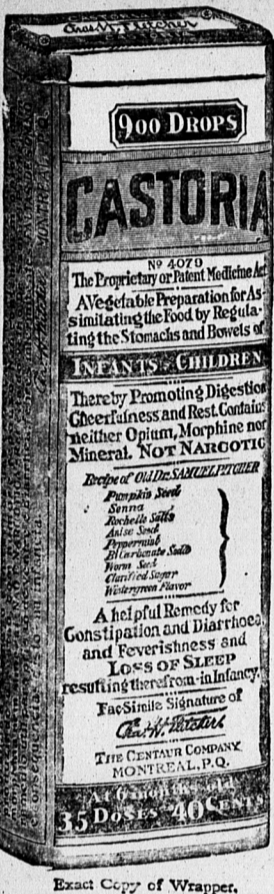


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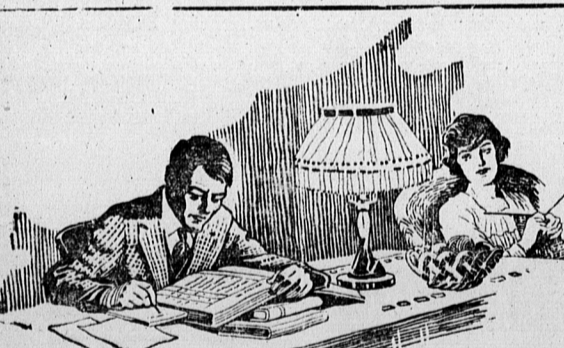
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## THE WOMAN HE MARRIED

BY JANE PHELPS

Chapter 113

Dick had written an ambitious story, that was what he called it. It was longer, the theme more serious than any he had yet sent to a publisher. He had written it either locked in his study, or when he sat with him quietly mending, or designing motifs for his decorative work. Not once had Juanita entered the study when he was working upon it, although she came over frequently. Always I told her Dick could not be disturbed, and often he would unconsciously hear me out by coming into the living room or on the porch for a moment and then excusing himself.

"Can't I help, Dick?" she asked one day, annoyed I think because of being shut out. "No, thank you, Juanita. I am going alone this time. Perhaps the next thing I write I will need you." The look he gave her went far to spoil any pleasure I may have had sensed in his refusal to allow her to assist him. He was still enamored of her—even if not so completely as before.

"At times my heart failed me—times like these when I saw he was still influenced by his feeling for her. Then I would wonder if it was worth while? If the unwilling faith and loyalty of any man was worth the effort I was making? Then my love would surge over me, and I would be willing to do anything, suffer anything, if only I could win back his love.

"Not that Dick was ever actively unkind, he wasn't. But his indifference hurt me cruelly. Often he seemed unaware of my existence, and he had entirely stopped using any loving words or giving me the caresses he used to lavish upon me.

To be sure, he kissed me occasionally when I went out in the morning to be gone all day, but I doubt if he would have done even that had I not shown I expected it.

And I knew the reason. It was not Dick's nature to be hypocritical. He gave his caresses, his kisses, to Juanita—he would not give to two women.

One day Juanita said to me: "I suppose the purpose of our lives is to get all the happiness out of congenial companionship where ever we can find it. That is why marriage is so often a mistake."

I was so astonished at her remark that I audibly caught my breath. Until then Juanita never had expressed such sentiments.

"Is marriage so often a mistake?" I asked after a bit. "Naturally, the first wild thrill passes, but isn't there something comes in its stead, something more stable?"

"Is any man satisfied with what you call 'something more stable'?"

I rather wondered why she said "man"? Had I been asking the question I would have substituted, woman. I scarcely knew how to answer her, yet I had an idea that she meant the companionship between herself and Dick—that it was right for them to get all they could out of it, regardless of me.

"Yes, I think so," I finally replied. "Take Dick now—he is temperamental, fond of anyone or anything which interests him. But it doesn't last. He always tells me of his feeling for this one and that one, even though he appears to be fond of them."

"You mean—that he tells you what he does? Always?"

"Not only what he does, but what he says and thinks," I exaggerated.

The peculiar light in Juanita's eyes told me I had hit her in some way. I had meant to, and was delighted. So I went on.

"Of course, Juanita, I couldn't talk to everyone like this, but you and Dick have been so chummy that I feel I can say anything to you and that you will understand. Especially as you and I have been equally as chummy."

"He is horribly disappointed that our book wasn't a success," she changed the subject.

"Yes, you see you and he weren't fitted to work together, or he would have perceived the discrepancies in your ideas. Naturally he was disappointed. But he has pulled himself together and we must help him all we can."

"Help him—how?"

"By leaving him undisturbed. He hates to tell you himself, Juanita, for fear you will feel hurt, so he leaves it to me. I know you are far too sensible to feel offended if he refuses to leave the study when you come over."

"Oh, certainly! I am sure I don't want to intrude!"

"I knew you would feel like that," I replied, and a little while afterwards I told Dick that Juanita said she didn't expect him to leave his work when she came. Then I added:

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Kessock, Sask.—"My mother has taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and upon learning of my troubles advised me to try it, as I seemed all run down after the flu and had lost my appetite very bad. I have taken Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Lydia E. Pinkham's Blood Medicine and used the Sensitive Wash also. Dr. Brown's Capsules and Prescription and am much better in every way. I am willing for you to use my letter as a testimonial as I recommend your medicines." Mrs. IRMA NELSON, Kessock, Sask.

It is not always in business that a woman is forced to give up her work on account of ill health. It is quite as often the woman who does her own work at home. When backaches and headaches drive out all ambition, when that bearing-down sensation attacks you, when you are nervous and blue, the one great help for such ailments is Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

The door was open and I walked in. Naturally I intended to make my presence known at once, but my name, then Dick's, in Juanita's husky voice halted me. Then old Mary, Juanita's nurse, who had lived with her all her life, also spoke of Dick.

Juanita had laughed at me, calling me a simpleton, and had declared she could take Dick from me any time she wished. I thought with a shiver that eavesdroppers never are supposed to hear anything good of themselves; Surely I had not.

I went back to the door and rapped loudly. Juanita came to the door and her surprise at seeing me so early in the morning gave me the opportunity to recover my composure. I told her my errand, but refused to wait until she could look up some data.

"Dick will run over and talk it over with you," I said as I hurried away.

"Well, what did you find out for me?" Dick asked.

"Nothing. I only saw Juanita for a moment. She will look it up for you, then you can go over and get the result."

"Very well."

I longed to tell him of the conversation I had overheard, but did not know just how to make him understand that it was not jealousy, or anger at the way she had spoken of me, that instigated me. So, as usual, I told him nothing.

In some way I must make Juanita herself show him. Nothing else would convince him of her true character as I now saw it. But I had no idea of sitting down calmly to wait. I would force her hand in some way.

That illuminating moment when I listened to Juanita and Mary had destroyed the last remnants of any feeling that I was doing wrong to try anything in my power to break the friendship between Dick and Juanita. I now would feel no self-reproach no matter if I deceived them both. Before this I had rather hated myself at times for the part I was playing, and at times had it been given up in despair had it not been for thoughts of Junior—what it might mean to him his future.

I wanted so to be happy with Dick, so wanted him to be happy with me. It would be a sort of reparation for those years in New York if now I could make him contented. I longed also for his respect. I longed to have once lost and only won again through heart break for us both.

Through my unhappiness ran just a faint gleam of hope. Had Juanita felt that Dick was becoming colder would she have spoken so bitterly of me, been so anxious to show Mary—herself—that she could take him from me? The more I thought over what I had overheard, the more comfort I took in the thought.

Would he grieve when he found out the sort of woman Juanita was? Or would the knowledge kill all affection for her?

In most stories I have read where a wife suspected her husband of disloyalty, she had spent time weeping, wrailing at fate, or attempting to get even or make him jealous by introducing the other man. I did none of these things, and am inclined to think not many tactful or proud women do.

Of course I had my work which took much of my time. I believe that I was much happier to have an interest in life aside from my household than I could possibly have been without it. And many other women whom the war had made economically independent felt as I did.

I loved Dick devotedly, perhaps more than ever before. But I realized, that weeping, or being disagreeable would avail me little if anything.

"I must fight it out in my own way," I said to myself. "No one can help me."

It seemed such a monstrous thing that a woman with whom I had been friendly should deliberately try to wreck my life and Dick's just to prove her fascination. I had not realized there were such women in the world—women not immoral, but wickedly unamoral. Such a woman was Juanita.

NAN DETERMINES TO ELIMINATE JEALOUSY

Chapter 115

The serious story that Dick had

written, without either advice or help from Juanita, was accepted and liberally paid for. It gave me another chance to say "I told you so," but remembering that women were so often accused of using that expression I desisted. To my surprise Dick mentioned it himself.

"You were right, Nan! My work is better when I go it alone." Then, as if not wishing to disparage Juanita, he added: "Of course Juanita is talented, and in another type of story might prove of great assistance."

"She might—but I wouldn't risk another failure in trying her out," I returned as casually as I could.

Dick made no reply, but soon after I saw him leave the house by going to tell Juanita of his success.

"I don't care! She didn't help him!" I declared childishly, then to show that I did care, I cried a little.

Two hours later, when Dick came back, he had the data for his contemplated Indian stories, but he evinced so little interest therein that I said nothing.

"What's the matter? Aren't you going to do the articles?"

"No—I don't think so. Not now."

"But why? I thought you were keen about getting them out?"

"I was—perhaps. But Juanita wants to collaborate with me and I don't feel like doing so on this new idea."

"At any other time, or with anyone else, I should have laughed because of the expression 'man stuff', but now I only smiled and replied:

"I am glad you see it that way. I have felt so all along. Not many women are capable of writing interesting articles on such a subject. I hope you didn't quarrel with her about it."

I had said exactly the opposite to what I felt. I did hope they had quarrelled. I would have been delighted had so simple a thing terminated their friendship.

"No. We didn't quarrel. That would have been silly. But Juanita felt she could not go on to conceal it, and I made things worse by refusing to join a camping party she is talking of making up."

"I hadn't the time."

I longed to ask if I had been included in the invitation, but refrained. What difference did it make so long as he had refused? Besides it might show up my jealousy—something I was more determined than ever not to do. I would employ strategy—anything that would help me. But any show of jealousy would only defeat what I had set out to do. Of that I was sure.

"What are you going to do now?" I questioned. "Another story?"

"Yes," Juanita suggested. "She has a very good idea, something I never have seen used. We will collaborate on it, this time using her name as well as mine."

"You mean if you sell it?"

"Naturally."

"I hope you won't be disappointed in getting it over."

"Why do you say that? That way?"

"I was only thinking that perhaps it would be like the book, spoiled by having two people work upon it. You know I think you do better work alone. And it seems the editors think so too. However, I hope it will be a 'go'."

Dick needed a bit of proof because of my remark, and I hastened to add: "You see, Dick, dear, I have faith in you—naturally. Most women do believe in the men they love, I guess. But I am not so sure of Juanita. Her work is more amateurish. She's very bright but along different lines."

"I had seen Dick frown so hard, as usual, praised Juanita after disparaging her. "Well, wait and see. It is her plot anyway," he said.

"Now, once again, hours of unhappiness commenced for me. Juanita was over every day, and often all day, closeted with Dick in his study. Her manner to me too had undergone a change, a disagreeable one, hard to ignore."

It was as if she said: "You see! I can make him do as I please."

Chapter 116

It sounds terribly heartless but when the story upon which Dick and Juanita had spent weeks of work was returned by no less than five editors I could not help feeling glad although I took great pains not to show it. In fact I was most sympathetic.

It had a peculiar effect upon Dick. The rejection of any work invariably depressed him for a time but this turn down seemed to dishearten him altogether. One editor had said the plot was a "good one, but the treatment childish, uninteresting, ordinary." It was the same editor who had bought the previous story, which in a way accounted for Dick's disappointment.

"Do cheer up, Dick! You can't expect to write successes all the time," I tried to encourage. He had been either very silent, or cross as could be for days past. "You have

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It spoken a pleasant word to me since that story came back. Don't take it so to heart." "I guess I am pretty much of a grouch, Nan. But I somehow felt so sure Hapgood would take it. He spoke so very flatteringly in his letter about the other one." Hapgood was the name of the editor who had taken Dick's serious story.

"You wrote that alone." I could not help the reminder.

"I know!—and, Nan, I guess I shall have to write alone. It worries me to have to tell Juanita so. Especially since she has given me several ideas that I am sure I can work up."

Dick went over to Juanita's room after our talk. He came back smiling.

"Well?" I asked, wondering.

"She was a brick. When I told her that I would have to work out my ideas in my own way that she could not collaborate, she was a bully. She could, and even said she would efface herself permanently if necessary to my success."

I could not help thinking how simple Dick was. He repeated things Juanita said to him with all the naivete of a child. Yet I knew she still held a strong attraction for him one not easily to be broken.

At times it seemed as if my punishment for what I had done in those past years was more than I could bear—even more than I deserved. I married him. Full of life and fun. Honest, faithful. Then I would think of him as he was when we left New York—broken old, ready willing to pass out of his own life because of the ruin of his own life—the ruin I had wrought. It was during such reminiscing that I felt no punishment was undeserved, no sacrifice too great for him.

I was doing remarkably well in my work. I now had sizable bank account and often refused to contract for homes that would take me away from Dick, although he was so busy writing (and spending his leisure hours with Juanita) that I am not at all sure he would have missed me had I. We had a capable maid, and Junior was doing well in school. Had Dick loved me—or had I been able to believe he did, I should have been perfectly happy.

One day we had a talk about our finances. He had insisted upon running the house, of course. He was making money now—had sold two stories since he refused to work with Juanita—and he declared I had done my share while he was getting "whipped into harness."

"But Dick, I want to keep on."

I pleaded, "You see, dear, it is perhaps a woman's place to keep the home, of course. He was making money now—had sold two stories since he refused to work with Juanita—and he declared I had done my share while he was getting "whipped into harness."

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### Wall Street Bomb Mystery Renewed

NEW-ORLEANS, Mar. 23.—Five men said to be wanted in connection with the Wall Street bomb explosion last year were brought here today from Rio De Janeiro on board the shipping steamer Rushville. The men are sailors and give their nationality as German or Russian. They are shackled hand

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