

Old Dutch



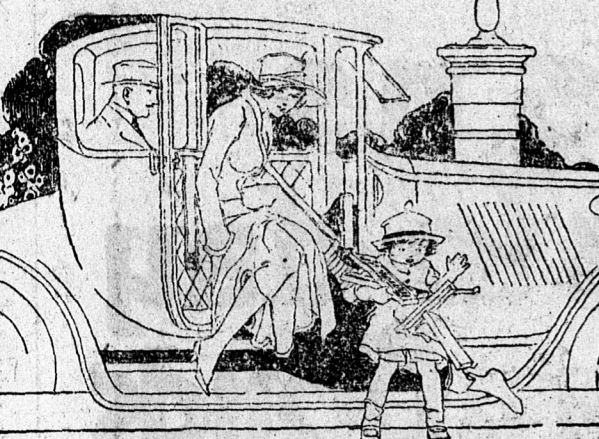
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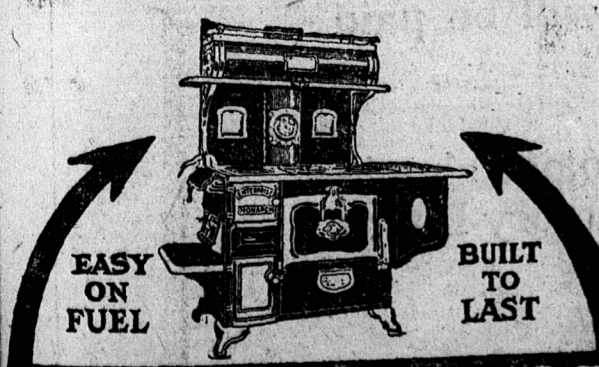
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SANDRA THE JEALOUS

Continued from Page Eleven

I would think he used to say the same to her, and first, I guess that is what would hurt me, not being first. It is a good thing you haven't my disposition. I would have thrown those pictures of Number One out the very first day I came here. "Oh, no you wouldn't!" I replied, thoughts of Everett in my mind. "You think you would, but when it came right down to it you would not want to hurt your husband's feelings. But Rose, you must be careful, I changed the subject. "Everyone knows Walter Kemp, and you will get talked about if you go around with him. They say he only admires one woman or girl until another comes along." "I'll look out for myself as far as he is concerned. Now I must go to dress. I want to look nice. I told him we were going, and he said—she blushed and hesitated. "What did he say that makes you blush so?" "He said he would have to go also and watch his divinity from afar. Wasn't that a lovely thing to say to me?"

"Perhaps—I guess Everett would think it silly." "Of course he would. Everett's old!" Rose ran away then to dress, leaving me with a feeling that I almost hated her. She had made me unhappy first by talking of Leola, calling me Number Two, and then she had expressed what I had felt so many times: that when Everett kissed me or said nice things to me, it was only a repetition of what he had done and said when Leola was with him. I didn't mind so much what she said about the pictures, I had overcome that feeling to a certain extent, and sometimes would forget all about them—until some one called them to my attention.

Then what she had said just before she left me. She had thought that a wonderful compliment of Kemp's—and to tell the truth, so did I. I would have been delighted could I have had one like it paid me. But she had said, without in any way softening her words: "Of course Everett would think such a compliment was silly," and had added: "Everett's old!"

"Everett was old," I thought as I dressed, yet he did not look old in the same way Father did, although they were almost of the same age. He had the wide-awake air of the city man, was always faultlessly groomed, and wholly dignified, was never pedantic or bored appearing when out in company. At dinner, I looked at him and a thrill of pride ran through me at his distinguished appearance, followed by an unaccountable wish that he were young, very young like Alice Sloane's husband, yet that he looked just as he did.

We had not been in our seats at the theatre, but a few minutes when Rose nudged me: "There's Mr. Kemp—over there in that box." Just then he caught sight of us and bowed. Everett turned to see what we were looking at, and caught him bowing. He screwed up the faintest bit, but also acknowledged Kemps greeting by a faint bow.

"I knew he would be here," Rose whispered. "I couldn't see why she should be particularly flattered, because there were two lovely women in the box with him, also two men. Afterward Rose said he was alone because she couldn't be with him. I thought it such nonsense when she had only met him two or three times. But I guess she was right, after events seemed to prove her so. "Isn't he handsome?" she added. "Very," I replied. "Yet I like Everett's style better." Just why I should have said it I do not know—some feeling of standing up for what belongs to me probably.

"He's stunning of course for an old man, especially in evening clothes; but Mr. Kemp is my kind." There it was again! Would Rose ever stop calling Everett an "old man"? If she only knew how I envied older women, I must tell her all about how I felt—that older women, women of Everett's age were so much more entertaining, so much more attractive, than young girls were not to be mentioned in the same class. I would tell her of Irma Barton, how jealous I had been until she had told me of Leola and of herself. Perhaps I could make Rose understand that no longer did Everett seem old to me, and that I would be delighted could I add a few years to my own age so gaining in experience.

We went directly home after the play. I thought Rose was disappointed, but paid no attention. James served us a light supper in the dining room before we retired however. "I would have gone to some restaurant for supper," Everett said, addressing Rose, but Sandra hasn't quite recovered, and I thought she looked tired.

"This is very nice," Rose had replied meekly. My heart was singing for joy. Everett had thought only of me. I had looked tired so he had made his plans because of that. I didn't care now! Rose had said he looked old, or that she liked a young man better. No indeed! My husband suited me. If only I could hold all that he knew, it seemed sometimes that I must bore him. And I had once heard him say he could not endure a person who bored him.

Then, after we had bid Rose goodnight and were talking over the play, one of his emotional surprises came again to me. He caught me in his arms and held me so closely that I was almost breathless. "Tell me you love me," he said tensely, "better than anything older world—even if I am so much older. Tell me, Sandra!" His eyes were glowing, and he kissed me again and again. He was in a mood I did not understand, perhaps because he so seldom gave voice to his feeling—any feeling for me. "I do love you, Everett. Sometimes I am a little afraid of you, but I always love you. I want you to love me too—love me better than

anyone in the world—or out of it." At once he put me from him. My reference to Leola although veiled, had angered him. "Good night, Sandra. I hope you will rest well," was my answer.

CHAPTER XIII. I cried myself to sleep. Why, after one of Everett's unusual emotional considerations of me I should always have to refer to Leola, his first wife. I cannot explain. I had been jealous of Irma whom Everett showed a liking; but far more jealous of the woman who once had occupied my place in his home and in his affections. And Rose's unconsidered speech had made me still more sensitive. For as he held me closely in his arms there had flashed through my mind: "Just as he held her, just so he once told her of his love, just so he kissed her." I indulged in a perfect orgy of self pity before I finally slept.

But in the morning I felt differently. He had held me in his arms, he had told me of his love, and had kissed me. I would not let even the thought that he had given his first wife the same tokens of affection, spoil my happiness. In this mood I went down to breakfast.

Everett looked keenly at me. Did you sleep well, Sandra?" he asked as he gave me my good-morning kiss—so often omitted. "Yes, thank you. After I did get to sleep I didn't wake until Hetty told me my bath was ready." "I am glad, because I have planned a nice afternoon's motor trip and a dinner in the country. I have asked Barrett Edmonds to join us, this last to Rose." After he left, Rose said: "I shall have to get Walter Kemp on the telephone."

"I promised to meet him again this afternoon for tea. Of course I can't now," she looked so disappointed that I asked: "But wouldn't you rather go for the ride and dinner as long as Barrett is to be along, than just to have tea with Mr. Kemp?"

"No indeed! I would rather spend half an hour with him, than hours with anyone else." "Bad as that!" I laughingly replied, thinking Rose was simply voicing one of her usual exaggerations, not dreaming she was in earnest. "Yes, bad as that!" she replied as she went to the telephone. Naturally I heard part of the disjointed conversation—just enough to know that she had impressed one another enough to prefer being together than with others. Rose said: "You know I would!" Then: "Indeed I will, no I'll not let anything prevent. Of course I'd rather be with you," etc. proving plainly that my premise was correct.

I said nothing, however, to Rose. Yet I couldn't help feeling sort of shut out, as if I wasn't wanted. Rose was my guest, yet she was making all sorts of plans which did not include me. I never thought that had it not been for Everett's training in the conventions, I would probably have thought it all right. It was only because he had made me understand what my duties were

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as a social factor, that I understood much of it even silly, it kept recurring to me until we reached the road where we were to dine. Then the perfect smoothness with which we were served and the attention given Everett, consoling me for having an "old man" for a husband. The dinner was perfection. Everett had ordered it by telephone so no ugly paper menus were passed around and there were no long waits between the courses. The music was delightful. Everett danced with both Rose and me, and smilingly told me that for once he would waive his objections to my dancing in public with anyone but him. So Barrett and I had a wonderful dance. If Barrett had love to me—a little, —it did not make it the less enjoyable. I had heard that open confession is good for the soul. So I am confessing that I liked the admiration, the compliments, Barrett Edmonds gave me that evening.



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