and be my Love

By PEGGY DERN

WNU RELEASE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Alice is a waitress at the McTavish house, and Jim McTavish, almost with an eye for a pretty ankle, finds her attractive. He is flattered when the visitor asks him to go over to her house to help her. Lawrence Martin, with whom Meg has been engaged for one year, calls that night. Suddenly he suddenly arrives. Lawrence had gone to the country just to work for old Judge Graham. Jim McTavish announces jointly that he is going for a walk. When Lawrence arrives he is in great spirits and announces that Judge Graham is going to retire within a year and want him to take over. "I want you to marry me, Meg." He hesitated a long time.

CHAPTER V

He was frankly shaven, immaculately groomed—and, she told herself, almost a little surprised, he was downright handsome. He looked less than his forty-nine years, holding himself erectly, as though in an effort to disclaim the threat of impending overweight.

"For a walk! At this time of night?" she protested, surprised.

"It's seven o'clock, and there'll be a moon," her father told her almost as if—

Almost before she had finished there was the brisk ring of purposeful footsteps on the old bricked walk, and a moment later the outer door opened and Lawrence came in, hunting in his near her, greeting her eagerly. He stood his light topcoat and hung it with his hat in the accustomed corner of the closet beneath the stairs.

"That looks good." He peered the open fire and stood before it, warming his hands. "It's a bit nippy out tonight, and darker than a pocket. I was glad of my pocket flash before I got here."

"There is no moon?" asked Megan in surprise.

"Not yet," answered Lawrence. "Not before nine, I should say."

He stood, tall and lanky, and a little stooped, as though his height had run away from his weight. His dark, dark hair was brushed back from an intelligent forehead. His eyes were brown and steady behind the homeomed eyeglasses, his jaw was square and rugged, his mouth thin-lipped, rather generous but pleasant.

Suddenly he grinned at her, and said, "Well? Do you see anything different about me? Have I changed?"

Megan's eyebrows went up a little. "No — has something happened?"

"Well, the old Judge called me in this afternoon, and said he had no plans to retire next year," Lawrence told her eagerly. "The old fellow's getting on and he is pretty tired. But he wants me to take over, beginning now, so that in a year he can slip gracefully out of the picture and I can carry on."

"That's splendid, Larry—but no more than you deserve," Megan laid him credit and eagerly.

He nodded, his eyes very steady and very serious behind his rimmed glasses. "Thanks, honey," he answered, and went on before she could take note of the endearment. "It affects you, too, of course. That's, I hope it does."

His pride was confident, assured. Obviously he was as sure of her as of his qualification of the statement had been merely a surface matter.

"It's no secret to you, Maggie, that you've been my inspiration all these years, and you must have heard all along that as soon as I got to the point where I felt sure I could take care of you, I wanted you to marry me," he went on quietly. "I've got to that point now, so—will you, Maggie?"

But for some queer reason, Megan hesitated before answering. Confused as long, her eyes on the fire, her hand hid beneath his own, that Lawrence looked at her in sudden sharp alarm and said quickly, "Oh, look here, lady—it's polite to speak when you're spoken to."

"I'm sorry, Larry." She turned to him in some emotion apology. "It's just that—well, I scarcely know what to say."

Lawrence was surprised and a little dashed. But his hand closed more warmly over hers and he said with an effort at lightness, the threatening tension, "Well, you would be nice."

"I wish—I could be 'yes'," she admitted frankly.

Lawrence turned sharply, so that he was sitting sideways on the bench, facing her squarely. The thick, dark brows were drawn together in a puzzled frown and his eyes were apprehensive.

"See here, Maggie, what are you getting at? You're not unlikely going to say no, are?" he demanded anxiously.

"Of course not." She tried to laugh at the idea, but it was not a convincing laugh.

"Of course, I didn't do it with the proper build-up," he admitted with a little crooked grin. "Maybe I should have dragged on one knee in front of you, with one hand on my heart, the other reaching in a pounding gesture, and said something like, 'Mac MacTavish—Miss Megan—may I ask you, Maggie? Will you do me the honor to accept my undying devotion?' Shall I do it that way?"

"Don't be an idiot!" Megan was grateful for the lightness and tried to rise to it. "It's only that—well, you have taken me a little by surprise—"

"Oh, come, now, Maggie—not 'this is an sudden,'" he protested mockingly.

"I know—I do sound like a fool," she admitted quite honestly.

The raillery was gone from his voice and his eyes when he spoke again. His tone was quiet and steady, his eyes gentle and warm.

"You have known all along, Maggie, that I love you. I think it first started when we were kids. Every man has somewhere in his mind or his heart, or both, a picture of the ideal—and there's never for a man, must been anyone but you in that place for me. Everything I've done, every thought I've had for the future, has had you all woven into it and through it. It's been pretty hard from last two or three years wanting you struggle to hold on to single here and not being able to help you. But now—well, all that's changed, Maggie. I've got an income that is modest enough in all conscience, but it can take care of you, Maggie, and I promise it will be easier for you than it has been for me. Will you? I'll see to that! Do—will you be mine, Maggie? Because I want you and because I can't visualize any kind of life without you."

There were tears in her eyes, and her heart gave a warm flush as she turned to him and said, "Yes, Larry—if you're sure you want me."

Lawrence said huskily, "As if I could ever be so sure of anything else in my life!"

He took her into his arms, awkwardly, as though she were made of something so infinitely fragile and precious that the slightest careless touch might destroy her; yet there was a strength and an urgent tenderness in his touch that made her sweet and disconcertingly. She loved his very awkwardness, loved the fact that when he bent to kiss her, his lips touched her cheek before finding her lips. She was sure his love of his life, his prospects, his confidence, told her that. And the fact that he had not had enough experience with other girls to be deft and smooth with her endeared him to her.

There were so many things to be considered, so many problems to be settled. But tonight was no time for them. Tonight it was enough just to know one's self deeply loved, to know that she was first in Lawrence's thoughts, as she had been for a long, long time.

When he left, with fifteen minutes to catch his bus, she went slowly up the stairs to her own room and sat for a while in the darkness, in front of the silver square of moonlight that spilled through the window. She was ashamed of herself that she should feel, not the excitement, delicious impatience of a girl newly engaged, but only a weariness that seemed to drag her limbs and to slow her beach.

She was still awake when she heard her father come in, and she sat, she looked at the little clock on the dressing table. A quarter past twelve! An incredible time for him to come in from a mere walk, when he had left the house at seven. She sat in the surprise of his coming in so late, she could not but hear the caution with which he moved the stairs, the warmth with which he walked, heavily on tiptoe, past her door to his own room. Only by straining her ear could she hear his door close. And then she gave herself a mental shake and got up to prepare for bed.

The explanation of her father's late return was quite simple, after all. He had been playing pinochle with some of his cronies, probably in the back of the barbershop, which, she knew, was a favorite meeting place for some of the rather rattish characters who were his personal friends. And with that explanation, she crawled into bed and finally fell asleep.

The news of her engagement to Lawrence was accepted without any surprise whatever in Pleasant Grove. Mrs. Stuart summed up the attitude of the town when she said, wholeheartedly, "Well, it ain't no surprise to none of us. 'Course, we're all mighty glad and we know you and Lawrence are going to be happy. He's a fine boy and you're both lucky to get each other."

Megan, doing the Saturday morning baking, with Annie's assistance, felt her cheeks warm at the teasing of the remarkably early.

"You all goin' to live in Meachersville, I mean?" Mrs. Stuart went on, scrubbing with relish a slice of the hot gingerbread Annie offered.

Megan paused in her kneading of the soft, white dough that was going to be hot rolls when she had finished with it.

"I suppose so," she admitted almost reluctantly. "It wouldn't be very sensible for Larry to try to go to and fro, on the bus. It's too uncertain."

Mrs. Stuart nodded understandingly.

"Well, maybe then you'll sell the farm," she concluded wisely.

"Sell the farm?" Megan repeated in some consternation. "We really haven't had time to discuss that," she admitted finally. "We aren't going to be married until the spring, and that will give us plenty of time."

"Well, now, I dunno," Mrs. Stuart ventured, licking the last fragrant, sticky crumbs of the gingerbread from her fingertips. "Folks that's going to have a real wedding want to get in and settled by January, or February at the latest. If you're going to sell, you better let folks know right away. Reckin you won't have no trouble getting a good price for the place, farming being higher than it ever has been before."

"I suppose so," Megan agreed. She was secretly, if unhealthfully, glad when Mrs. Stuart had finally gone.

With the hall of the baking in the stove, and Annie safely in bed, Megan stripped off her apron, went out of doors, and whistled to the dogs.

Reaching the top of the hill, where the big fall pine stood in the hollow of the valley, most majestic pine, she sat down and drew up her knees and rested them with her arms. The dogs mauled about, desirous with joy.

Below her to the left she could see the roof and the backyard of the Meachersville place. There was a little patch of an orchard on the slope back of the house, apple trees that had never been pruned and so grew riotously well, formed a wall of hedge along the front. The recent neighbor to the Meachersville place was Stanton, which was around a bend in the road and so out of sight of the shabby little old house.

Behind her, Megan knew the Ridge stood into a valley that was threaded by the small brook that watered her own meadow, and that meadow was not a little so that there were rich lotuses lands bordering it. It was a peaceful place in the cold autumn morning. Here is the central coastal country, where played a wild band; there was hardly ever any rain, neither a killing frost. Two crops a year grew from the farmer, and she was peaceful and placid. Or a bad year said Alice Stevens—we came to live here. Megan private her thoughts away from the unpleasant course of Alice Stevens—because she had something of her own importance, to herself at least, to think about.

Mrs. Stuart had taken it for granted that Megan would sell the farm when she married Lawrence. Nobody who knew Jim MacTavish could conceive him running the farm or even living there after Megan was gone. He'd take the money Megan got from the sale and run through it and be "out" Lawrence and Megan's hands for support for rest of the life. Megan was sensible enough for the daughter she was not conscious of any disloyalty towards her father in thinking such a thought. She was simply facing facts. She knew how so well that her father would make mistaken plans that marriage would leave her free to shape her life's own aspect it.

He looked out over the beloved valley, and the old farm. Not to be here when the early spring came, not to go out with tractor and harrow and seed bag, to hold the rich dark earth, to drop the fine seeds into the ground and witness the age-old, ever-recurring miracle that brought food and sustenance from the dark earth by means of those tiny, hard seeds. This was of the soil, she had been born to it, she had lived upon it, not only from her mother but from her father's people before her, people who had turned the barren to a known and beloved food, and who had tried the lotuses and had found a wonderful new world, that they might have and that was their own. Land that had been cleared by her forefathers, land that had been fed and watered by the very sweat of their tired bodies; every inch of this place was part of her.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Lawrence turned sharply, so that he was sitting sideways on the bench, facing her squarely.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By MARGUS L. CONDRON, D. D.
Member of Faculty, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for August 11

Subject: JESUS AND PAUL, MEN OF PRAYER, PRACTICE, AND SACRIFICE.

JESUS AND MORE RELATIONSHIPS

LESSON TEXTS—Luke 10:38, 39; Mark 1:35; John 11:1, 2; Ephesians 6:18.

GOLDEN TEXT—Pray without ceasing. (I Thessalonians 5:17.)

Home—that place so dear to the heart of each one of us—is God's very province in the sight of God. He is concerned about our homes and those who live in them.

Right relationships between children and parents have much to do with the peace and prosperity of a community and a nation. Experience has demonstrated that to be true, but even more basic is the fact that it is in accord with the promise of God.

One of the sad breakdowns in modern life is that of proper home and obedience to parents by children. In all too many homes God's order has been reversed and instead of honoring and obeying their parents, children (both young and old) have taken the place of "boss," and mother and father must obey if they want peace and rest.

The problem of juvenile delinquency, or perhaps we should say more correctly, parent delinquency, is right on our doorsteps now. That means that the need for our young is both great and acute. The future happiness of hundreds of thousands of children and the prosperity of thousands of employed and honorable parents will depend on the intelligence and faithfulness with which this lesson is taught in our churches, and the honesty of heart with which we all receive its truth.

I. The Responsibility Stated (Exod. 20:12).

"Honor thy father and thy mother—obey good, old-fashioned, and right from world round.

We are told by Paul that this is the "first commandment with promise" (Eph. 6:1-3). The Lord was not making a bargain with man, or standing up high above the lines of a gentle angler, the roar of bulldozer motors and the shouts of men in recreation break the silences of the night . . . such sounds as have never before been heard since the ancient volcanic forces of the earth rent apart the waters of the Pacific, and the countless millions of coral polyps deposited their skeletons in eons of time to form the rich and coral base of the atoll reefs . . . the crashing splitting thunder of the atomic bombs have broken the peace and stillness of this fairy-land. American ships lie upon the coral beds of the lagoon floor . . . 40 fathoms down.

Soon divers will explore their wrecked hulls to note the work of simple energy and blast upon the wakefulness of skyscrapers, thermospheres with which the lagoon led to see what this man-made force has done to nature's work. Skyscrapers will study the fish life to learn what radio-activity has done to the living tissues. In the years to come our children may see specimens of fish may be one result.

A radio station, ice plant and electric plant and their functions in this present output of the American way . . . for women American sailors and American soldiers and airmen go to meet, go the American way in ships and planes.

Expensive, but Worth It

To date this mass movement of ships and men with their supply and maintenance has cost the American taxpayers some $20,000,000 so that our military planners might learn the effect of atomic energy on ships and men and material. And it is costing us approximately half million dollars a day to keep it going . . . going well beyond the summer months for the third test is now scheduled for November and the total cost will run well over $100,000,000 . . . Our congress and our military leaders believe it is well worth it. And they've left nothing undone.

A lost orchestra plays waltzes, rumba music and the sound is wafted across the water from the officers' club where the legend over the dance reads "Up and Down." And there's plenty of refreshment in liquid form, so plentiful it may be the reason for the shortage in the States and strange use.

Some 20,000 men are here . . . a little piece of the United States transported to the South Pacific. If we could only see a movie wheel the years before us would resemble nothing more than Coney Island.

* * *

About one-fourth of the animals required to the atom bomb test of July 1 are now dead. This does not include those killed for autopsy. Dr. Shields Warren, radiological expert, says that about one-third of the survivors are in a critical condition from burns. Five total as of quite dead, have been flown to the U. of Chicago for tissue studies. They allowed to die to radioactive organs. One hundred and eight animals have been flown to the Federal Health Institute at Bethesda, Md., where they will be studied.

NEA Washington Bureau
1013 13th St., N. W.

A Little Bit of America Transplanted in S. Pacific

BIKINI ISLAND.—There is an unsuspecting pattern spread before me here in this south Pacific and . . . a picture of great beauty and a beam which portrays the American way.

For tonight as far as the eye can see is a huge sea vista with the curving length of this three-mile-long island thousands of electric lights wink in the soft trade winds and mirror their reflections in the gently swelling waters of the lagoon. Thousands of other lights from the foot of some 300 ships are clustered in array here, other patterns of reflected lights, numerous stars spread in the inky-studded sky and the winking lights of ship communications play a soundless tune upon the southern night. Red and green ruling lights ship the moon-swept in the rolling waves and add color to the magical picture in this far-off place.

Yet only a few short months ago this island and the entire atoll of coral reefs and islets was as primitive and wild as when the first Polynesians cleared their frail outrigger canoes into Bikini lagoon some 900 years ago. Today the small band of sailors has been moved bed and baggage to another large island and taking their place are thousands of Americans here swarming the beaches and playing beneath the coconut palms from which the sailors derived their chief food supply.

Paving, Steel Buildings

Concrete walks have taken the place of the rough native trails, coral roads have replaced the sandy paths that for centuries, rough footbed tracks have been replaced by sturdy American structures. Baseball, basketball, tennis and horseshoe courts edge into the palm groves. Steel towers form satellites for radio, television and other communication, standing high above the trees. The ring of a gasoline engine, the roar of bulldozer motors and the shouts of men in recreation break the silences of the night . . . such sounds as have never before been heard since the ancient volcanic forces of the earth rent apart the waters of the Pacific, and the countless millions of coral polyps deposited their skeletons in eons of time to form the rich and coral base of the atoll reefs . . . the crashing splitting thunder of the atomic bombs have broken the peace and stillness of this fairy-land. American ships lie upon the coral beds of the lagoon floor . . . 40 fathoms down.

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