

JUST A GIRL

BY JANE PHELPS

A LUNCHEON FATHER DISAPPROVED

Chapter 16.

We had lunch at Delmonico's. Mother had made me promise only to lunch at certain places unless she were along. She didn't mean with me but with said girls. She didn't believe in girls lurching unchaperoned when there was a man along. But I didn't see how I could very well refuse when Claudia had accepted so enthusiastically. Anyway, Mr. Sanders was so old, so much older than we were, she could not possibly object. So I went along with an early conscience.

I guess experience does count. Mr. Sanders ordered the most delicious luncheon. He seemed to know just what I liked. The waiters all seemed to know him, and were most assiduous in their attentions. It was a different attention than waiters gave the young men, even men like Jack Pryor who gave scandalous sums as tips. It was as if they respected Mr. Sanders' judgment.

We had a lovely time. He bought us both great bunches of violets, and when we had finished and were strolling down the Avenue, he brought us each a box of bonbons. Then he thanked us so nicely for giving him our time. You would naturally have thought we would have been the ones to say "thank you," not he. But he made us feel we had done him a real favor.

When I spoke of it after we had left him, Claudia said: "I suppose he's had lots of practice." "What do you mean?" "In pleasing girls. He must be 35 years old, and he hasn't married yet, and is always with some woman or girl. I guess he has had plenty of chances to learn what pleases us."

"I think he is lovely!" I enthused. "So do I!" I told mother we lunched with Mr. Sanders, of course. At first she didn't look one bit pleased. But when I told her all about it, she laughed and said: "I expect you and Claudia seemed like two little girls to him. But I would rather you didn't do it again."

Dad frowned when he heard about it. "He's altogether too old for you, Zena. Stick to the boys when you want an escort. I don't like the idea of a man as old as Sanders running around with two children like you and Claudia. I am sure Mr. Shepard would feel just as I do."

It was so unusual for Dad to express himself so strongly that I was puzzled and asked him if he had anything against Mr. Sanders. "Don't you like him?" I queried, when he told me he had nothing at all against him. "Yes, Sanders is all right. But he's too old for you. As I said, stick to the boys." I was sure by Dad's voice there was some reason he couldn't explain to me, but I said no more. I was sorry I couldn't go again—if Mr. Sanders asked me. We had had such a nice time.

I told Claudia what Dad had said. "My father was real cross about it, too," she confessed. "He said almost exactly what your father did, that Mr. Sanders was too old for me, and that he didn't like it. And he made me promise that I wouldn't go anywhere with him again."

I guess they have something against him. Maybe he has been awfully gay." I suggested, almost whispering as the thought came. "That might be so. Perhaps he has deceived some girl or something and they know it. It would be just like Dad to keep it to him."

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self. I think we are old enough to be told WHY we shouldn't do things, don't you, Zena?" "Indeed! do!" My answer was emphatic, altho, to be honest, I never had given the subject a single thought. "I shall be 20 in 10 months." "And I in seven." "Twenty is old enough to know things," I mused. "I think 19 is. I'll bet lots of girls younger than we are, are a great deal wiser in many ways." "Never mind, Claudia." It was Mother's laughing voice, "you will have plenty of time to grow wiser. Don't despair."

BREAKFAST CHATS

Chapter 17

For a day or two after Claudia had told me of her letter, I was quite pensive. I wondered if it would be breaking faith with Mother if I sent Kenneth a message. Finally I asked Dad.

"I don't think it would be wrong, but I wouldn't do it, dear. Mother trusts you. A year isn't long in passing. If he is a man of his word, he'll write when his probation expires." That was the way Dad always talked to me—so sensibly, and as if I were sensible, too. It made me want to please him. I imagine he expected some message. For when Claudia told me she had received another letter from him, she said nothing of any message to me, so I concluded he hadn't sent any because I had not noticed the other one.

I would think I had almost forgotten about him when something would come up to make me think of her, and to think of him. One day Edith Wren said to me: "Isn't it strange that that cousin of Claudia's, that Kenneth Lawrence, doesn't write to any of us? I was sure he would. I know she felt pained by her tone. I didn't tell her he had written to me until Mother forbade the correspondence. It was none of her affair. But for days after I thought of Kenneth, and couldn't help a little feeling of joy that he had not neglected me."

I never had told even Claudia about his letters. "I was going out a lot—too much, Dad said. But Mother told him it was hard to regulate a debutante. I had so many invitations, and most of them ones that Mother wanted me to accept. She was stern about my rest though, and made me sleep as late as I could mornings, until I revolted."

I had always eaten breakfast with Father when I was at home. He loved to have me. I told Mother I would go back to bed if she insisted, but that I was going to eat with Dad. In fact the first morning I joined him again showed how pleased he was, so I never failed to be down when he was.

As I look back, I think of those morning talks. Dad and I had "breakfast chats" he called them—were the best part of my days. He was sometimes serious, sometimes gay; but always kept me interested. After breakfast he would run up the stairs like a boy to kiss Mother good-bye. I always waited in the hall to help him with his coat if it was cold weather, to hand him his hat and stick at other times. Then I would go to the door and watch him until the car turned the corner.

Mother used to laugh at us. "You two are just like a bride and groom," she would say. But I knew she was pleased to have me with Dad. Once she said: "He's the very best man I ever have known."

I know now that he was a very unusual man. Not many men of large affairs would have devoted so much time to a daughter as he did to me or been so thoughtful of all that pertained to his home life. "His refuge," he called our home. In February we all went to Palm Beach. Edith seemed to grow young again. We bathed and sailed and danced, and I never had a dull minute. Mr. Sanders was there—I found out he went for a month every year. He seemed to be continually popping up wherever we went. But at the end of the week I didn't care. I danced with him occasionally, and once or twice he joined us on the beach. I had no idea he was falling in love with me, so I was just a bit startled when Dad told me he had asked permission to ask me to marry him.

"What did you tell him? I asked excitedly. "I told him you were altogether too young to marry anyone. "What did he say then? Don't make me drag it out of you, Dad! Don't you know any girl would be excited over her first real proposal?" "Your first! What about young Pryor?" "Oh, Jack doesn't count! When

he can't think of anything else to do, he proposes to me." I wondered how Dad knew about Jack. I never had told him. He laughed heartily; then he said: "I told Sanders you would have to decide WHO you would marry. So don't be surprised if he says something to you." Then seriously although he smiled at me: "Remember, dear, I am not ready to lose my little companion for some time yet."

"You won't have to; so don't worry!" Dad looked somewhat happier when I said that, and kissed me. HORACE SAUNDERS PROPOSES

Chapter 18

"Zena, I love you! Do you, can you, care enough for me to be my wife? Wait—I am older than you are, but not too old to make you happy if you will trust me," Horace Sanders said to me. This was more as the men proposed in books than Jack Pryor's taking it for granted. I suddenly felt very solemn—very grown up. "Oh, I don't think I shall ever marry! Not for years and years!" I almost laughed as it flashed over me that I had used the very same words I had when Jack asked when I was going to marry him.

"I know that perhaps you feel that way now, but won't you let me try to make you love me. I feel sure I can." "Love goes where it is sent," sentimentally I replied. "But you don't dislike me?" "Oh, no, I couldn't dislike anyone who danced as divinely as you do, and who is so kind and thoughtful. But liking isn't love, I added with all the wisdom of my 19 years. "Will you try to love me?" "There's no use in trying—when you don't want to do a thing. And I don't want to get married."

"I shall not give up hope that I may make you change your mind." "I shan't! So don't hope." He said a lot more to me about loving me, not being willing to give me up et cetera. It was really thrilling, so like I had always supposed men talked—just as they did in fiction. Finally he left me and I rushed in to Dad: "Well, that's over!" I exclaimed. "What?" "That proposal—Mr. Sanders'." "Um—what did you tell him, if I may ask?" "Of course you may ask!" I climbed onto his knee. "He said he would teach me to love him, and a lot of things. But I told him love went where it was sent; that I liked him because he danced so divinely, and was nice to me, but I didn't love him, and didn't want to get married."

"What did he say to all that?" Dad's eyes were twinkling. "He said he wouldn't give up hope. It was just like it is in the novels—the proposal, I mean. They always end up by saying they won't give up hope, you know."

"What did you say, then?" "I told him I wouldn't change my mind, so not to hope." Dad asked no more questions, but I knew by the way his arm tightened around me that he was pleased.

"So you refused Horace Sanders last night?" Mother said to me. "Yes," I felt quite important, yet a little bit embarrassed, too. "He is a very rich man, and not very old. Sometimes a man who is a few years older than a girl, makes a very good husband."

"But I don't want a husband." "You will some day." Mother said nothing more to me, but I heard her talking to Dad about Mr. Sanders.

He is desirable in every way except his age, she said. "I am very, glad Zena cares nothing for him," Dad returned. "I don't believe in such marriages. Men and women have to grow old together if they are to be happy."

We left Palm Beach in a few days. Mr. Sanders was very nice and assured me once more that he would not give up hope. I had a great surprise when I reached home. Edith Wren called up and asked me to come right over, that she had something to tell me and couldn't wait.

I felt suddenly frightened. Had Kenneth Lawrence written her? Perhaps he had asked her to marry him. I almost ran the two blocks to her house, and was all out of breath when I got there. "What is it? I am dying with curiosity!" I declared. "He says he is tired waiting for you, so he asked me to marry him."

"He—who?" Thoughts of Kenneth made me feel faint. "See! She held up her finger, on which sparkled a big solitaire."

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EDITH'S ENGAGEMENT

Chapter 19

I was awfully glad it was Gregory Stuart whom Edith was going to marry. It would insure her remaining in New York, and while I didn't care for Gregory like Edith did, yet I liked him very much. "Edith is older than you are," Dad said when I told him she was engaged.

"Only a little over a year." "It makes a difference what you are talking about how long a year seems to you, doesn't it?" roughly I asked Dad. "I pretended not to know what he meant. But I know he referred to the time when I thought a year a long time to wait for a letter from Kenneth Lawrence."

Edith being engaged made things in our set even more lively. Of course we all gave parties for her; then we gave her a linen shower, and teas without number it seemed to me. She was the second girl in our crowd to marry—Rose Hartman had been the first, and Rose was 22. Of course Edith wasn't married yet, but I think it is for some time, but being engaged was very exciting and interesting, not only to Edith, but to all the rest of us.

I wonder why it is that being engaged seems to make a girl so attractive. It is because she is for a long time found, her so? Not that Edith wasn't attractive before she became engaged, but it seemed to add immensely to her popularity. I guess it makes one feel important too. "Oh, well, I suppose I shall also become engaged some day after a long, long time. I would hate to be an old maid—although it isn't quite so awful now, that they call them 'bachelor girls.' If you believe the newspapers, and some of the stories you read, some of them are quite happy. But I think it is rather strange that they nearly all talk about men. I know because I belong to some charitable societies run by them. And not one of them—but if you listen—you can hear talking of the 'sterner sex.'"

Mother was awfully interested in Edith's engagement. "I think it is a very suitable match. Gregory is a fine boy, and has everything to make a girl happy."

"Meaning money?" I broke in. "Yes, in a way. His prospects are very good. His father's business will undoubtedly come to him, as he is an only son. Then his mother was a Carew, and his private fortune also. I consider Edith has done extremely well."

"Gregory is nice, Mother. But he'll never attend to business like his father does. He is too fond of dancing."

"He won't have to. His father doesn't either, only the older man has the work habit—like your father—and doesn't know how to stop. As for Gregory's dancing, he'll not care so much for it when he is older. I notice men, as a rule, do not."

"Oh, I don't object to a man dancing! I only thought he was more of a dance fad than most of the boys. Why, I came near marrying Mr. Sanders because he danced so wonderfully. Far be it from me to say anything against dancing."

"Don't use slang, Zena. It is bad form." I used to annoy Mother dreadfully by saying such things, and I really tried not to. But some of the girls were so careless and after being with them and the boys, I found myself almost unconsciously repeating any new expression I heard.

"Well, Zena, one of your prospects is gone I hear," Dad said when Mother told him of Edith's engagement. "Yes, Dad, isn't it?" "Very, I hope you will be able to bear up under it."

"I'll try." "Gregory is a nice boy if he is a bit spoiled. I think he will make Edith happy."

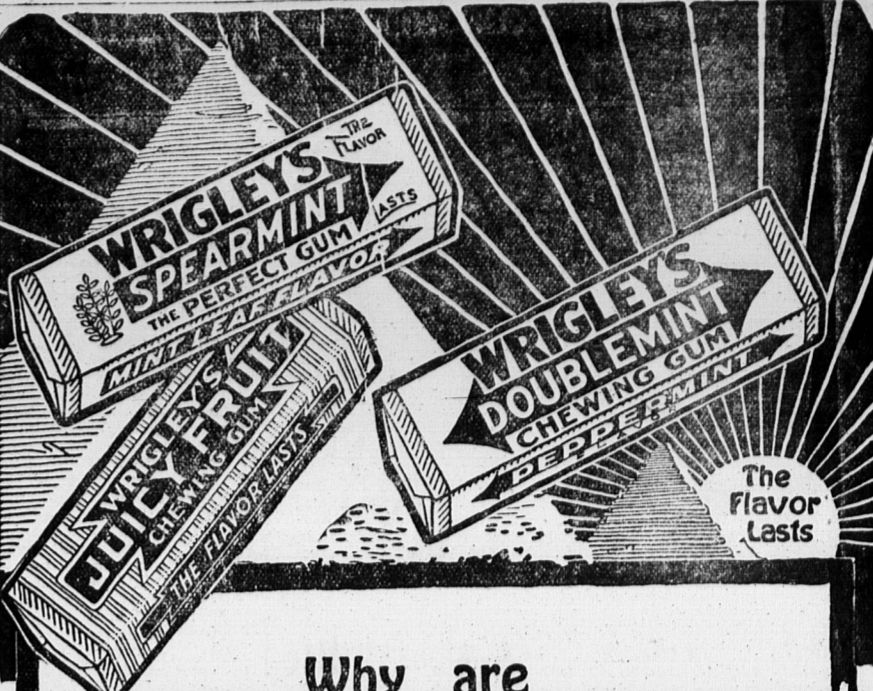
"That was the difference between Dad and Mother—if you know what I mean. Mother always thought of material things in those days; while Dad never spoke of them. He thought being good, doing right, and happiness, worth more than anything else. Mother thought of these things, too—but afterward. She couldn't help it though. She had been brought up in society."

Tomorrow—Zena's Mother (Dom. Press Special).

PARIS, May 27.—A Serbian delegation today announced that the Adriatic negotiations would be resumed in Paris, probably next week. It was said that Victoria Sceltoia, Italian Foreign Minister would come to Paris to attend the sessions.

(Special to The Guardian.) MELBOURNE, May 27.—The Prince of Wales, who sailed from New Zealand on board the battle cruiser Renown, May 21, arrived in Melbourne today. The Prince was warmly welcomed. A fleet met the Renown while airplanes directed over the harbor. Three thousand pigeons were released in the midst of cheering crowds as the Prince debarked and drove through the crowded streets. The railway and tramway strikes which it had been threatened would be called during the visit of the Prince were averted through a compromise.

(Special to The Guardian.) LONDON, May 27.—The ebb and flow of railway workers from Italy to Canada, which has been at a complete standstill during the past five years of war conditions, will shortly recommence. The Canadian Pacific Ocean service is refitting the steamship Pretorian with a view, it is understood to using her to convey this class of unskilled labor from Italy. Railway officials say that the Canadian who has never been fond of pick and shovel work is even less enamored of it since his experience of trench digging during the war. As a result, repair and construction work has been held up for lack of



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