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The Major

By Alice E. Allen

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The Major munched his hay and mottled. The girl had given him an apple that morning...

The Major had taken the apple carefully from the girl's soft hand...

Next to Dick, Major loved the girl. Sometimes he grew impatient with her...

Of course the girl loved Dick. One couldn't help that, even if one did grow impatient sometimes...

He went to see Geraldine nearly every week and almost never to see the girl...

But in time the girl had always come well worth waiting for...

The Major chewed away on his crisp hay and meditated...

He went on merrily, trotting easily up the little hill...

When he looked up at the sound of Major's steps...

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very desperate for a month or so and vowed he would die if I refused him...

"Well, who came next?" I was getting interested.

"The college boys, I believe. You know a girl was not considered at all popular in college there in the west unless she had at least one proposal a year."

"You were there a year, as I remember," I interrupted, and you averaged many.

"Our two, and half of the girls had four and five. With Billy and Frank, the two at college made four, and not one counts so far as we."

"Just when and where did they begin to court, may I ask?"

"She ignores my question as she comes to the fifth of her list."

"I had almost forgotten the month you visited Greece the winter after I came home from school. He was an Englishman. He must have proposed to every girl he met that winter, and I came in with the rest. Let me see, who was next? Oh, the doctor, and he really did court for he was a big man, and I liked him."

"Do go on," I entreated. "You see we have had only one that counted so far."

"Well, we went to the mountains in the summer, the highest place—no one around excepting two men and one of them was a millionaire. It was the youngest of the men and there were two other girls there."

"Elizabeth looks so innocent and free from guile when she is pleading her suit, that I find it rather hard to count her out. But I hold up eight counting fingers."

"The next? Now who was next?"

"That winter I recall at home and found all sorts of amusing things. It was that winter Alan had to come. And, you know, Dick it was that winter that you proposed."

"Just then one of the legs broke and a horse fell on the rug. I stopped to pick it up, and raising my head suddenly was surprised to see Elizabeth's cheeks a bright pink."

"No other would ever think to see me now that way—"

"That I was over madly and hopelessly in love with you," I finish.

"You acted very foolishly about this time, didn't you?"

"Alan I never understood why you should have insisted that I was in love with him, because I wasn't with you."

"No reply. So we both went on looking into the fire as though we expected to find some answer there. Presently she turned with one of her quick little glances and laid her hand on my arm."

"What a good old friend you have been, Dicky, in spite of all I have done to hurt you. I often wonder if you are as glad as I that we are such good friends."

"As I look into the dear face I had loved, and would go on loving until the end of time, and thought what it would mean to me not to have the privilege of being her 'comrade,' even though I longed to be something more than that, it was not hard to tell her that I found it my greatest joy to be considered her 'best friend.'"

"So that is why I wanted to talk to you of Mr. Herrington," she continued. "He is the twelfth and—yes, the last of them all."

"But why the last? Why not wait until No. 13 appears?"

"The unlucky thirteenth? Never! Seriously, Dick, I am getting far too old to wait much longer. Mr. Herrington is very nice, and I'll never marry for love, I feel sure, so why not make up my mind to accept him? Dick, you aren't fastening to a word I'm saying."

"I drew my chair close beside hers. 'I have been thinking out a plan to help you, if you care to hear it.' She looked at me and smiled."

"It's this: To save yourself—from the last of the twelve or the possible unlucky thirteenth you not go back and accept one of the others—for instance."

"Her hand lay so temptingly near that I reached over and took it between both of mine."

"For instance, Elizabeth—well! No, don't think I am getting far too old to wait much longer. Mr. Herrington is very nice, and I'll never marry for love, I feel sure, so why not make up my mind to accept him? Dick, you aren't fastening to a word I'm saying."

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Last of the Twelve

By Lucy E. Hampton

Copyright, 1916, by Lucy E. Hampton

"Come in," Elizabeth's voice came from some where near the fireplace and was so faint that I could hardly hear it...

"Dick followed more slowly. Major stood quietly. Things seemed to go wrong at first. Then there came a silence, then another longer one, then there was no sound at all."

After a while the girl came out from under the trees. Her face was sober. She came behind her. She ran up to him—the Major—and gave him some grass. She slipped her arm around his neck and said in a very low voice: "Major, I wouldn't be so stupid as your master is, not for worlds! Would you?"

"Then she ran away again through the soft gold grass shadows. Dick followed. There was a look on his face which Major remembered to have seen there once before when he, the Major, had entered a loop trap."

Major munched the grass and listened. He could hear Dick's voice speaking earnestly. Then came the girl's steady, unflinching, steady, Dick's again. If only they could wait long enough matters would be decided. Then it was that the Major looked at his own feet. He pulled up the hem of his coat and again, each time, Dick had been thinking of other things than the one he was trying to do. It slipped, however, the latter, but Major was free to do as he liked."

With going care he measured his space. There was just room to turn around. Very carefully he did it, kicking the carriage quietly. Then, picking his way over the rough road and broken bridge, he went slowly away. He did not turn. He walked steadily and bravely as for a soldier's march. Any one seeing him would have said that he was driven."

He reached the main road and started off for home. Surely somewhere in the pine woods on that long walk home the two, Dick and the girl, would come to an understanding."

He went on merrily, trotting easily up the little hill, then walking slowly again, coming nearer and nearer to the first dwelling this side of the pine woods, a little farmhouse nestled among the maples."

A woman pulling weeds from a flower bed looked up at the sound of Major's steps. She pushed back her hat that she glanced at the empty carriage. Then she sprang to her feet and called "Whoa?"

But the Major didn't stop. The woman ran down the walk and through the gate and caught his bridle. "You're Dick Churchill's horse," she said with a soft touch on his head. "Where is your master?"

The Major didn't wish to talk. And he did wish to be on his way. But the woman didn't understand. How could she? She was only a woman. She led him through a gate and along a driveway to a big barn. He went readily enough. The Major was always polite to the girl and her apples and tins of sugar."

In the barn the woman fastened him securely and gave him a drink of water and a handful of hay. "Your master 'll be along soon enough looking for you up," she said as she went back to her work."

Almost an hour later Dick walked hurriedly along the road and up to the farmhouse. Major heard his step and his voice. "Can I borrow a horse and carriage here?" he was saying. "My horse has gone off without me."

"Guess you'll find him in the barn," said the woman. "He went walking along by here quite a spell ago. Anything wrong?"

"There was nothing wrong. In fact, to the Major's way of thinking, everything was right, for Dick's face looked just as it did after he (Major) had won that race many years ago."

When Dick and the Major reached the woman's there was the girl sitting on the pine as the situation itself. And her eyes—well, the Major just wished she'd look at him as she did at Dick."

"Oh, Dick," was all she said. But Major knew."

Buffon's Lassness.

Buffon goes always with the sup, and he used often to tell by what means he had accustomed himself to get out of bed so early. "In my youth," said he, "it was very fond of sleep. It robbed me of a great deal of my time, but my poor Joseph this domestic was of great service in enabling me to overcome it. I promised to give Joseph a crown every time that he could make me get-up at 4."

"The next morning he did not fail to awake and torment me, but he received only abuse. The day after he did the same, with no better success, and I was obliged at once to confess that I had lost my time. I told him that he did not know how to manage his business; that he ought to think of my promise and not to mind my threats. The day following he employed force, and I begged for indulgence, I bit him because, I stormed, but Joseph persisted. I was therefore obliged to comply, and he was rewarded every day for the abuse which he suffered at the moment when I awoke by thinking accompanied with a crown, which he received about an hour after. Well, I am indebted to poor Joseph, for ten or a dozen of the volumes of my work."

"Why, you see—well, I'm ashamed to tell you what I have been thinking. I don't care enough for him to marry him, I'm afraid. But he happened to be the last—well, I'll call him the last of twelve."

"The last of twelve—what?" I demanded. "You don't mean to tell me, Elizabeth Denton, that you have had twelve separate and distinct lovers in your short life of twenty-four years?"

"Most of them did not count, they were so long ago; but they were just as serious as the others while they lasted. You can't guess who was my first lover, Dick. Trenton! He proposed to me one night at a party. I was only fourteen, I think. I remember we had some sort of games, and in one of them he chose me as the one to level best, and afterward came the declaration in the conservatory. Only a short time after this Cousin Frank proposed. You never knew he was one of my old lovers, did you? He was

very desperate for a month or so and vowed he would die if I refused him...

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