

SANDRA THE JEALOUS

By Jane Phelps

for an answer I almost flew up stairs.

I had been talking to Rose about half an hour before. We had separated to dress for dinner. She was not in her room, neither was there anything to show where she had gone.

"She's not there. I can't imagine where she has gone." "We'll have dinner. She'll probably turn up in a few moments."

But although we carried over each course, we finished dinner and still she had not come.

"You don't suppose anything has happened to her?" I asked Everett, loath to believe she would go to meet Walter Kemp at night when she knew her absence would be known to Everett.

"No, she has met someone and been detained. Don't worry about her. It is only eight o'clock, and scarcely dark. She wouldn't be at Alice Sloane's, would she?"

"No—I don't think so—we made our party call yesterday. I'll talk up however and ask, if you think best."

Before Everett could answer the door bell rang. James brought a message for me.

"The boy said there was no answer." "Probably from Miss Grandon," Everett said. "Why don't you open it Sandra?"

My hands trembled as I did his bidding. "Walter Kemp and I were married an hour ago. We leave in mid-night train for Chicago. Will wire address so you can send my trunk. Love, Rose."

Without a word I gave the note to Everett. "Walter Kemp! Where did she get acquainted with him? Have him while she has been your guest?"

"No, Everett, he hasn't been in the house since you told me not to receive him."

"Then how did she meet him?" he spoke impatiently. "We are responsible for her to a certain extent. She was our guest."

"We met him one day when we were shopping. He stopped to speak and of course I had to introduce him. Then one day we were having a soda and he joined us. I have never seen him again."

"She would scarcely run away and marry a man she had seen but twice. Has she met him without you?"

"Yes, Everett. I suppose I should have told you, but I felt it was none of my business, in a way. She had tea with him once or twice, and lunched with him."

"I am amazed that, knowing my opinion of the man—his reputation, you did not tell me at once. Her people will blame us if she is unhappy—which she will be, I am afraid."

"Oh, I hope not! And Everett, I don't think they will blame us. Rose is fair, and she is truthful. She will tell her just how it happened. I will write mother all about it, also. She is Mrs. Grandon's closest friend and will be sure to tell her what I say."

"It is done, now, and we cannot do anything. But, Sandra, I am disappointed that you had not enough confidence in my judgment to let me know what was going on."

ROSE THINKS SHE IS LUCKIER THAN I

CHAPTER CVII. Mr. Grandon wrote, entirely exonerating us from any blame for Rose's elopement.

"She has always been wilful. We will hope and pray she may be happy," he had said as he closed his letter to Everett.

I had packed and sent her trunk to Chicago. Also I had written her a long letter. In her reply she had said she was so happy that she had no room for regrets even if she had made me and Everett cross.

"I didn't think anyone in the world could be as happy as I am," (she had been married a week when she wrote this.) "Walter is the dearest thing. And I am absolutely first in his affections. He never has loved any woman before—never wanted to marry anyone, even if he is almost thirty. That seems young compared to your husband, doesn't it? But to me the great thing is that I am the only one, the first. No warmed-over affection in mine, Sandra." There was much more, all in praise of Walter.

Without thinking, I handed the letter to Everett to read, then would have taken it back, had I dared, because of what she had said about being first in her husband's affections.

I watched Everett's face as he read. I saw something very like a sneer, then, look of pity upon it.

"Poor girl," he said as he laid the letter down. "I hope she never will be unaccepted. But as to being first with Kemp—thinking she has no 'warmed-over affection,' as she expresses it—his affections, or what he gives that name, have been hashed over so many times that I doubt if any remain. But, as I said, we can only hope for the best."

Someway, after, Rose left. I was happier than when she was with me, although I had enjoyed having her. I spoke of this to Everett, and he replied:

"In the three years you have lived in a different environment you have grown, Sandra. It may be that because I am old—as Rose said—that you, too, have grown older in mind than you would had you married a man nearer your own age. You have learned to fill the hours with things worth while—many of them. An idle person, one who wastes the golden days in foolish running after pleasure, is never really happy. I do not mean that we must not enjoy ourselves; a certain amount of pleasure, or play, is as necessary as is the work. But to think of nothing else, as some men and many women do, is absolutely demoralizing."

"I hope I can learn to keep house well, Everett," I said apropos of nothing in his remarks. "Mrs. Gray is teaching me, in case I should have to manage without a housekeeper. I am practically housekeeper a num-

ber, believe it will ever be necessary, but it is something every woman should know. I had intended proposing just what you have done of your own volition when you were a little older. It is hard to have good servants unless you understand their duties. We might lose Mrs. Gray or some of the others, then you would find the house did not run as smoothly, and it would annoy us. Then, too, I have a queer theory—Sandra, that every man is entitled to comfort in his home, his home is well managed, whether he is rich or poor."

"Mrs. Gray says I am very apt." "You should be with such a mother."

I was delighted that Everett so liked my mother. Since her visit he never missed saying nice things about her whenever we talked of domestic affairs, or of capability in a woman. It made me feel so much nearer to him to know he liked my people.

After this talk with Everett—we had many serious little conversations in the months after Rose had left us—I tried harder to learn the running of a home, and also applied myself to my lessons with Mrs. Barr with renewed interest.

I would make myself a companion for my husband! I would make him proud of me, even if he didn't love me as he had Leola.

ROSE HAS CAUSE TO ENVY ME

CHAPTER CVIII. Rose wrote me occasionally. Walter Kemp had been of a roving disposition always, and they had decided to settle in Chicago.

"Walter has had a splendid business offer and has accepted it," she wrote. "My only regret is not to be with you in London. But of course I would not think of that when he can make so much money by accepting this offer. Then, too, he is all the company I need. I have not tried to get acquainted at all, although there are one or two very pleasant young women in the hotel who have spoken to me. We have found an apartment—I did not want the care of a house—and shall furnish and move in at once."

But after the letter in which she wrote of her home, describing the furniture, her trouble in securing maids, etc., her letters grew more infrequent—and different. Gradually she said nothing about Walter being all-sufficient for her, or about his wonderful love. At first her letters were full of her happiness. She now made no complaints, but the buoyancy was gone. I felt she was unhappy without in the least knowing why.

When I answered her letters I made no mention of the change I had noticed, but wrote as usual. I never had said very much about Everett in my letters to her, simply telling her she was well and wishing to be remembered to her. I had never overcome the feeling that she did not like my husband, and it made it hard to write of him. So I was astonished when, in one of her short notes to me, she said:

"You say very little about Everett. I shall make Walter hate his very name. I always hold him up as a model husband. He was so gallant, so courteous to you, as much so as if you weren't married."

"I wonder if, now he is married, Walter neglects all the little courtesies Rose thinks so much of?" I muttered as I read her letter. Had I known that he not only neglected the amenities of life, but was already, after only a few months, neglecting Rose, I should have been deeply sorry for her. That this was so, I did not know for some time.

"But Buster and Toddlies paid us a visit just at that time. They were with us about ten days. It was vacation for them, but as Everett facetiously remarked: 'Anything but a vacation for us!' It didn't seem possible that two boys of their age could upset a house, and keep us all so busy."

"I never had seen Everett so happy. He laughed and joked with both the boys; planned parties for them; took them to the shows and motion pictures; bought them all sorts of games; and generally disported himself in a way to win their lasting allegiance, and to make me wonder if he really were my afflicted husband."

"You are as much of a boy as either of them," I told him upon their return from a ball game.

"They are doing me good," he returned, laughing at something Toddlies said. "I only wish they were to be with us longer."

Mrs. Gray, James and Thomas were all slaves to my brothers' whims, and as for Hetty and the cook, I told Everett we never would get them straightened out again. Cook made the most delicious and indigestible dishes for them, and Hetty waited upon them until I complained I had no one to do anything for me. But it made me very happy. I love the boys, and they were such dears—so gentlemanly and considerate—that I was proud of them as well."

When they left it seemed as if someone had died. Everett complained more than did I of missing them.

But about a week after they left I had a fainting spell. When the doctor left, Everett took me in his arms, and said:

"Dear, we won't have to borrow other people's children very much longer." The doctor had told him I was to be a mother.

I never knew anyone could be so tender, so thoughtful, as Everett was. I forgot all the unpleasant things which had happened and only happy to think I was to have a baby of my very own, and that Everett really loved me.

CHAPTER CIX. Everett never had been thoughtful—I did not know it was in him. Although I recalled that whenever I had been ill he had been considerate. Perhaps he thought when I was ill I didn't need consideration.

Without my knowledge he had sent for Mother and she came about two weeks before my boy was born. I was so delighted to have her. Now it seemed to me I never should be unhappy again. When I held my boy in my arms I forgot all the boy-

Everett married me. I forgot his neglect, and was as happy as the day was long.

Mother remained with us until Everett Jr. was two weeks old, then she went back to dad, who never was happy if she were away from him.

Everett had hired a competent nurse, and after mother left she took entire charge not only of me but of the baby. At first it seemed only natural that this should be so, but by the time baby was a month old I had commenced to resent her rule and Everett's insistence that she should be obeyed.

"He is my baby! I ought to have something to say," I complained. The nurse was a woman about forty-five years old, rather austere, and terribly determined. Dad would have said she was "set in her ways."

She seemed to think it was bad for a baby to be cuddled or rocked, as if I had committed murder.

When I spoke to Everett about it, he said:

"You are too young to know anything about raising a child." Miss Lane has been a nurse for years. I insist that you do as she says."

"I wasn't too young to have a boy, if I am too young to have anything to say about him!" I retorted, more hurt than angry. "And Miss Lane never has had a baby; she doesn't know how dreadfully a mother wants to love and cuddle her very own child."

Miss Lane has had wide experience. She has cared for many babies, and the doctor assures me she is one of the very best nurses on his list—a long one. I have hired her to remain permanently—that is until she refuses to stay longer. I hope you will be careful not to say or do anything to make her leave us."

"You mean she is to stay right along? I thought we would have a nice young nurse, a girl like Hetty, for him when he was a little older."

"I shall run no risks with my son. We shall retain Miss Lane."

Our conversation ended for the time, but my heart was filled with resentment toward Miss Lane, and also toward Everett. He had said: "I shall run no risks with MY son," just as if the baby belonged entirely to him. He might have said "our son," I thought, my eyes filling.

Was my precious boy to be another cause for unhappiness between us, instead of the joy I had supposed he would be? I loved my darling boy passionately. And to have Everett shut me out by saying "MY boy," and to have that woman who didn't know how to be mother of a baby tell me what I couldn't or could do with him, was maddening.

"I won't stand it!" I muttered, yet I knew down in my heart I should have to stand it, just as I had had to endure other things in my life because Everett willed I should.

I wondered dumbly if other wives had such emotional ups and downs as I had—if others had to have the sweet periods offset by periods of unhappiness caused by inharmonious with their husbands.

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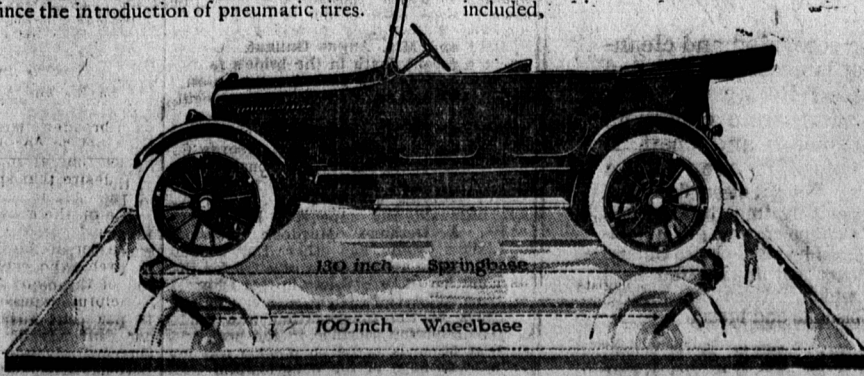
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