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## When Father Decides

By R. RAY BAKER

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It was no use, the motor just wouldn't start. Not a sputter could Anne Davis get out of it. She tugged and tugged at the flywheel, but there was not even a buzz to reward her efforts.

She looked down the river, vexed and despairing. The boat was floating at a fair rate of speed, and unless she could get it moving in the other direction before long she would have little prospect of arriving at the Rest-While cottage before dark.

Already it was dusk, but she managed to make out something coming upstream. Soon she heard the creaking of oarlocks and presently a shadowy shape loomed into view. It was a rowboat with a man bending vigorously at the oars.

"One of the inhabitants," Anne decided, but there was little disdain in her voice. Meeting one of them in the village she would not have favored him with passing notice, but now any kind of man would be welcome. She hailed the stranger.

"Stop a minute, will you, please?" He rested with his oars partly out of the water.

"Did you call me?" he shouted, after brief hesitation.

"Yes, I can't get this old engine started. I wish you would help."

With some skill but much more difficulty he managed to get the rowboat alongside the motor craft. They were of about the same size, for the gasoline-propelled vehicle was far from being pretentious. It was, in truth, simply a rowboat in which a one-cylinder engine had been installed, and it was rented along with the cottage that the Culbertsons, with whom Anne was staying at the resort, had leased for the season.

Anne had insisted on coming after some provisions that were needed at the cottage, and she had started out early in the afternoon for Alanson, feeling not a little conceited over being the pilot and sole crew of the miserable little craft. The Culbertsons had expressed misgivings over the venture, but Anne generally had her own way, and was possessed of a reputation for being a self-reliant sort of girl, so she was allowed to make the trip alone.

Everything went smoothly until she had covered about half of the ten-mile journey on the way back, when the engine went dead without warning. Not another boat of any description was in sight, for it was at that time of day when most folks are partaking of their evening meal. She must have drifted two miles when the rowboat came into sight.

Anne breathed a sigh of relief when the newcomer grasped the gunwale of the motorboat and peered over at her. He had brought a lantern, and by its light she could see that he was a rather good-looking young man of perhaps twenty-six. He had on a green shirt and blue overalls, and on his head was a wide-brimmed straw hat.

She caught a glimpse of a tin can and a fishpole in the bottom of the boat, and in order to be congenial she inquired whether he had had any luck. Imagine Anne Davis discussing the subject of angling with a country rustic! Imagine Anne Davis, the breaker of men's hearts back in the big city, talking familiarly with a denizen of this country town!

"Fair, fair," he replied, and his voice seemed to be singularly musical for an uncultured person. "I got half a dozen—or seven, I forget just which it is. Hold the boats together, and don't move, will you, while I crawl over and see if I can start your engine."

She did as instructed, hoping he understood the business of getting from one boat to another. He caused considerable rocking, but nothing serious happened, and presently he was tinkering at the engine, while she held tensely to the gunwales of the two boats where they met.

"Got it," he grunted after a few minutes' investigation, which was hampered somewhat by the dullness of the glow from the smoky lantern. "Loose battery connection, that's all." She heard an energetic buzz from the engine.

"Wait a minute; I better tie up," he reminded himself aloud, and left the motor to attach the painter of his boat to the gasoline craft. Returning to the motor, he gave the wheel a spin and the boat started down stream with a chug-chug that, under ordinary circumstances, was far from musical, but it sounded almost like chimes to Anne in this particular instance.

"Turn it around," she called. "I'm going up the river. It got turned the other way while we were floating and I was trying to start the engine."

"He soon had the boat breasting the current, and again she sighed with relief.

"Guess I better take you home," he suggested. "It's pretty dark now, besides, you look tired, and besides—I need the ride myself."

Naturally she assented. After he had proved so useful she could not very well dismiss him and send him back to laboring with the oars again. On the way she got musing and decided it would be a great lark to carry on a little flirtation with her new acquaintance.

She started by introducing herself, and in return he told her that his name was Harry Saunders. She invited him to spend the night at the Culbertson cottage, and after some slight hesitation he accepted.

So it came about that the breaker of men's hearts in the big city set out to break one in the country. But she got fooled. Before the evening was through Anne Davis had fallen in love for the first time in her life.

"Stuff and nonsense!" roared Uriah Davis. "Do you mean to tell me you have picked out a farmer for a husband? I tell you you're insane. You're stark, raving mad. Look at your opportunities here in Detroit."

"It's no disgrace to live in a small town," Anne told him. The summer season was over and she was home after a three weeks' love affair that started out frivolously and developed into a very serious case.

"Well, I won't have it, that's all," her father insisted. "You aren't going to disgrace the family like that. A girl of your beauty can pick off a man of money without any trouble."

Anne bit her lip savagely and stamped a foot.

"I don't want a man of money. I want Harry, and I'm going to have him or I'll die an old maid with—with a broken heart." She left the room, sobbing, and went and climbed into her bed, where, bolstered by several pillows, she wrote a "good-by, forever," letter to Alanson.

Mr. Davis evidently was determined to see that things went to his liking, for the next day he came home with the announcement that he had invited his young law partner to the house for dinner.

"You've heard me speak of White," he said. "You know, he's been with me in business for two years and I've never yet got around to having him meet my family. He's a hustler, all right; in fact, he's worked up until he's been carrying on the burden of the firm's practice. He worked so hard that he broke down last spring, and he's only back in the harness this week, after a long rest, which appears to have done him lots of good. He's the man for you, Anne. I approve of him, and you will, too, if you can forget this silly country romance, for he's an attractive young chap."

Anne pouted in her room, but when her father summoned her down to meet Mr. White she put on her best smile and straightened her hair and added a few finishing touches of powder to her face, then went to the reception room. It was just as well to humor her father, she thought. It would not do to treat his partner shabbily.

When she descended the stairs she saw a slender, well-dressed, well-groomed young man talking to Mr. Davis. They immediately stopped their conversation when she appeared and introductions were in order.

The next noon, at luncheon, her father inquired:

"Well, Annie, how do you like Mr. White?"

She looked across the table with a happy little smile and lifted her coffee cup. After a few sips she placed it on the table and replied:

"Fine, father. He and I are engaged. We're to be married next month."

Mr. Davis all but choked on a piece of meat. He was forced to swallow half a glass of water to prevent strangulation.

"Great heavens!" he ejaculated, gasping. "So soon? Of course, I heartily approve, but it seems rather sudden." Then he grinned, somewhat mischievously. "But what about this country lover?"

Anne laughed. "Well, you see, father, Mr. White happens to be the country lover. His name was Harry Saunders down at Alanson, and mine was Susie Smith. You see, we each started out fooling the other, but we really fell in love."

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TIME TABLE

Trains leave Watford Station as follows:

GOING WEST  
Accommodation, 75 ..... 8 44 a.m.  
Chicago Express, 13 ..... 12 34 p.m.  
Accommodation, ..... 6 44 p.m.  
GOING EAST  
Accommodation, 80 ..... 7 38 a.m.  
New York Express, 6 ..... 11 16 a.m.  
Accommodation, 112 ..... 4 20 p.m.  
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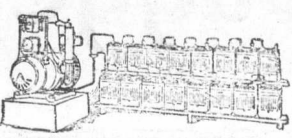
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