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THE LOVE PENDULUM

BY MARION RUBINCAM

NEW INTERESTS

Chapter 49

After that I made few attempts to pacify Winthrop. Sometimes I smile when I remember that evening—one of those smiles with a twist at the corner, that we can only achieve when we are far enough away from the cause of it.

That evening, I remember very well, I turned and walked from the room. It was a beautiful dignified action, but it led me nowhere.

After all, there we were, tied up in a tiny country house—where was there to go? I went to the living room below and covered my dignity by pretending to get the baby's clothes that Mrs. Anderson had packed up for me.

When I got back to my room—to our room, rather, for we had the big sunny room that went across the front of the house, Win had disappeared.

Now there were only three bedrooms in the house, ours, which Colin had taken, and back of that, a room cut in half, one part being a more or less primitive bathroom, the other a very small bedroom.

Into this cheerless space, Win had decided to establish himself. The baby was sleeping quietly on the bed, I went downstairs and brought up that convenient substitute of crib—the clothes basket.

I padded it with cushions, made a smooth, comfortable bed of it, and put my poor little walf in it, for Connie always seemed a walf in me in spite of her more or less affectionate mother.

Then I tapped on Win's door. He was sitting on the one chair in the room, not a comfortable chair at all. He was in his bathrobe and he was reading the only thing handy, the evening paper.

"She's asleep," I remarked. "I'll bring her in here now, and you can go back to your room."

Winthrop made an attempt at other it is impossible to achieve dignity in a bathrobe, and especially so when one sits upon a hard uncomfortable chair much too low for ease. But Win tried nobly.

"I intend to stay here," he remarked loftily, "until you regain your sense and send that child back."

"I can't send her tonight," I said meekly. "It's too late."

"Your promise to return her will do."

"But don't you see, Win," I protested. "I have a certain sense of responsibility. I'm very fond of her. Her mother named her after me. And besides, she would die this hot weather in that dreadful tenement. Please let me keep her till she is well again. It's an act of common charity."

"Charity is a virtue which is supposed to begin at home," my still very dignified husband remarked. "You've shown little to me. If you will keep my house full of common little artists and washwomen's babies—"

"He ended the speech it was to the walls with their hideously flowered wall paper. I turned and closed the door."

That night I thought about things all over again. Mentally, physically, spiritually we had parted—certainly a complete separation. What was the idea? Divorce? I turned cold at the idea. Legal separation? That was no better. Compromise? Where could we compromise? Hadn't I tried yielding on almost every point?

I slept finally, wondering whether I had tried to compromise. When I woke in the morning, it was to wonder whether compromise meant to send back the baby? If so, I knew I could not compromise. Connie was to stay, no matter what happened.

all earnest. Some perhaps were affected, many were wrong in their point of view—yet all had the great gift of sincerity and the equally great one of simplicity. Win and I drifted still further apart.

THE QUARREL

Chapter 50

In one thing Win was faithful that summer. He put aside every possible cent of money toward paying his mother back for what she had advanced. Our country expenses were trifling, even with the guests we had. I had with my car—that saved garage hire and gasoline and repairs, three items that had eaten into our bank account.

Having no maid we were saved that; food in the country was cheap and we had an inexpensive table. This was partly because I was an amateur housekeeper and partly because I was avoiding work in order to gain health again.

As the weeks passed I watched our account grow, and was pleased at that, at least. By October we would be clear of that monster, Debt, which was something I had learned to dread during the winter. Then there was always the chance that Winthrop would bring in a new client to his firm, in which case he would earn an extra commission.

The days fell into a lazy routine, a pleasant one to me, a bored one to Win. We rose at 7 or before, breakfasted in almost total silence, and Win took the bus to the train. My household duties and the baby, which gained weight and prettiness from day to day, took many hours. Sometimes I varied my routine, by leaving Connie at a neighbor's and going down to the Sound for a swim.

In spite of my unhappiness and uneasiness, I was improving in health. I ate well and slept well, the tired drawn lines had long since disappeared and my skin had the warm pink glow that caused me to be called beautiful.

One of the things I loved best was to walk in a pelting rain. I had a lot of old clothes for this and a waterproof coat and cap. One afternoon when I came in from such a tramp, the cold rain had been beating in my face for an hour. I had tramped to the shore and back, and my whole body was glowing from the air and the exercise.

Colin was with us that week. He stayed in and was making some pen and ink sketches for a magazine article.

"I built you a fire in the fireplace," he said as he looked up. "Take off those wet things and sit in the armchair there. I'm going to make tea for us."

"How good you are," I answered, as he brought me a cup of the hot drink. "I feel wonderful after that walk! This tea is just the thing."

"You look wonderful!" he told me, taking—as he usually did—an uncomfortable little chair on the other side of the hearth. "What a skin you have! It can match its color with my pigments, but there's not an artist alive can paint the quality of blue in your eyes. It's not the shade, you know. It's quality."

"I know!" I had heard Colin's favorite topic before. "Not even Corot could give the illuminating quality of the rain and mist as I saw it over the valley—by the way, where is Win? His train is in. There goes the station bus past the house."

Colin looked uncomfortable. Then he stammered: "The—truth is, Connie, he phoned an hour ago—I had to run over to the farmhouse to get the message. Yes, I talked to him," as I looked up suddenly, "he says he isn't coming up tonight."

"I could not finish for being wilderment. It was so surprising and so embarrassing. For here was Colin, a guest in our house! Colin was the sweetest person in the world—but that was no reason for Win to put me in the uncomfortable position of being there with him—"

"It's as awkward for me as for you," Colin broke in on my thoughts. "I told Win as much. He told me you could always arrange to have someone stay with you, I ended matters by bribing the farmer's wife to come over for the night. Of course," he added, smiling whimsically, "I might run off with you between her coming makes it all right and does away with scandal."

"How dreadful of Win!" I burst out suddenly. "I suppose Gwen is in town—that's usually the reason when he doesn't come home."

"No, it's not Gwen. She's in Bar Harbor, as I happen to know. It's only the weather. He hates rain and drizzle; in the city he can forget it in clubs and taxis and hotels. Here he has to face it, see it, walk in it—he doesn't gain a wonderful complexion by that, as you do."

"Did he say the weather depressed him so he couldn't come home? How ridiculous!" I burst out. "Temperment is always ridiculous—to others," Colin answered. "Poor Win actually does suffer out here. Let him stay in. He'll go to a show and feel better and come back tomorrow in good spirits."

"To let the weather affect him so he could do something so ridiculous—"

added to the grotesque effect. Poor ugly, beautiful Colin! For one instant I loved him with all my heart—or rather, with all my gratitude for his sweetness and his understanding. He turned and smiled gently at me.

TO EXPECTANT MOTHERS

A Letter from Mrs. Smith Tells How Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Helped Her

Trenton, Ont.—"I am writing to you in regard to Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I would not be without it. I have taken it before each of my children were born and afterwards, and find it a great help. Before my first baby was born I had shortness of breath and ringing in my ears."

I felt as if I would never pull through. One day a friend of my husband told him what the Vegetable Compound had done for his wife and advised him to take a bottle home for me. After the fourth bottle I was a different woman. I have four children now, and I always find the Vegetable Compound a great help as it seems to make confinement easier. I recommend it to my friends."—Mrs. FRED H. SMITH, John St., Trenton, Ont.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is an excellent medicine for expectant mothers, and should be taken during the entire period. It has a general effect to strengthen and tone up the entire system, so that it may work in every respect effectually as nature intended. Thousands of women testify to this fact.

you adopting a washwoman's screaming baby?" "I prefer not to discuss the possible gossip of my friends. And I don't wish to quarrel."

"You seem to like it." "I don't even care enough about you now to quarrel with you," I answered.

That was not true, but it hurt. And I meant it hurt. Strange perversity that makes us sometimes hurt those we love best!

HIS MOTHER'S LETTER

Chapter 52 For a long time it seemed that everything we said, everything we did, only drove deeper the wedge that was separating Winthrop and myself.

As I looked back over our year of married life and our but little more than a year of friendship, it seemed to me that our love had swung like a pendulum, far out to one side where there was love and passion and tenderness and comradeship—and now far out to the other where there was none of these qualities. At least, this seemed true of Winthrop's part.

I wondered what the end of this meant, and brooded over it. Did all marriages begin that way—with everything to make them beautiful at the start, yet nothing lasting to make them beautiful at the end? Did not most people swing through the emotional arc, and end at a dead level between the two like the hanging, quiet pendulum of a clock that has stopped?

Wasn't that awful dead level even worse than an active dislike? The more I thought about it, the more hopeless the whole outlook became. For, after all, Winthrop and I were so totally unlike! And we did not know it at the start—how could we? We scarcely knew each other at all.

To him, I represented everything he wanted—a pretty woman, well dressed, with the smooth manners of the city bred girl, with a certain social position, with a background of frivolity.

To me, he represented everything I wanted—a strong, quiet man, sincere because he knew nothing of the staidity of the city-bred man, living among people who were simple and sincere too. In a place where there was time to rest and to be at peace, and leisure to cultivate real friends instead of feverish acquaintances.

I remembered the long afternoons of the summer before, when half a dozen of the girls in Wellsville gathered around my tea table and we sat and worked and talked and learned to know each other. How different from the meetings of the winter—ten minutes' chat on superficial subjects at a crowded reception, empty flattery as one stood at a "tea," scraps of talk between the acts of a play, or such conversation as was possible while we danced to the blare of jazz music!

I had made no friends in the country this summer, but I had cemented my friendship with Colin with Lorna—a little writer, with half a dozen of Colin's friends, and I had found in my old friend, Nedda, a qualifier I never dreamed existed.

Otherwise we had no guests—Winthrop would not invite our "smart" friends out to our tiny house. The night we quarrelled, Winthrop came to me in the evening, after Colin had gone to bed. We were alone.

"Though you seem to take little interest in my business or in my affairs or in myself," he began in a very dignified manner. "I still think I had better tell you that the commission will finish paying what I owe my mother."

"I'm glad of that," I looked up and smiled. I was very glad. "I drew down our bank account check for my commission which to a few dollars. That, with the check for my commissions they gave me today, makes up the money I owe. I sent mother my check for the whole amount today. And I asked her to lend me enough to buy the partnership in the firm. She said she would do it if I proved I could live economically and get out of debt. I think I have done so in a remarkably short time."

I said nothing to this. There was not a word on his part about the share I had in it! Indeed, the

THE MAD WHIRL

Chapter 54

For a while we did seem to have found the happiness that somehow we had been missing all these long months. For a while everything went the way we wanted it.

Winthrop's mother kept her promise and advanced him enough money to purchase an interest in his firm. This made our income sufficient to cover all the expenses of our apartment, and to allow for the extravagant method of living that seemed to please Winthrop.

I was sufficiently rested to stand the active life we were suddenly plunged into without getting the sickening little pain in my shoulder that I had carried almost all the winter before.

The saddest part of the new arrangement was that I had to give the baby back to Mrs. Anderson but, at least, I had the satisfaction of knowing that little Connie had stored up sufficient health under my care in the summer to start her safely on the winter months.

Mrs. Anderson was almost pathetically grateful for the care I had taken, it never seemed to occur to her, to whom motherhood was only an added burden, that the greatest joy of my summer had been the extra work her child had given me.

Winthrop was light-hearted as a boy once we were back in the city. He took every day like a new adventure. One day he purchased a new car another day he came home with a very smart motor car, and for weeks afterwards he was purchasing new little luxuries to be put in the machine.

He decided that it was too much trouble to drive himself, so hired a chauffeur. He even wanted to move to a more expensive apartment, but I managed to stop him on this one point. In spite of our increased income, I knew we could not stand too much expense.

September and October passed and the so-called social season was in full swing. My aunt came back to town and opened up her house, and my father arrived from Canada with new plans for a winter's trip to South Africa.

"Don't you ever want to stay home?" I asked him one afternoon when he dropped in for tea.

"What a little home body you are, Connie," he said, with an indulgent paternal smile. "I am always at home because my home is the whole world."

Winthrop was taking all this in calmly, I had, at least, the satisfaction of knowing that my husband

BACK AGAIN

Chapter 53

Of all the things that are hard to put up with in life I sometimes think lack of understanding is the most difficult.

When I was first married to Winthrop I rejoiced in the fact that I was such good friends with his mother. Having had no mother of my own, and knowing only that there was some curious mystery surrounding her life and her disappearance, I naturally turned with outstretched arms to the little grey-eyed woman in Wellsville who had been so kind to me when I was ill.

Though the long days of my convalescence Mrs. Taylor had never been anything but charming, and during the days of my engagement to Winthrop she had all the sympathy that I should have expected from my own mother. To have her turn against me also at this time was almost more than I could bear.

I put the letter down. "Did you ever tell your mother that it was you and not I that ran the bills up last winter?" I asked.

At once thinking I was going to scold, his face clouded over and the odd, sullen look that I had learned to dread so much came back.

"That's like you," he answered "to blame me for everything that goes wrong."

There was never any use arguing while Winthrop was in such a mood, so I handed him back the letter and said nothing.

"At once he began to cheer up again."

"At all events," he said, "we can get out of this hole and go back to our home in the city."

"But the lease of the apartment does not expire until October," I objected, "and this is only September."

Once more Winthrop looked like a small boy who had been deprived of some favorite playing.

"I'll buy the lease back from them," he said, "and we'll move in next week."

I knew that this would cost him several hundred dollars, and under the circumstances we could not afford the money. It seemed a useless thing to do in order to have three weeks more in the city, but Winthrop was so obviously cheered by the idea of going back to town immediately that I made no objection.

So it was within that week we found ourselves back in our old apartment. The season in town had not quite begun. Very few of our friends were back again, but Winthrop was so overjoyed by being down in the heart of the city that for once he did not seem to mind the lack of companionship.

"It was about this time a year ago," he said, "that I came to New York for the first time. Do you remember?"

I nodded eagerly pleased that he should have recollected one sentimental detail of our early married life. For Winthrop had grown so forgetful that he did not even remember the first anniversary of our wedding, and I had learned to be independent enough not to remind him nor to show that I was hurt because he had forgotten.

"Of course I remember," I said. "It was really our honeymoon."

Winthrop answered, "Do you remember we stayed at your aunt's house, and the first evening we were in town we went to a show and to a roof garden and danced?" I nodded my head. Perhaps I was just a little disappointed that he should have remembered only the frivolous details of our first evening in the city together.

Advertisement for Marven's "White Lily" Biscuits. Includes image of a biscuit box and the text: "Marven's 'White Lily' Biscuits they satisfy".

"We are awfully happy now aren't we?" he asked, with more tenderness in his voice than I had heard for a long time. "Are we?" I asked. "Aren't you?" He was obviously greatly surprised. "I am always happy when you love me," I answered simply. "But I do, you know I do. Of course we have misunderstandings—I suppose everyone has. But I love you a great deal." His arms were around me to prove it. "This will be our second honeymoon."

I learned my head against his shoulder. Perhaps it would be another honeymoon! Perhaps now we should find the happiness we seemed to have missed before!

"I'd like a private yacht too," I said suddenly. "But I suppose we can't have one yet. Think of the parties we could take out on short cruises, Connie!" "I'd rather stay on land," I answered promptly. "But this I knew was the wrong thing to say. So I changed my tactics at once."

"That evening we went to a very elaborate affair in honor of Nedda's engagement. Nedda had been all summer deciding between two men, one 'the catch' of the season, another a young chap with nothing to recommend him but a very lovable personality. I suspected she cared more for the latter, but having decided to marry the rich one, Nedda stubbornly maintained she cared most for him."

It was to be a very smart affair, and Win was looking forward to it, to meeting some particularly fashionable people.

"The beautiful Gwendolyn is to be played as I played it last winter. But this time—was going into it whole heartedly. Win wanted me to look 'smart.' I did. I wore a gown of silver cloth that clung much too tightly, and was out so low that even Win was scandalized. I did my hair in an extreme style and wore heels that made walking a difficult art."

I smoked cigarettes until Win protested that I would ruin my health. And I danced, and flirted and gossip and laughed, and listened to inanities from fat gentlemen possessing many dollars and no wit.

"No, tonight, my father remarked once. 'The Marsdens are going to cut her!'" Nedda chimed in, her sweet face carrying a cherubic smile while she gave us a new piece of gossip. "Oh, haven't you heard? Oh, nothing much—a mysterious week end, two people lost on a back road, and refuge at an obscure mountain inn—the usual thing. Odd, our Gwen could not have done it in a more original fashion!"

"But I thought you liked Gwen," I protested, shocked for once out of my veneer or worldliness. "I adore her," Nedda answered. "Still, if she will get lost when motoring with attractive men—"

"That isn't true," Win cried suddenly.

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Advertisement for Not a Blemish skin cream. Includes an illustration of a woman's face and the text: "Not a Blemish... Gouraud's Oriental Cream".