

Love Is Blind

By HOPE WILDER

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"IT DOES seem like the irony of fate that there should have been a fire in your house that night of all nights," laughed Jane Burke.

"It's not a laughing matter," replied Alice pertly.

"Why not? You must have looked like the first lady of Mars or something ten times worse."

"You're about right. Honestly, when mother and father were calling to me frantically to get out, I could think of nothing but what a slight I looked. And to appear that way before half the town and all the firemen!"

"What was this marvelous new beauty treatment you were trying out? A new mud pack, or what?" asked Jane, still highly amused.

Alice pretended to shudder. "Oh—I'd rather you wouldn't ask. There I stood on the balcony in front of my room—the very spot I had so often pictured myself in! And in what a predicament! But far from looking lovely and romantic like Juliet addressing Romeo, I was something out of the comic page. My hair was done up in those metal wavers and they stuck out all over my head. I had a heavy cream plastered over most of my face about an inch thick. And I had a couple of pieces of adhesive pasted in various attractive spots just to complete the picture. There was nothing worth anything omitted."

"I can imagine. But why all the beauty preparations?"

"Well, I want to look as youthful and beautiful as possible at the dance at the country club tomorrow night, and I was following advice from a beauty expert for several nights so that I'd surely be a knockout. You see, Brad Conklin is in town visiting his cousin and I haven't seen him to speak of for three years. And you know how I feel about Brad—"

"Well, did Brad turn out to see you in your choice make-up?"

"I'll say he did. His cousin, Jack Langstaff, is a volunteer fireman and dragged Brad along to help the boys out. There the two of them stood with the ladder leaning against my bedroom balcony. Both of them waiting to make sure that I got out safely. It makes me shudder to think about it.

"I had to climb down the ladder, and there the family and the firemen gathered to grab me when I was in reaching distance. Years ago I had determined never to be caught in such a predicament. And just when I relented once, there had to be a fire. You're right, it must have been fate."

"Well, cheer up, if you're sure Brad is in love with you, he won't even refer to the subject. If he doesn't turn up within six months, you can be sure he saw all and decided the best way out was a prolonged and eternal silence."

"Maybe you're right. But after all, I still feel a little mortified. But at least, he might have sensed humor in the occasion, don't you think?" asked Alice.

But, before Alice could reply the sound of an automobile turning in the driveway, attracted Alice's and Jane's attention. It was Brad Conklin.

"Well, cheerio," he said, smiling, "I hope the excitement last night didn't have any bad effects on anybody. It was a big night for all concerned, and the first fire I've participated in for a good many moons."

Jane regarded her friend Alice and then looked at Brad. She realized that if he had noticed the extensive beauty preparations the night before, he wouldn't divulge the fact. As Alice didn't attempt any reply, Jane said, "It must have been a corker. I'm certainly peeved that I missed it."

"Then Alice has been telling you all about it?" ventured Brad. "I hope she told you all the lives that were at stake and the thrilling bravery of the volunteer fire department."

Jane laughed. "Well, she told me all about it from her side, as one of those who had to be rescued."

"And I've been telling her all about my extraordinary appearance on the balcony—as I emerged from a beauty treatment which I thought was going to have wonderful results instead of creating a riot among the natives."

"What's this? I may be dumb, but I'm afraid I can't quite follow your trend of conversation. Enlighten me, young lady," Brad demanded.

Then the whole story was told once more with added enthusiasm by Alice and side remarks by Jane. But as she prattled on about the trials of the previous night, Alice could not help feeling relieved, that at least Brad pretended not to have noticed her strange appearance.

After the story was fully told, all three had a good time laughing. The damage the fire had done was little and the insurance inspector had already promised to make proper amends.

"Well, may I ask what was the reason for this extensive beauty treatment?" asked Brad.

Alice once again seemed tongue-tied. To save the situation Jane once again took it upon herself to carry on the conversation. "Brad, you're an intelligent young man. Well, I guess the old adage is true. What would you say? Don't you think 'love is blind?'"

Brad was unable to hide his face in a barrel. But he was relieved to see Jane retreating after that remark. It made it much easier to take Alice in his arms and to hold her there until she gasped for breath.



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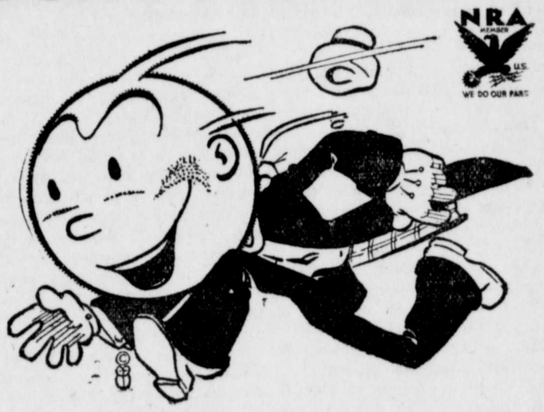
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SALLIE B. NORRIS

late of said county, deceased. All persons having claims against said deceased's estate are hereby warned to exhibit the same, with the proper vouchers thereof, to the undersigned on or before the 7th day of April, 1934, otherwise they may by law be excluded from all benefit of said deceased's personal estate.

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