

# THE NEW FABLE OF WHAT TRANSPIRED AFTER THE WINDUP

## BY GEORGE ADE

Once upon a time Ferdinand breathed right into Adele's translucent Listerine three words which told all records as monosyllabic Trouble-Makers.

They have a harmless look on the Printed Page, but when pulled at the Psychological turn of the Road, they become the Funeral Knell of Bachelor Freedom and a Prelude of cutting the Spring on whatever has been put by. The Serpent, operating in the guise of Listerine, had lured, coaxed, wheedled, and fawned until the poor trembling Child, only twenty-four years of Age, was alone with him in what the Landowner had worked off on her Papa as a Formal Garden.

They stood clinched there in the dull Sunset Glow, and a Pergola for a Background. It was all very Belasco and in strict compliance with the League Rules laid down by W. Somerset Maugham.

According to the \$2 Drama and every bright red Volume selling for \$1.18 at a Department Store, this was—

THE END.

The Curtain began to descend very slowly, with Ferdinand and Adele holding the Picture.

It seems, however, that they had come to the real, sure-enough Final. The Terminus was some distance down the Line.

The Curtain refused to fall.

"What is the idea?" asked Adele, somewhat perturbed. "We have hit the logical Climax of our Romance. As I understand it, we are now supposed to ascend in a Cloud and float thru Ethereal Bliss for an Indefinite Period."

"Right-o!" said Placide. "According to all the approved Dope, we are booked to live happily ever after."

Just then her Best Friend came rapidly down the Graven Walk with Anxiety stenciled on her Features.

The accepted Swan seemed to hear a low rumbling Wagnerian Effect from out the Clear Sky. In Music-Drama it is known as the Hammer Theme.

It is included in the Curriculum at every Fam Sch.

Ferdinand had a Hunch that somebody was getting ready to drop Cyanide of Potassium into the Cup of Joy.

"Oh, Adele!" said the Friend, just like that. "Oh, Adele, may I speak to you for a Mo-munt?"

Ferdinand made his Exit, much peeved, and the Friend expressed a Hope that she had arrived in time to throw the Switch and avert the Wrecking of a Life.

Far be it from her to Switch, but it was her Duty to put Adele, hep to what everyone was whispering Under Cover.

She had no absolute Proof that he had carried on with a Front Row Floss in New Haven, but it was Common Talk that one of his Uncles had been a Regular at a Retreat where the Doctor shoots a Precious Metal into the Arm.

It would be terrible to marry some one and then find out that he Drank, the same as all the other Married Men.

Leaving Adele in a Deep Swoon, the true Friend hurried to the nearest

Public Phone to spread the dismal Tidings. The meantime the elated Lover had loped all the way to the University Club to spring it in the Navajos and receive their Felicitations.

His Rapture had rendered him



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fairly incoherent, and he was gurgling like an after-dinner Percolator, but he finally made it evident that he had been Hooked.

A deep Silence ensued, most of those present looking out of the Window at the passing Traffic.

Finally a Shell-Back, who had been leading a Life of Single Torment ever since Sumter fired upon, asked in a sepulchral Tone and without looking up from his Hand, "Has the Date been set?"

Ferdinand tried to tell them that he was going to the Altar and not to the Electric Chair, but he couldn't get a single Sip on the Back.

The only one evincing Interest was a He-He named Herbert, who took him into the Cloak-Room to plant a few Canadian Thistles in the Garden of Love.

Herb said he had always liked the Girl, even if she had given a couple

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The Sunflower Paths of Dalliance, were leading mostly to Reno, Nevada, and the Article commonly known as Love was merely a disinclination to continue eating Breakfast alone.

He said a Good Woman was a Jewel, but if one of them got a fair Run and Jump at a Check-Book she could out National City Bank on the Hummer.

Probably it was all right to go ahead and take the High Hurdle, but the Percentage was against the Candidate, and the Cost of Living was never so altitudinous.

Ferdinand retired from the Royal Presence feeling that he had been duly authorized to walk a Tight Rope over Niagara Falls.

As soon as the Bride-Elect had taken enough Headache Powders to prepare her for the ordeal, she sent for the Suspect to come up to the House and outline his Defense.

They put in a humid Evening. When the falling Tears had made the Drawing Room too soppy for further use, they moved into the Hallway and he continued to think up Alibis.

At 11 p.m. he had explained Everything, repudiated many Lifelong Friendships, decolorized his College Career, flouted the Demon Rum, and resigned from all Clubs.

The birds were singing up and down the Main Stairway and Grandfather's Clock played nothing but Mendelssohn.

She lay dampedly pillowed on his bosom. He was intensely relieved, yet vaguely conscious of the Fact that she had best him to it. There had been a General Settlement, and he figured modestly as Supreme Court.

In his anxiety to get the Kinks out of his own Record he had failed to hold her up for anything except Pardoning.

Before terminating the Peace Conference, it was suggested that inasmuch as everyone else in the World had been Edified, probably it would be just as well to let her Male Parent in on the Secret. Not that Father was in the least bit of a Party in the up-to-date Household. Still he is useful as a Super.

The old Gentleman was so soft that he nearly tipped the Porcelain. He gave Ferdinand a regular Cigar and then stalled for about 30 Seconds before indicating a Willingness to sign any form of Contract.

He pulled the Old One to the effect that the House would not seem the same after Adele had gone away, meaning that Breakfast would be served in the Morning and the Night Shift abolished.

When Ferdinand got back to his Room and counted up, he had to admit that Father was the only Outsider who seemed to be plugging for the Adams.

But all petty Suspicions and unworthy Doubts flickered and disappeared

of his Best Pals the Whillykathrow. His advice was to put up and smother her before she had time to pull one of her temperamental Stunts and hand out the Rinkaboo.

Possibly if she could be weaned away from her eccentric Relations and governed with a Firm Hand she would turn out O. K.

Still it was a tall Gamble. Under the Circumstances, he didn't see that there was anything for Ferdinand to do except mop up a few Drinks and hope for the Best.

When Ferd looked at himself in the Mirror at Midnight, he didn't know whether he was Engaged or merely operating under a Suspended Sentence.

Next morning he had to bare his Soul to the Gods. The Firm Hand of a Revered Fud should have been known as Mr. Yes-But.

He was strong for the Married

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dinand. He resolved to make a Stand and issue a ringing Ultimatum. He might as well tip it off to her and the whole Tribe that he was to be Caesar in his own Shack.

So he went up to her House ready to die in the Last Ditch rather than yield to the advocates of Immersion. After viewing the Problem in all its Aspects, he and Honey compromised by deciding that the Bains were to be orthodox Baptists.

Having spiced every Blot from the Escutcheon and laid out the Labels for all Generations yet unborn, the inept Benedict thought there would be nothing more to it except Holding Hands and watching the Calendar. Just then a Dress-Maker swooped down and stole away the Light of his Life.

Every time he went up to scratch on the Door and beg for a Kiss, a Strange Lady with Pins in her Mouth would come out and shoo him away, explaining that the Pearl of Wisdom had been laid out in the Operating Room, being measured for something additional.

Occasionally he saw her at one of the many Dinners decreed by Custom. They had to sit miles apart, with Mountains of unseemly Victrolas stacked between them, with some moss-grown Offshoot of the Family Tree rose and conquered

It seemed that Adele had a Step-Mother who had been crouched for Years waiting for a chance to bust in to the Pupae. Nothing would do her but a regular Madison Square Phantomagoria, with two Rings and an elevated Platform.

She wanted Ribbons down the Aisle and Little Girls sprinkling Petals, a Concert Orchestra buried under the Pains, and a few extra Ministers of the Gospel just to use the Pulpit.

Every supernatural Accessory decreed by the Court of Bankruptcy was woven into the Mystical Chorus when Ferdinand and Adele were made one and Unhookable.

The Rehearsals somewhat resembled the Moving Pictures of the Durbur at Delhi.

As a final Preparation for the stupendous Fagend, the Groom sat up all night in the Chamber when Ferdinand, watching the Head-Liners of the Blue Book demolish Glasware.

According to the dictates of Fashion, one who is to be married, to assume the solemn Responsibilities of Matrimony should abstain from Stumber for a week, devoting the time thus saved to consideration of Food and Drink.

The Ambulance bore his Remains to the Church. A few faithful Hang-Overs lifted him thru the Porch, with his Toes dragging somewhat in the Mud.

They propped him against a Pillar and told him his Name and begged him not to weaken, no matter what the Preacher might put up to him.

Soon after he saw a Haggard Creature suffering about with White advancing unsteadily toward him. With the Make-Up, she did not look a Day over 47.

He did not hear any of the Service, but Adele who wore more fortune, told him afterward that it was a very Pretty Wedding, and that the Presents they got were Simply Great.

Moral: Too many Trained Nurses commode Cupid.

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His Asthma long enough to propose a Toast to the Bride.

What they really craved was a Dim Corner and a box of Candel Cherries.

The only Speeches they wished to hear would have been constructed out of the 40 words of standard Baby Talk, comprising what is known as the Mum Vocabulary.

But they had to muster the same old property Smile every time that the old Brofide or old Mr. Plattitude lifted a shell of sparkling Vinegar and fervently exclaimed, "Thank Sir!"

Even after the Menu had been wrecked and the satiated Revelers had laboriously price themselves away from the decorated Board, there was no Escape.

The Women Folks led Adele away to some remote Apartment to sound a Few Warnings, while the Men sat around in the Blue Smoke and smoked Ferdinand to a fare-ye-well.

Each morning he found in his Mail a few regular Madison Square Phantomagoria, with two Rings and an elevated Platform.

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