

# The FIFTH WHEEL

By Beatrice Heron-Maxwell and Florence & Eastwick

## OUR NEW SERIAL STORY

THE FIFTH WHEEL has always been a puzzle to mankind. Some people think a fifth wheel is unnecessary. But that all depends upon the progress of fortune. When all goes well with the waggon, four wheels are quite enough. But when a motorist gets a punctured tire, or a smashed rim, wheel number five comes in very handy. In the story by that name, things do not go smoothly. There is uneasiness from the very beginning. This continues for a large part of the story, until the break comes in a sort of along-the-road climax. It is here that the fifth wheel becomes a necessity to a large number of people, most of whom are uncommonly interesting characters. Love plays a very important part in the story, as it does in most English novels. There is a dash of Thomas Hardy in the treatment, though the love element is by no means so powerful as in "Tess of the D'Urbervilles."

Zero is a negligible yet unlimited quantity—an oval—an embryo—nothing, comprising everything. If you wish to profit by the unexpected that always happens, back Zero.

THE dusty road leading through Fleet and Crookham, towards Cron dall, was undisturbed by travellers on a June morning when a sailor, tramping along with his bundle slung over his shoulder, stopped at a gateway and looked inquisitively along the wide, well-kept drive with its close tall border of rhododendrons and pines of Spinney Chase.

Beyond a clump of trees where the drive took a wide sweep, he could see the upper windows of a large house, over which the creepers were only thinly spread.

"New," he soliloquised, "pretty near brand new! though it's built old-fashioned; everything tip-top, up to the mark. Might do a deal here easy!"

As he pushed the gate open, a woman came to the lodge door and asked what he wanted.

"I've got some curios here," he said; "real good ones from foreign parts. Heard your skipper"—he nodded towards the house—"had a fancy for such things, so thought I'd like to show him mine. No objection, I hope, Missis!"

The lodge-keeper looked a little dubious.

"He don't buy things at the door," she said. "He gets them from collectors—or dealers."

"Ah! but he can't get these because they're not easy found. I've collected 'em in strange places, and they're worth a lot if a dealer got hold of 'em. But I'll sell 'em reasonable first hand."

"Well, you must go round to the back door," conceded the woman. "Take the small path to the left."

The man nodded and walked on. "I was right about her boss," he reflected. "Guessed anyone with a place as new as this would want some old thing to put in it."

Turning the corner, he came upon the lawn, where two young girls and two men were playing tennis, while across the green expanse he saw the long, low facade of the house, which

was the replica of an old manor, and picturesque even in its newness.

A winding path, screened by a shrubbery, led him round to the rear, and through a courtyard he reached the kitchen door.

To the maids and footmen gossiping together, he spun a yarn of wreck and wrack and maroon, of strange adventures and final rescue, ending in safe return, while the good ship in which he had been second mate, was lying, with her merchandise, fathoms deep in the China Sea.

And getting round them with his ready tongue and roving eye, he persuaded the butler at last to tell his master that there were some curios worth seeing at the door.

By this time he had learnt that the house was named Spinney Chase, and was the country residence of Horatio Pridham, contractor, who was negotiating to buy the Basingstoke Canal with the idea of making it a means of motor-boat traffic to and from Southampton and London.

While the butler went with the message, the sailor, undoing the knots of his bundle, meditated that anyone who was rash enough to buy the canal must have few brains and plenty of cash to spare, and that, provided he asked a good price, he was safe to sell some of his wares.

Therefore, when Mr. Pridham sent for him to the inner hall, he told another glib tale of hair-breadth escape from Boxers whom he had looted successfully, and produced some specimens of carved green jade as well as some weapons with jewelled hafts, as the result. Mr. Pridham was inclined to take the whole lot, but, on second thoughts, sent for his son, who condemned most of them as too ordinary to have any value.

BUT a quaint-looking dagger attracted him, and, after examining it, he said, "This might do for your collection of weapons, father. I've never seen one like it. What's the spring for?"

The handle was of dark metal, inlaid with silver, and at the end of it a small flat knob was obviously intended to be pressed inwards by the thumb, when striking, only that a rim of rust prevented it working.

The sailor took his clasp knife and with the point scraped the rust away. Then he struck downwards, at an imaginary foe, and, pressing the knob, a second and third blade, thin and fine, shot out from either side of the large one, near the haft.

"As you draw it out, it makes a double gash, like a cross," said the sailor. "It's a torture knife; that is the only one in the world. You'll never find another."

"How much do you want for it?" Mr. Pridham asked.

"I'd take five pounds, sir."

"I dare say you would," said the younger one, "but you won't get it here. Two pounds ten or nothing."

The sailor argued, but yielded, and he retired with his two pounds ten while the man and his father went to the outer hall, where, in a recessed panel, hung a collection of arms—offensive and defensive—from all parts of the world.

"It will fill up this gap," said Laurence Pridham, "opposite the bookcase that the Diva carried for wear-

some lovers. I shouldn't care about a jab with either of them."

Meanwhile, the sailor, with a friendly word or two of good-bye, had swung out of the gate and was on the high road again. About two hundred yards along he came upon a break in the hedge and stepping through, saw that a zig-zag path ran from it down to the bank of the canal. A little farther was a bridge, and another path leading downwards to the fringe of trees beyond which the canal path wound its way. As he sat down his bundle and, taking the money out, tied it in his handkerchief and stowed it in his jacket, his eye caught a movement near the bridge.

Unseen himself, he had a clear view through the hedge of a girl who stood watching the road along which he had just passed.

Her gaze was eager and concentrated, and as the sun slanted into her eyes, she put up her hand impatiently, to screen them.

The gesture was familiar to him, and a dawning recognition in his eyes leapt to certainty.

"Liz! by all that's holy!" he said softly, under his breath. "Then my tramp's ended. I wonder how she comes here!"

Quietly he crept nearer to the bridge against which she leant and, still hidden by the hedge, was quite near her when she gave a little involuntary exclamation of relief and, turning, ran down the path to the canal.

The sailor straightened himself, a dark swift look of anger replacing his former one of glad surprise.

For along the road a young man was approaching, from the direction of Spinney Chase, and the sailor recognized him as the son of the man who had bought his knife.

Into his mind flashed the thought, "Liz was waiting for him. She has gone down to the canal and he'll follow her there. If he does—!"

He lay down flat on the grass and pulled his cap over his eyes, with one arm carelessly flung across his bundle.

"I'm sleeping," he murmured, after his usual fashion of talking to himself, "tired after my tramp, and feel the sun a bit. Any man can sleep who has a mind to. There's no law again it as I knows."

Under his cap his eyes watched the tall figure approach and pass and turn off to the bridge.

Then he rose, tilted his cap back again, and swung his bundle over his shoulder.

"So that's her game," he said. "Well, there's three to play now."

And he went down the zig-zag to the canal bank.

### CHAPTER I.

We All Begin by Being Units, but the Unity of Units is Strength.

HORATIO PRIDHAM sat smoking his cigar, with a glass of port beside him, reflecting on many things.

Time was when he had taken his ease behind the glass partition of his office, after the warehouse was closed for the night, and had been glad of a pipe and a tankard of beer to help him through with checking the day's accounts. But a good many years and a good deal of hard work



That velvety skin of the Orient, with the delicate, refined, pearly white of the North, is the most alluring facial beauty in the world. This ideal blending of the complexion is within the reach of every woman by the regular use of

## GOURAUD'S Oriental Cream

the ideal, non-greasy toilet preparation. The Society and Professional women of two Continents are enthusiastic over the wonderful results attainable.

At Druggists and Department Stores.

FERD. T. HOPKINS & SON, Props.,

37 Great Jones St., New York

### ABOUT THE CLOTHES MOTH.

There are several closely allied species of Clothes Moths, Tineina, all so much alike that it is difficult to tell them apart. The Moth finds its way easily into chests of drawers and wardrobes, and lays its eggs. From these eggs the larvae which eat our garments are hatched. Each larva makes a case for itself from fragments of the material on which it feeds.

Nothing short of hermetical sealing will keep the Clothes Moth out of wardrobes, chests of drawers, boxes and similar places where clothes and furs are kept, and under ordinary household circumstances hermetical sealing is impossible. The one way to prevent damage by Moth is to use Keating's Powder, which kills every moth with which it comes into proper contact before it can lay its eggs, or should the eggs have been already laid, it kills the larvae immediately they hatch. Before putting away furs, blankets, Summer or Winter wearing apparel, and clothes of all descriptions, first thoroughly shake them, and then well sprinkle them with Keating's Powder; leave the powder on them. Carpets.—Before relaying carpets see the floor is thoroughly dry, then dust all over with "Keating's" and lay the carpets on top. Furniture.—Blow "Keating's" freely and regularly into the folds of all upholstered furniture and the backs of chairs, bedding, etc.

It is necessary that both the Powder itself and the article on which it is used are absolutely dry. So used it will not injure the finest fabric.

"Keating's" contains no poison, and is absolutely harmless to everything except insect life.