

THE CRICKET

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Patsy myself," cried the tyrant, racing down the hall.

Miss Wilder followed, and Mrs. Bryce turned to her book, with a sense of irritated futility which her only child always aroused in her. But the party soon faded from her mind, save when shrill shouts from the lawn below caught her attention.

Eventually Mr. Walter Bryce, familiarly known as Wally, appeared at his wife's door. He was an undersized, dapper little man, with almost no chin. His sole claim to attention lay in the millions accumulated by his father.

"Nice row you've got on down stairs," he remarked.

"Isabelle's birthday party," yawned his wife.

"Looks to me like poor old Wilder's birthday party. Just as I came along, a line of kids was marching up to give their hostess their presents. Old Wilder was hanging on to Isabelle so she wouldn't bolt, and the little beast wouldn't take one of the packages. Said she didn't want their presents. The poor Wilder appealed to me, and I told Isabelle to act like a lady, and whadye think she said to me—right there before all those smart-aleck kids?—'Get out, Wally, this is my party'!"

Mrs. Bryce laughed.

"You ought to know better than to give her a chance like that."

"Look here now, Max, she's got to be attended to. She's the limit. She's got no more manners than an alley cat."

"That's no news to me, Wally."

"Why don't you do something about it?"