

TWO WISHES

I'd like to live in a palace, a kingdom or empire to sway,
With armies, and courtiers, and servants
to act at my bidding all day;
I'd like to have millions in bullion, some sceptres
and crowns of pure gold,
A throne in each room of my palace so precious
its worth can't be told.

I'd like the possession of jewels—a thousand or two of the best—
And deckings of silk and of satin to cover the couch where I rest.

I'd summon my court bright and early, I'd hear, and decide, and be fair;
The friendless would know me as brother, the homeless would find refuge there.

The poor would receive undreamed riches, to all would I open my hand;
Bereaved ones I'd comfort and solace, and hate could not dwell in that land.

My labors would last all through daylight, and then, when the sun had gone down,
I'd shake off the burdens of reigning, and lay aside sceptre and crown.

This wish, were it true for the asking, I'd renounce for one greater still;

No empire I'd want; neither treasures nor armies to move at my will.

I'd wish for a little home somewhere—a flat, or a neat bungalow

With trees and green grass all around it and a plot where fair flowers could grow.

A home that would be a real palace, if you as its Queen would but reign,

A more precious jewel than you, Dear, no crowned head on this earth could gain.

With joy and devotion I'd serve you: obey each command that you gave—

Instead of a king in his might, Dear, I would rather, by far, be your slave.

—Joseph Fred Buck.

OUR LITTLE MRS. LAWRENCE

"Well! Aren't you a clever little schemer though? Bless me, you certainly know how to map out other folk's destinies."

By MADGE RIVERS

PETER STANHOPE LAWRENCE threw down his newspaper and a broad grin lighted up his boyish, handsome features. He had heard a slight rustling sound which, he had reasons for believing, was the swish of a silken kimono. From somewhere the light in the sitting room was switched off and he was left blinking cheerfully at the glowing grate fire. The door was opened cautiously and a tiny creature, almost elfin in the dim light, glided into the room and in a second had taken possession of his knee.

It was a very sweet-smelling creature, wrapped luxuriously in a long, extravagantly flowered kimono. A mop of bright hair fluffed itself around Lawrence's neck as the creature rubbed her cheek against his.

"Was it a Turkish bath to-night?" he asked, still wearing his contented grin.

"Then were you doing your nails?" he persisted as the creature shook its head solemnly (and it may be remarked at this point that the creature was Mrs. Peter Stanhope Lawrence). "Manicuring 'em you mean? No, not that. But it took me such a long time to drain off the ocean and scoop up a dozen or more submarines and a handful of dreadnaughts and a few other things." She sighed softly.

"So Stanny undertook another naval battle in your bath, did he?" Then he added proudly, "The little rascal will be an admiral one of these days."

"That's what Elinor was saying to-day, and now I am reminded that I want to tell you something."

"Is it—is it a secret?"

Lawrence asked hopefully, the cheerful grin broadening into a huge anticipating smile. His wife always had a peculiar little way of communicating her various secret confessions and inspirations. She never could quite make up her mind as to whether she should tell him or not. But, finally succumbing to his persuasive eloquence, she would twist and squirm on his knee until she had one big, good-natured, husbandly ear close to her lips then softly whisper the information.

"No, well—it's not a secret exactly," she was saying, "but it is an idea. The first part of it is that Roger Clinton is in town and is coming to dinner to-morrow night." Her eyes were almost starry and her lips curled gleefully.

For a minute Peter Stanhope Lawrence's face was very near stern: why was she so hilarious at his coming? Clinton was a nice decent sort of a chap, popular about town and all that, but then her eyes needn't be so shiny for him. The words of his mother came forcibly to his mind.

"If she is a flirt during her engagement, don't be too sure that marriage will reform her."

It was true that she had given him many anxious hours just because she wanted to have "some fun"; but he found it easy to forgive and forget it all when they had really settled down in their cozy little home. But now—

"Edna!" he demanded, "why are you so glad Clinton's coming?"

"Stupid old Peter." She pulled his ears gleefully. "I

believe that you are jealous." Her laugh rippled out so infectiously that Lawrence smiled in spite of himself.

Still he reiterated: "Well, why are you glad?"

"Because I want Elinor to have a man to love, and children. She deserves 'em."

"Of course, I suppose I'm a bally old funeral," Lawrence shot out, "but to save me I can't see the connection."

"I know, dear," she cooed contentedly. "You're a man, but such an old darling."

At this point two soft bare arms were flung around the funeral's neck and a perfect deluge of kisses rained warmly on any and every part of his face.

"There, there," he puffed when he was released. "Now let's hear all about it."

"Well," she began, with a very important manner, "ever since Elinor wrote me that terribly lonely letter, I've been trying to get her married."

"You've been trying to get her married?" The grin was broad and complacent now.

"Yes. It's got to be done"—firmly.

"It's got to be done," he echoed, also firmly.

"Stop, Peter," she ordered imperatively. "Mercy, you'd think we were a 'darky' number in vaudeville, the way you drawl things after me."

"Un mille pardons, Madame. Pray proceed."

"That's why I asked her to come and stay for a month in the city. I think I love her more than if she were my real sister; anyhow, we had the same daddy."

"She is awfully fond of children," she continued.

"Yes, I know she thinks the world of our Stanny."

"She does, but that's nothing. Everybody does. He is her half-nephew and the dearest child in the world."

Edna Lawrence's statements were not cleverly constructed but generally pretty forceful.

"Well then?" Peter asked humbly.

"She even loves dirty little street wretches. She could hug 'em, filth and all. Just think of that. Of course, she'd rather have 'em washed."

"I think she would," Lawrence contributed thoughtfully.

"And she can make good things to eat the way all men's mothers used to make 'em."

Her husband didn't dispute this statement; he knew all about that.

For fully half an hour little Mrs. Lawrence prattled enthusiastically on her half-sister's wonderful and varied abilities. It didn't matter in the least, however, what subject she chose; sitting on her husband's knee, she always had an interested listener. Her simplicity and the child-like musical quality of her voice never failed to please him.

"Daddy doesn't need her; in fact, I believe she sometimes feels that she is—well—superfluous"—doubtfully.

"Yes, I understand."

"And she is so terribly unused to meeting people and being in the world that she could never take a position. She wants a home. See?"

He saw all right and innocently wondered where she (his wife) was going to drag Roger Clinton in.

"I don't drag him in at all. He is coming for dinner, to-morrow night in a perfectly dignified manner, and you, Peter, must arrange something to happen by accident so you'll be delayed at the office an hour or so; you'll do that to oblige me, won't you Peter, love?"

"Sure I'm on—but Jove, Edna, I do like my dinner."

"Bless your heart, Larry" (this name came from Lawrence), "you can go over to the club, and we'll save all kinds of nice things for you. Now, you're sleepy, dear. Little Stan was sleepy to-night, too. It must be the weather."

"Must be. But what's the idea of dispensing with my company to-morrow night, little one?"

"Well, you see—it's this way. Elinor is frightfully bashful, and she seems to feel conscious of her ignorance or something like that; and when you and Roger Clinton get together, you talk in such a high and mighty strain that I feel at sea, and I'm sure it would terrify her, and when Roger is alone with us women folk he is such a patient, simple fellow. I've told her that he is a stupid old bore so she isn't scared of his brains. You know that was the reason she wouldn't have anything to do with Mr. Harding—he was so tremendously intellectual; he was a widower of course, but such a dear, and she would have loved his little girl. Well, then I told her how terribly lonely Roger has been since his mother died. She feels so sorry for him, that I wouldn't be surprised if she began to mother him the minute he's inside the door. I guess I'll let Stanny stay up for dinner, then he'll be so cross and sleepy that I'll have to give him all my attention, and I'll bet anything that she'll tell him (I mean Roger) all about the baddest boy in her Sunday School class at home. They say Roger's an infidel, but that won't matter. He won't dare tell her."

"I'm not sure, but I think that he will tell her then that he has dyspepsia, and she'll likely promise to make some little bran cakes for him. She thinks they are a sure cure. Oh, they'll simply have to like each other, Peter Stanhope."

She sighed contentedly.

Her husband's eyes were alight.

"Well! Aren't you a clever little schemer though? Bless me, you certainly know how to map out other folk's destinies. But now, little Stan's mamma is going to be hiked off to bed." So saying he lifted the wriggling, giggling bundle in his arms and marched grandly away.

For seven miserable out-of-town nights Lawrence had had to do without his fireside hour in his big Morris chair. Now on this blessed eighth night he chuckled softly to himself as he looked round the room with an approving glance, and after luxuriously stretching himself he encased

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