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TRUSTED HIM FOR ELEVEN YEARS

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ANNA MAINS stared at the note which a messenger boy had just placed in her hand. Her husband had written it. It said: "Wife, I'm called away. Back tomorrow.—Ed." Wife crushed the note in her small, plump hand. Her cheeks flamed with indignation. But tears of disappointment filled her dark eyes. She went into the living room and sat down on the davenport.

It was the eleventh time in as many years of married life that this same thing had happened. Ed would eat breakfast and leave home with his schedule apparently made up for the next twenty-four hours. Then about noon he would either send a note or phone—"Called away." When he came back he never explained where he'd been. Once she had asked him and he had evaded telling her. After that she had been too proud to ask.

For eleven years Anna had been a model wife. She did not question Ed about his business affairs. The office was his, the house was hers. He gave her a generous allowance. All the women of her acquaintance envied Anna Mains.

And she had invited the Stones and Culvers to dinner tonight. It was the anniversary of her marriage and she had felt like celebrating. Yet Ed had forgotten all about it or else he had ignored it for the sake of keeping his mysterious date.

Anna didn't see how she could excuse Ed's absence to their friends. It wasn't as if he were accustomed to going out of town on business. No, she couldn't excuse Ed's absence from his own anniversary dinner. Neither could she at this late hour call off her party.

The plump, pretty little woman, with gray threads in her light hair, curled upon the davenport, buried her head in the cushions and sobbed. Anna had cried seldom in the whole course of her life and her tears came hard.

Suddenly she ceased crying. She was angry. More than that, she was suspicious for the first time.

Hastily powdering out the traces of her tears, she went downtown to Ed's place of business.

She found Miss Pettis as usual at her typewriter. Anna nodded to Miss Pettis and went on into Ed's little private office. The room was full of his presence. Anna had had a desperate notion of rummaging through Ed's old desk. But suddenly she had another and terrifying idea. Maybe that pain he had been complaining about meant something after all. Maybe he'd stolen away to see some particular specialist. She returned to the outer office.

"Did Mr. Mains seem bothered about anything when he went away?" she asked.

"Yes, he did. He was downright glum," Miss Pettis shuffled some papers on her table. "He got a letter that upset him terribly. It's here if you want to see it."

Anna took the letter. It was written in a woman's hand on cheap white paper. "Dear Ed, I want to see you bad. Come right down. Carrie Holcomb." It was dated the day before. The place was a small nearby town.

Anna tried to smile. "All right, Julia." She got away without betraying her feelings, went back home, called up May Culver and Alice Stone and explained quietly that she and Ed had both been called out of town. But the dinner invitation was good for the same day next week. She phoned for a taxi and was driven to the station.

When she reached the tiny depot at Pine Grove she asked a bystander to direct her to Carrie Holcomb's house. He answered promptly. "Laws, everybody knows where Carrie lives. Go right up the street till you come to a white house with green blinds and a willer tree." Anna found the house easily. Lights were glowing behind the green blinds. Through one unveiled window she could look in an see her husband. He was sitting down, talking earnestly to some one who was out of sight.

Anna's lips quivered. Suddenly she turned and walked away. At the station she waited long for a train that would return her to her home. She stole into the house, she went to bed, but she couldn't sleep. All night long she lay thinking. Shame and regret blistered her soul. For she had known somehow as she looked into that humble lamplit room at her husband that whatever Ed's mission was it was innocent.

Noon came. She had lunch ready. Ed came breezing into the house with the usual, "Hello, old girl!" But when he came to the table he slumped over his food. He looked unutterably weary.

"Don't feel much like eating," he said. "I never got to bed last night at all." Anna clasped her hands hard under the edge of the table. "Tom's dead," he said, simply, and covered his face with his hand.

"Tom?" Anna spoke in a whisper. Ed took the hand from his face.

"I never told you. I never told any one. Tom Holcomb and I were boys together in Pine Grove. He was the best pal I ever had, present company excepted." A glimmer of smile stirred Ed's drawn mouth. "We both had the same chance. But Tom went bad somehow. You know I can't help thinking that it might just as well have been me. Well, the last time he got free I saw he was done for. Wrecked physically and mentally. He had just two friends left in the whole world."

"You, Ed?"

"And his mother. Funny what a woman like Carrie Holcomb will go through for her child. She showed me her hands—worked to the bone. First off she was too proud to let me help her. All I could do was to sneak in there once a year and try to cheer her up and take a gift to Tom. But yesterday I got a letter. Tom was going out—horrible! You don't want to hear about it and I don't want to tell you. But I'm going back there tomorrow. Maybe you could do something for Tom's mother that I can't. You'd understand her better than I do."

"I'll go and do all I can," Anna said.

She went round to Ed's chair and put her hand on his shoulder.

"Will you forgive me, Ed—for something?" she asked wistfully.

"What's the something?" He drew back his head and looked up at her "No, I didn't mean that, old girl. Anything you do is all right with me." His eyes twinkled as he drew her to him. "I ought to be able to trust you once when you've been trusting me right along for the last eleven years."

Analysis of Average Man's Fear of Thought

Do men fear life? Or death? Or war? Or evil? Or folly? No. They fear knowledge of life, realization of death, truth about war, candid perception of evil, revelation of folly! "Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin, more even than death. Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible; thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions and comfortable habits; thought is anarchic and lawless, indifferent to authority, careless of the well-tried wisdom of the ages. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. It sees man, a feeble speck, surrounded by unfathomable depths of silence, as unmoved as if he were lord of the universe. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man." Bertrand Russell's philosophic dictum illuminates our theory of realization brilliantly.

Men love realism. They abhor realization. That's why they lavish their affection upon melodrama—realism built upon a falsification of values—and vent their wrath upon drama—realism built upon a revelation of values (varying degrees of disillusioned candor).

Melodramas—detective stories, moving pictures, dime novels, a majority of the "legitimate" dramas, mythology—satisfies the heart of man (art for heart's sake!) by catering to his sense of realism and leaving his capacity for realization unawakened.

Here we have the key to the history and the psychology of the conflict, never ending between the creative artist and the public (including the lesser artists), between literature and life, truth and illusion, realization and realism.

In art for heart's sake, Mr. Average Man's conventionalized emotions are stirred, his morality flattered and exhilarated, his conscience reaffirmed, his "philosophy of life" (i e. code of personal conduct) unchallenged. He goes on his way rejoicing.

But the works of realization, embodied in creative literature, are infinitely more exacting and less indulgent. For a good reason.—From "Our Changing Human Nature," by Samuel D. Schmalhausen.

Make Friends of "Kids"

Speak to kids when you pass them. They'll treasure that recognition for years. A man loaned me $100 when I was fifteen years old. He hardly knew me. He was appointed postmaster of the old town not long ago. I wrote to congratulate him, and reminded him of how he had trusted me.

He thanked me for the letter, but said he couldn't recall the loan.

My gracious! that was the biggest hundred dollars I ever saw or had; and he didn't even remember it. I'm glad he doesn't know even yet that I wrote to the President at Washington asking to have him appointed postmaster.

Most kids never forget either an injury or a kindness. I would rather have a boy or a girl for my pal than to be invited to dine with a queen.—F. G. Moorhead in the Farm Journal.

Natural Heating System

John Gordes, Boise Valley (Idaho) farmer, uses natural hot water on cold nights for frost protection. From a "hot-water well" on his land Gordes has laid a system of pipes on his truck garden and when the frost is in the air he turns on the water and the scalding hot sprays raise the temperature well above freezing. This makes it possible for him to plant earlier in the season and to keep crops growing later in the fall than his neighbor.

In the Shadows

It was positively and absolutely the last good night.

In a farewell embrace they stood in the dim entrance hall.

Thus little Algy found them.

"Oh," said he.

"We were seeing which is the taller," explained the young man, in some confusion.

"You are about ten inches taller!" piped the little fellow. "But Alice is about ten shades redder!"

Unfortunate Early Savant

Henry, Marquis of Villena, a Castilian savant in the reign of John II, studied astronomy so diligently that he lost all run of his worldly affairs and caused a wit of his day to comment sarcastically: "He knew much of heaven and nothing of earth."

His blind neglect of his financial concerns cost him all his possessions and reduced him to extreme penury in his last years. He was suspected of necromancy, and at his death in 1834 the king's ecclesiastical agent threw more than a hundred of his precious books into the flames.—Detroit News.

Concerning the Law

The true view, as I submit, is that the law is what the judges declare; that statutes, precedents, the opinions of learned experts, customs, and morality are the sources of the law; that back of everything lie the opinions of the ruling spirits of the community; who have the power to close any of these sources; but that as long as they do not interfere, the judges, in establishing law, have recourse to these sources.—John Chipman Gray.

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