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LOT'S STRATEGY

By SUSAN BROWN ROBBINS

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"I don't know what it is," said Lot despairingly.

"Imagination," returned his sister shortly.

Lot turned on her. "Look here, Maria Bemis," he said almost fiercely.

"You pride yourself on your faculty for seeing things. You've been here three days, and haven't you seen that there was something come between us since you were here before and that she has stopped caring anything about me?" His voice broke at the last words, and he turned away from her.

Maria looked at his back, and there was an expression on her face of mingled pity, contempt and amusement.

"I've been here three days, Lot," she said quietly, "and I've seen that you are a pair of foolish children. But before I go on I want to ask you if you have got over caring for her."

Lot looked at her with indignation too strong for words.

"I didn't think you had," said his sister in a tone of relief. "If you had, it would be a serious state of affairs; but, as you haven't, I don't see any difficulties."

"You must admit that she isn't happy," he said at length.

"Yes."

"But, don't you see, it must be me, because she doesn't see anybody else, hardly."

She settled herself more comfortably on the grain chest and began to speak deliberately. "Don't you know that when two people, I don't care who they are, live on a lonely farm and don't see anybody but each other for weeks at a time—don't you know that they are bound to get morbid and imagine all sorts of things about themselves and each other? That is why so many farmers' wives go insane."

"But what can I do?" Lot asked, a look of terror in his face. "I've tried to get her to go to places with me, but I can't."

"I'll tell you," said Maria decisively. "The first nice day take her out over the farm and spend the day. I'll see to things while you are gone, and I'll put up a lunch for you. Show her all you are doing and plan to do. Take her to the pretty places and, most of all, make love to her as though your life depended on it."

"I don't believe she'd go. I couldn't persuade her. You've no idea how set she is."

Maria looked at her brother scornfully. "Perhaps you never heard of such a thing as strategy."

She turned away and walked out of the barn.

For a long time he stood looking at his grandfather's steeple covered wagon. It had been considered an elegant affair in its day, but now it was seldom taken out except when some of the children came home at Thanksgiving or for short visits.

He took out his jackknife and opened it, felt of the edge, then got into the wagon and knelt down on the seat. Very carefully, and following the thread in the cloth, he cut a slit two inches long in the back of the seat. He knelt at the cotton batting stuffing with the point of his knife. Then he let the flap go back in place, the cotton batting showing a little all along the cut. "That looks very natural," he muttered.

The next morning Lot spoke to his sister when Eunice was in another room. "Just as soon as the dew gets off some," he said, and she nodded after breakfast she carried to the barn a large covered basket, a demijohn of cold tea, a shawl and her sister-in-law's sunbunnet. These Lot helped her stow away under the back seat.

At 9 o'clock Lot came into the house. "I'm going to start off with the old covered wagon in a little while," he said, "and I find there's a tear or a cut in the back of the seat. Do you suppose you could mend it?"

Eunice went to get her workbasket. She found a piece of green cloth and pulled some ravelings from it; then she went out and got into the covered wagon and set quietly and patiently to work.

Lot watched her furtively from the barn. When he thought she was nearly half through he began harnessing with feverish haste. What if she should get through too soon? She looked around as he backed the horse into the shafts. "I'm not quite through yet, Lot," she said mildly.

"Don't hurry," he answered. He waited with the reins in his hand until she had taken the last stitch; then he jumped in, sat down beside her and spoke to the horse. Eunice half started to her feet, but he laid his hand gently on her arm, and she sank back again.

"We are going to ride over the farm," he said quietly.

He drove on, talking rapidly about his plans, recalling incidents of the hawking and speaking of the getting in of the ensilage.

Eunice was silent, and in spite of his lively chatter Lot was anxious.

In the middle of the pasture Lot stopped the horse and glanced about. Some of the cows were feeding near, and they lifted their heads to look with big, inquiring eyes.

"Pretty good looking cattle, I call them," he said proudly. He paused. His face was quiet, white and agitated, and he did not dare look at his wife.

"I always thought an animal of Buttercup," said Eunice in her sweet, gentle voice. "I liked her looks so well that I learned her to drink and took all the care of her myself."

"Yes," he said, "I remember, and it was a good thing that you did take charge of her. She's made a fine cow. His voice grew curiously husky, and he spoke almost sharply to the horse, "Get up, Nell."

As they went slowly through the pasture the cows one by one dropped their noses to their feeding again. Eunice gazed about her eagerly, a new light in her face. "Oh," she sighed contentedly, "it is a lovely day."

The cart path was very rough, and the wagon bounced and pitched along, the overhanging bushes and young trees brushing against its top and sides. Eunice laughed like a child and now and then gave an involuntary little scream.

Lot laughed too. "I guess I'll have to put my arm around you," he said. And he drew her close, driving with his free hand.

"Isn't this fun?" she laughed. "And it won't hurt the wagon, either. How did you happen to think of such a nice idea?"

"Why didn't I think of it years ago?" he returned evasively. "I ought to have, with the poor little wife kept at home with a weak ankle."

"I have wanted to see the farm awfully," she said, nestling up to him as his arm went around her again, "but I didn't see how I could, and I never expected to."

Suddenly she impulsively threw her arms about his neck and buried her face on his shoulder with a little sob.

"It's awful silly," she murmured, "for folks as old as we are to act so spoony, but I thought—I'd got a notion that you'd got all over caring anything about me, and I'm so glad to find it isn't so."

As for Lot, he held his wife close, and in his heart was a great joy.

Many women think they are required to tell a husband that he is not so smart as he imagines himself. If they would retain favor in his sight they would make him believe the reverse.



The duel in the dark was a favorite with duelists. Two men were locked in a dark room and crawled stealthily from corner to corner, until some false step made one of them the target for bullet or blade.

Life is a duel in the dark with the attack comes swift and sudden. The mistake which commonly opens the way for an attack by disease is neglect of the symptoms of stomach trouble. When eating is followed by undue fullness, belchings, sour or bitter risings, etc., disease is attacking the stomach.

The best way to frustrate such an attack is to use Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. It cures diseases of the stomach and other organs of digestion and nutrition, and makes the body strong and healthy.

"I was suffering very much with my head and stomach," writes Mrs. W. C. Gill of Weidon, Shelby Co., Ala., "head was so dizzy when I would raise up in bed would fall right back. Could eat but very little, in fact scarcely anything. There seemed to be a heavy weight in my stomach so I could not rest; I had to belch very often and would vomit up nearly everything I ate. I was in a bad condition. I took four bottles of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and five of his Favorite Prescription and am now well and hearty. I feel like a new woman and give Dr. Pierce's medicines credit for it all. I had taken medicine from physicians without any benefit as I could see."

Dr. Pierce's Medical Adviser is sent free on receipt of stamps to pay expense of customs and mailing only. Send at once stamps for the paper covered book, or 50 stamps for the cloth-bound. Address Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y.

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THE STORY OF A DISCOVERY.

How many valuable inventions have been the result of pure accident, while in other cases men have puzzled their brains with study for a lifetime and brought forth nothing!

It happened one night that a big starch factory on the banks of the Liffey, near Dublin, took fire, and great puddles of starch and water were left outside.

Some calico printers who had been out all night and were quite tipsy came along toward morning, and one of them stumbled into one of the puddles. He found it so sticky that all his clothes stuck to him so fast that he had to stay in bed next morning till his wife soaked them out.

The man knew from his trade that the starch and water had formed a very powerful and valuable gum. He went back to the place of the fire and investigated, and the result was the discovery of the adhesive gum now used in sticking postage stamps and which has made many rich. But temperance lecturers need not know it.—Boston Globe.

A Vivid Imagination.

A furniture dealer tells a little story that shows how some people are constituted. A lady ordered an elegant easy chair of a peculiar kind. It was made and sent to her house. She examined it carefully and critically, finally remarking that it suited her exactly, with one exception—it was too soft. She sent the chair back to be made a trifle harder. It was returned to the shop and put aside. Nothing was done to it. After a lapse of about a week the chair was sent out again. The lady again examined it and now found it too hard. She was sorry, but when she paid so much to get an article for her own comfort she wanted it just right, so she sent it back to the shop for another change. The chair was again put aside for a week or ten days and sent out for the third time without the least alteration. This time it was just right. She took the chair, paid for it and was sorry it had not suited her at first. The poor woman never knew that the chair had not been changed a particle.

Deceptions of Wild Birds.

Falcons, hawks—the largest species—can compress their features and look very slim if they think it necessary to do so. As to the owls, they can hump up into any position they think most suitable. It is useless to look for these self-preserving traits in any of the family kept in zoological collections, for the birds are so accustomed to see large numbers of people passing and re-passing or standing in front of them that they treat the whole matter with perfect indifference. They know that at a certain time their food will be brought them and that they are otherwise perfectly safe. Then the raptors in a wild state have a bloom on their plumage like the bloom on a bunch of grapes which is not often seen when in captivity.

An Elephant Story.

An elephant train was on its way from Lucknow to Seetapore, and one elephant, becoming lame, knelt down and refused to go on. The elephant next in the column stopped of its own accord and when driven on turned back and began without instructions to remove some part of the load. Instances of aid rendered by birds to others in distress may also be found, showing that the instinct of sympathy exists and takes form in action when the cause of the sufferings are such that the fellow bird can understand and see its way to remedy.—London Spectator.

Novel Funeral Instructions.

Curious instructions as to the manner of her burying were left behind by an old lady at Stockport, England. Her funeral, she directed, should be attended by six of the best horses coaches Stockport could provide, and another direction was that after the interment the funeral party should repair to the best Tory hostelry in Oldham, there to be served with the best roast beef the house could afford, which was to be supplied by a Tory landlord and served by Tory waiters.

Brought Him Back to Earth.

"What name shall I invent for thee, dearest—what appellation that in a single word can express all my soul's desire, all my heart, all my passion, all—She (exceedingly unromantic)—Well, John, what's the matter with Jane? As a name it's always been good enough for me, and I thought it ought to be good enough for you."

Covered the Case.

Old Practitioner—Well, how did you succeed with your first diagnosis? Did you profit by my advice? The Young Doctor—I think I did, sir. I told the patient that he was suffering from a combination of liver, stomach, heart, lung and brain trouble. O. P.—Good! No chance of a mistake there.

Waiting Acquiescence.

"You must not expect me to give up my girlhood's ways all at once," said the happy bride.

"Oh, I won't," he replied. "I hope you'll keep right on taking an allowance from your father just as if nothing had happened."

An Ex-Convict.

Jolkley—I once heard a man say that he would rather be an ex-convict than anything else he could think of. Polkey—The ideal! How eccentric! Jolkley—Not at all. The man was in the penitentiary for life.

A Misnomer.

Cobwinger—Look here! Did you break that rubber plant? Freddie—That ain't no rubber plant. I pulled it till all the leaves came out, and it didn't stretch a bit.—Judge.

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