

Karin Ellis

(By Michael Jackson)
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National Magazines

CHAPTER XVIII

It was the second Sunday in October. The day had begun with low scudding clouds and a fresh damp wind that was chill to the bones. Now, in the late afternoon, the autumnal rain was suddenly here, slanting strong and sharp, denuding the trees and making sudden the reddish leaves on the ground.

Emily left her place at the large fire and walked to the window to the window look out over the fairway. Far away, through the sickness of the rain, she could see four figures grouped under the shelter of a tree. One of them, she knew was Billy.

She turned and walked back across the empty room to the fireplace, stretching out in the chair before it, her fingers toward the flames that licked about the giant logs. There was a wrinkle between her brows. She was not happy.

She thought of those last two months, August and September—hers and Billy's. During those months she had, for the first time in her life, taken the days as they came, with no thought of tomorrow. But now, tomorrow was here.

After that first night, she and Billy had begun, at first, to see each other once or twice a week; then toward the end, they were together every evening. They would drive to quiet little inns where they would meet no one whom Billy might know. They lived in a world of their own. There were no other people. No need of them. Once, lingering at the table in an out-of-the-way inn, Emily said to Billy, "Please don't feel you have to see me every day."

"I don't know, Karin, I want to." "I know darling, but I hate to see you giving up your card night and everything. You must be sick to death of me."

"Oh, you can't stand the sight of you." "Well, anyway, but you know—"

"Sure, Karin, but you only have so long to be together." And they were quiet, thinking about that— their time together. Billy lit a cigarette and gave one to Emily. They began to talk, idly and slowly. "I imagine you were an awfully cute little girl with your gray eyes and your hair all mussed up."

"Sure, I was the cutest thing in town." "I imagine you really were, though, Billy. The girls must have loved you. Did they chase you all over town?"

"No. Funny thing was, I never thought anything about girls." Billy paused to snub his cigarette in the ash tray. "I went to dancing school and I used to carry Margie's shoes in a little cloth sack. But I never thought about girls. Baseball and cars, that's all I like. I could drive when I was fourteen."

"Did you take Margie for drives?" "Not at first. I was too used to her. I never even thought about her till I saw her one summer coming back from Purdue. Look, Karin, you know how I feel about you, don't you?"

"I don't know. How do you?" "I mean, well, all this talk about Margie, I know it sounds funny in this day and age, but you're the first woman, the only one—"

"There's Margie?" "I know, but you believe me, don't you?" "Yes, Billy. I believe you. I'm sorry."

"I don't know how to say it exactly. You're the most exciting thing I've ever known. You're a swell person, Karin. We do have good times, don't we?"

"Well, our time's almost up." "Let's not talk about it." And so they would not talk of it, though it lay constantly in their thoughts, in back of their words. The knowledge that there was a definite time awaiting them, gave sharpness and immediacy to all their moments.

Looking into the fire now, Emily realized that the whole thing had been curiously innocent. She was filled with a sudden wretched fullness. But she was without guilt.

Still, no matter what the summer had been, to Billy or to herself, it was finished. And she might as well tie a blue ribbon around it, put it away, and bring it out of the treasure box in her old age when she would be able to view it clearly. Now, she was confused by its nearness.

She threw her cigarette into the fireplace as she felt a sudden gust of cold, wet wind on her back. Turning, she saw B.A. and Billy standing just inside the door, rain-splattered and laughing. They were panting from their run to shelter. Billy closed the door.

Billy and Emily were elaborately casual. "Hi, Karin." "Hello, Billy." Emily made room for them on the couch, but Billy backed to the fireplace, stretching his hands behind him. He was wearing gray slacks and a chambray windbreaker whose shoulders were dark with rain.

"I could stand a drink," B.A. declared. "Would you like a slug, Karin?" "I don't think so. I've got to pack and go."

When B.A. got for the locker room, Billy was suddenly stiff and ill at ease. He avoided Emily's eyes and cleared his throat. "Aren't you going to wait till morning?" he asked.

"No, I'm taking the five-ten," he said finally, to relieve him.



Mr. Clifford Gallant, son of Mrs. and the late Mr. Ames Gallant of Oyster Bed Bridge, who celebrated his 23rd birthday in England on Aug. 27th.

He was obviously distressed. "Oh," he said. "He saw that they were alone. Look, Karin, I've got to talk to you."

"Must you?" "Yes. It's like this, Karin. I won't be able to see you for a few days and there are some things I want to say to you."

His eyes pleaded with her. He needed assistance to go on; sympathy and understanding. Emily gave none. He wanted to break with no ill feeling. She could see that. And, in truth, there was no reason for all feeling. They had never talked of undying love. But bitterness was strong in her, and she thought, if he says, "We'll always be friends, won't we?" I'll push him right into that fire!

She began to call to someone down the hall. She rose, Billy's eyes on her. "I must dash," she said. Billy took her wrist in a strong grip. "Don't do that," Emily said evenly. She walked away from him feeling his eyes on her back.

She stood, noticing now that the window was open and the rain was coming in, splashing the curtain. Billy was beside her as she closed the window. She felt his arm about her. "Please, Billy!" She freed herself, ashamed that her voice was strained. "Now go away."

He made no move to leave. She tried to ignore him as he went to a chair, sitting uncomfortably, watching her. She moved from the dresser to the valves in measured strides, working as if her task required ceaseless concentration.

Once, looking at Billy, she saw that he was fussed. He said, "I'll drive you to the station." "Don't bother. I've told Ralph to get me a cab."

"No, I'll take you." "I'd rather take the cab. Really I would."

Billy stood and came to Emily who was snapping a grip. "Why do we go on like this?" he said.

"Please, Billy, go away. I have things to do." He was suddenly stubborn. "I'm driving you to the station."

"All right, all right. But go sit in the corner." Fastening the valve, Emily caught her finger. She was furious. She kicked the bed.

Billy came to her side, saying, "Hurt yourself, baby?" She turned on him. "Of course I hurt myself, you ok. If you hadn't been brooding me—" her eyes brimmed with tears and she rolled herself away from him, suddenly filled with rage. "Are you just going to sit there," Emily asked, "or are you going to take the luggage?"

They were silent walking down the stairs and on the porch Billy said, "Wait here. I'll bring the car around."

(To Be Continued)

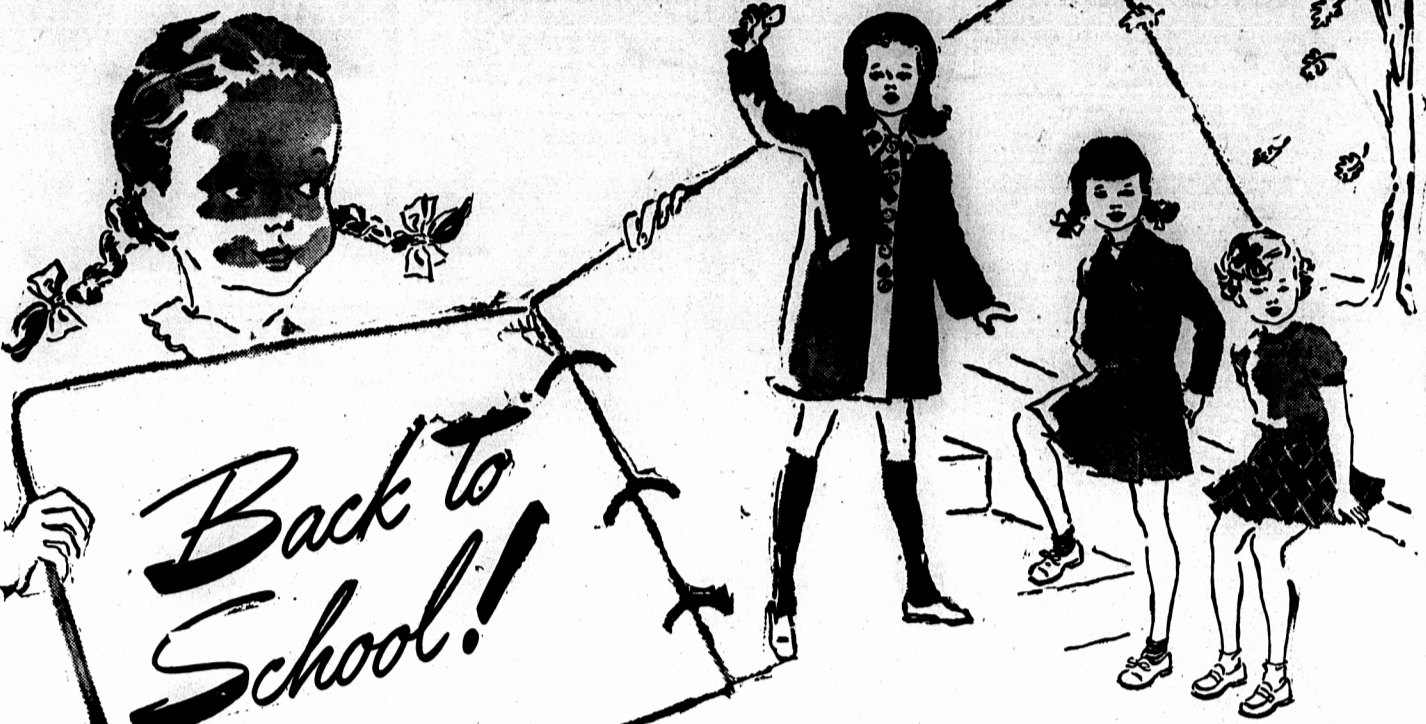
Expect Big-Three Get-Together Soon

LONDON, Aug. 31 — (AP) — An early British-American-Russian war conference was viewed in London tonight as a virtual certainty as a result of Prime Minister Churchill's statement in a broadcast from Canada today that such a meeting was necessary and in London "groundwork" conferences already were under way.

Ivan Maisky, former Soviet ambassador to London and now vice-commissioner of Foreign Affairs, was reported to have placed before Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden this morning a draft of Russia's war and post-war aims, to determine whether there is sufficient basis for a profitable "big three" get-together.

Eden it was understood, then conferred with Joseph P. Winant, United States ambassador, to give him full details of the Soviet position as outlined by Maisky for communication to Washington.

Both Maisky and Winant also were believed to have been given first-hand reports on the decisions made at the Quebec conference, which Eden attended.



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HINTS ON ETIQUETTE

Sit up straight at the table. Don't slump with your elbows spread out on the table.

BEETS WITH BACON

To make a superb dish out of cooked beets add a little diced bacon that's been browned with

diced celery, and to add flavor to pot roasts, stews or soups, just put fresh celery leaves in a paper sack and place on radiator or in a cooling oven to dry, then use in soup.

Do not pick sweet corn until you are about to use it to get it at its very best flavour. As soon as sweet corn is picked, its sugar be-

BRINGING UP FATHER

MOTHER: WHY DON'T YOUR SISTER SET A DATE FOR HER WEDDING? I AM GETTING WEARY OF WAITING!!

I DON'T BLAME YOU— BUT WHEN HE IS DELICIOUS HE WANTS TO SET THE DATE— AND WHEN HE IS WELL— HE WANTS TO PUT IT OFF!!

AM WEARY OF WAITING— TOO!! AM GOING TO GET MOTHER'S SISTER TO SET THE DATE!!

OH— YES— WE ARE GOON TO BE MARRIED— I'M WAITING FOR HIM TO SET THE DATE!!

WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM RIGHT NOW AND HAVE IT SETTLED!!

I CAN'T— HE'S BEEN UNCONSCIOUS ALL DAY!!



By George McManus

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