



He Understood Women

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Illustrations by Dalton Stevens



HE incident was certainly grotesque, yet it serves to introduce Marcia Morse, expert and popular ingénue of the American theater, especially when told in her own words. Alas! if we could also catch the peculiar, whimsical, alluringly feminine smile that played over her pretty face as she spoke, it would be better still.

"You remember that poor Gertie Colburn," she said, "who was always haunting the offices and getting jobs to appear in act three as one of the neighbors? Well, Gertie had a mother,—a real one,—and she died, and the poor girl had nobody in the world to help her; so of course I did it. I had to pick out the casket, if you please, and the undertaker came around behind, after the first act of the *matinée*, with a box of samples of linings and things. He was a funny little man with a bald head and a comedy frock-coat, and feeling real devilish at being in an actress's dressing-room. He showed me the samples and rattled off his spiel mechanically, but his heart was n't in his work. He was really making goo-goo eyes at me over those dreadful things. And there was poor Gertie, two doors away, just breaking her heart, with her mother dead, and I flirting outrageously with the bald-headed undertaker because I just could n't disappoint him. He did so want me to be what he thought actresses were!"

"Marcia, you're hopeless," said her friend with a laugh. "You'd flirt with *anything*."

"That's not true," Marcia retorted. "The trouble is, anything will flirt with me, and I'm too kind-hearted."

She was sitting on the veranda of her

new summer home as she spoke. Marcia Morse's summer home would have struck the casual observer as a paradox. The spoiled darling of the fluffy school of American sentimental comedies, whose picture adorned hundreds of dressers at Williams and Yale, had purchased a farmhouse in a remote corner of the southern New England hills, a house over a hundred years old, repainted and papered it in exquisite taste, furnished it simply with good mahogany, added a side veranda, a colonial portico over the front door, bought a horse and buggy, and for three months was living the simple life.

"You're a queer one," her friend went on. "I suppose you know that young carpenter who's been building your front porch is head over heels in love with you, and took about a week longer to do the job than he needed to?"

Marcia laughed her rippling, infectious laugh, which added about fifty dollars a week to her salary.

"But he did it just as I wanted him to," she said, "and that's worth the extra time. If I'd been here in the spring, I'd have got a better job all over the house."

"Well, I must say," the other woman went on, "that if every man I met fell in love with *me*, I would n't bury myself up here among the rubes. I'd go to Newport or Bar Harbor and catch a million dollars."

"But I don't want a million dollars; I've got all that's good for me now," said Marcia. "I just love my little old house and these rolling, wooded hills, and there are just enough people of our profession around to talk shop with when I feel I have to."

"Who?" cried the other, scornfully. She was somewhat older than Marcia, and

mostly played shrewd women-of-the-world rôles. "That grumpy Sawyer person who makes you work like a pack-horse when he stages your play, and that young freak who paints scenery that looks like a dope dream, and that high-brow critic Thomas, and all three of their dull wives; and finally, Harold Winthrop, who writes such wonderful plays that nobody will produce 'em! That 's your fascinating 'colony.' Honest to God, Marcia, I don't see how you stand it."

"But, you see, dear, I have you for company over the week-end," said Marcia, sweetly.

She was getting tired of her guest, who certainly did not fit into this rustic setting. Presently she left her to doze in a hammock, and went out to a pasture knoll behind her house. Why did she herself fit here? she wondered. Marcia was a clever young woman; she knew that. She had been on the stage since she was sixteen years old, a decade now, and before that her schooling had been of the most casual sort, picked up anywhere as her widowed father, a musical-comedy conductor who had once aspired to higher things, journeyed about the country. She had finally run away from a school near Boston and appeared in her father's own chorus, where her tears and pleading finally induced him to let her remain. She had a little speaking part before the season was over, and before he died he had seen her on the way to fame. The road had really been ridiculously easy, she realized. She had been popular from the first, and took to the stage like a duck to water. But where had she learned how to design a colonial porch for the carpenter or how to appreciate colonial woodwork and good mahogany? Why did n't she prefer the sort of thing her friend Hope Malden, back in the hammock, preferred? Why did she come here to this rustic intervale in the New England hills and find it so soothing to her spirit?

"It must be papa's secret love for Bach coming out," she thought, "or maybe my mother's character."

She had never known her mother, the

daughter of a Connecticut clergyman whose family had dropped her when she married a man of the theater; but her father had talked of her often, and always with a note of wistful reverence.

Marcia raised her eyes and looked across the intervale to a small white farm-house beside the road which climbed the hill on the farther side. In that house Harold Winthrop lived and wrote the plays her friend so scornfully said nobody would produce. That was n't quite true, because two of his plays had been produced by the most artistic manager in New York, and had enjoyed great critical favor and one of them some mild patronage. Moreover, they had been printed, and were read by the more serious students of drama. Marcia had the texts, and something in them stirred her deeply. They had a crisp style, a high seriousness, an intellectual weight, in startling contrast to the amiable piffle in which she habitually played, and the heroines demanded work of the actress, and thought and deep feeling. Down in her secret heart she cherished the ambition to play the heroine in a Winthrop drama.

She had not met Winthrop yet, though she had been in her new house two weeks. He had never been at the teas and parties in the other homes of the "colony," for his house had been his grandfather's, and he was rather a native than a summer superimposition. He lived in the old place quite alone now save for a farmer and his wife, who kept the house, and he spent a good deal of time out on the farm, working hard himself, for it was generally believed that he was poor. His only family was a younger brother, whom he was sending through college. Marcia had seen him only from a distance, a tall, wiry, lean-faced Yankee type uncannily like a picture she had of her maternal grandfather, the Connecticut clergyman. Just why he interested her so much she could not say, but she sat here now gazing across at his farm, and a slow discontent with the work she had been doing in the world grew in her bosom. If she could appreciate colonial mahogany and the charm of simplicity

in a house, and want it about her, why should she be content with less than the best craftsmanship in the plays she acted? Why was it that her pretty face and irresistible feminine lure, which she knew she possessed, should keep her on a lower level than her mind and spirit could appreciate? Was she doomed always to work below her best, as her father had been? Why should she have to go back to New York late in August to rehearse "Mary's Silk Stocking," in which she would n't do much more than show her own, pout a little, laugh a good deal, and be made sentimental love to by a leading man who wore irreproachable clothes?

She looked back at her own house, freshly painted, with its three thousand dollars' worth of mahogany furniture and its three tiled bath-rooms, and then across the interval to the old farm-house where Winthrop lived, which doubtless had no bath-room at all.

"He could probably write plays like 'Mary's Silk Stocking,'" she thought, "and put in a flock of bath-rooms. Why does n't he?"

Not wishing to have to answer even to herself, she went back to her veranda.

Coming around the corner, she heard voices. Hope had waked up and was talking with a young man, a boy, rather, of twenty or twenty-one. He was an extremely good-looking boy, too, and Marcia smiled on him sweetly as she advanced.

"This is Mr. Winthrop, Marcia," Hope said. "He came to see you, but I would n't tell him where you were. He was so much better company than you are that I made him wait."

"You—you are not Harold Winthrop!" Marcia exclaimed.

The boy laughed.

"Hardly! He's my big brother. I'm home on my vacation to see him before I go to camp. I heard you were here, so I came to call. We're old settlers here, you know, but brother's such a hermit he never makes calls. You must excuse him."

The boy was looking at Marcia now with unconcealed admiration, and blushed happily when she extended her hand.

"I know your brother's awfully busy on a new play," she said. "Besides, men always have to have women folks to do their social duties for them—or else nice young brothers."

"Well, I was pretty keen to meet you," the boy admitted frankly. "I saw you from nigger heaven last winter, and—and—well, you were fine!"

Marcia beamed upon him.

"I like to hear you say that," she said. "I wish I could hear your brother say it, too. I know he does n't like me."

"Why, how could he help it?" young Winthrop asserted gallantly.

"But he does n't, does he?" she persisted.

"Well, he thinks Mrs. Fiske is *the* actress," the boy admitted.

"So she is," said Marcia.

"Humph! she can't even dress," put in Hope.

"She does n't have to," Marcia asserted. "If you and I could do as much with a page speech as she can do saying nothing, we'd be great."

"Of course she is wonderful," the youth agreed; "but I'd like to see you in one of Hal's plays, just the same. I bet it would go then. He's just finished up one now that he thinks Cohen and Glass are going to take, and you'd be wonderful in that."

"You dear boy!" cried Marcia, "I could kiss you for those words!" Young Winthrop blushed furiously, and she added:

"Don't be scared; I won't. Would you like to see my little house?"

The boy followed her rapturously into the low living-room, with its huge old fireplace, its fine mahogany, its bright curtains and mezzotints, and she saw his eyes rove about, and noted with a thrill that he, who instinctively knew, approved. Indeed, there was even surprise on his frank young face.

"Did you expect to find a champagne glass and a cigarette-stub lying on the golden-oak table?" she asked slyly.

He colored again, stammered, and said finally:

"Brother would be dippy over this fur-

niture. We 've got some old stuff that was grandfather's. You must see it."

"But you have it; I collect it. Your brother would n't forget that," she replied.

"Why are you so down on brother?" he suddenly flared up. "That was n't a nice thing to say."

"It was a horrid thing," she admitted. "I feel horrid to-day. I want to quit piffle and act in one of his plays, and I know he would n't let me, without even asking him; so I 'm just catty. That 's the way we actresses are built. You 'll have tea, won't you?"

"Yes; but I 'll ask brother. To-night."

"Don't you dare!" cried Marcia. "If he does n't think of me for the part himself, it means he could never see me in it. Don't you dare!"

She held him with her eyes as she spoke, a challenging, provocative glance, and then let him carry the tea-tray to the veranda, putting it gaily into his hands.

Hope departed the next morning, but in the afternoon young Bob Winthrop was back again.

"Cohen and Glass have taken Hal's play!" he cried. "Gee! I'm glad for old brother. Honest, he needs the coin; for I 'm a big drain on him in spite of a scholarship, and he wants me to go to medical school and he wants to get the barn fixed and tile drain the bog and build a bath-room and do a lot more to the old place."

"I 'm glad, too," said Marcia. "Sam Cohen will push his play hard, and not just put it in a dim little high-brow theater and let it die. You did n't dare disobey me, did you?"

An older and less infatuated man would have smiled at the quick shadow of vexation that crossed her face when he answered, "No, of course not"; but Bob was serenely innocent.

"I tell you what I did do, though," he went on; "I just gave brother a blowing up for not coming over to call and see if there was anything he could do to help you get your place straightened up—outside, I mean, the farm and things. I just gave it to him good, and he promised he 'd come."

"When is his lordship going to condescend?" Marcia inquired, with a quick, nervous laugh.

"There you go again, slanging brother," said the boy. "I 'll not like you if you do that."

His tone was so naïvely serious with hurt loyalty that Marcia flashed her softest smile upon him and touched his sleeve.

"You must admit it does n't flatter me much when your brother has to be scolded into calling on me," she said. "You know, we actresses are a spoiled and pampered lot. We expect all men to be our willing slaves. You ask your brother if that is n't so."

Bob was thrilling under the touch of her fingers on his arm. He could only look into her face and answer:

"Maybe brother's afraid of you. I—I don't blame him."

The boy colored at his boldness, but Marcia only laughed, with a look at him from under drooped lashes, and said he was a "silly boy."

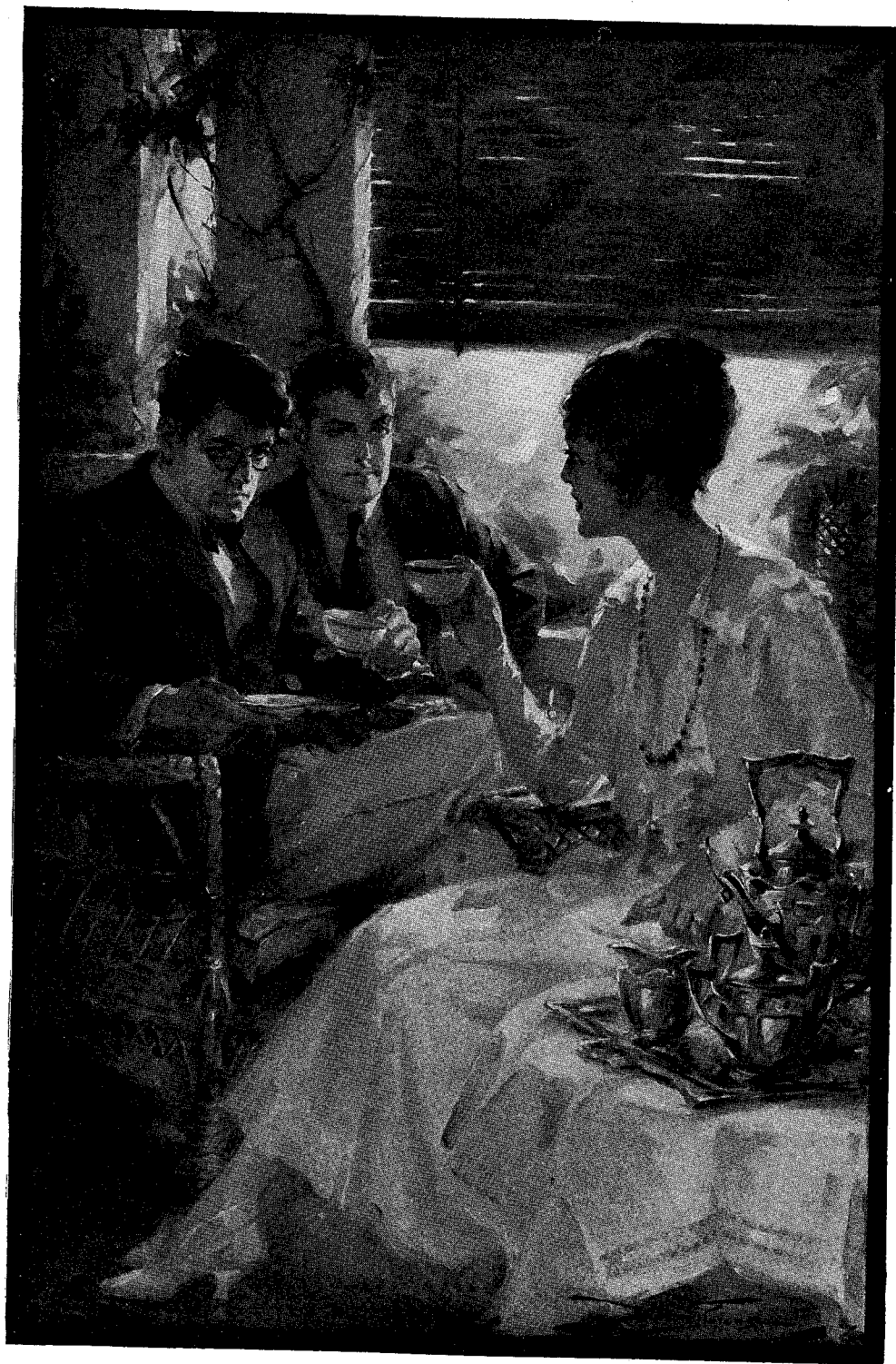
They went to get the tea-things, and when they returned to the veranda Harold Winthrop was standing there contemplating his brother's hat. The color flamed to Marcia's cheeks as Bob introduced them, and she knew her hand was cold as she put it into his. His hand was large and brown and hard, with rough nails—the hand of a farmer. He was looking at her narrowly through shell-rimmed gold spectacles, and though she kept her eyes on his, she felt curiously, unreasonably on trial, and resented it.

"Bob tells me I 'm very remiss in not calling on my new neighbor," he was saying; "but you must forgive me, as I 'm a farmer, and we can't get help this year."

"I 've always thought of you as a dramatist," she managed to say. "The storekeeper told me I was feeding my horse with your oats, but I was more interested in feeding my own mind with your plays."

The speech sounded forced and sententious as soon as she had emitted it, and she sat down at the tea-tray and began to pour the tea rather hastily.

"So you 've read my plays," he said. "I



"I OUGHT TO BE MAD AT YOU," SHE SAID"

'm flattered by that, I assure you. Strange as it may seem, they were written for actors, not women's clubs."

"Your brother tells me you've sold a new one to Cohen and Glass. They'll see that it gets to actors, I'm sure. They may be short on art, but they're long on profits. They really manage me, you know; Heine is just one of their blinds. Will you have cream in your tea? I suppose you'd think me awfully bold if I asked you to let me read the new play?"

She passed him his tea with her sweetest smile.

"Thanks," he said, taking the saucer between a thumb and finger that seemed in danger of crushing the fragile china. Then he hesitated a moment. "I'm a blunt man, Miss Morse," he said, "and, unlike some of my fellow-playwrights, I loathe reading my stuff to other people or otherwise inflicting it on 'em. If you're not just polite, and really mean you'd like to read it—why?"

"I'll be blunt, too," she said, and smiled again. "I like your plays because there is real psychology in your women's rôles. Some day I want to act in one of them. I'd like to see if there's a chance in this one."

"Gee, Hal, she could do the lead great!" put in Bobbie.

Marcia threw the youngster a secret, intimate, warning glance, and then watched the older man's face.

"I'm a pretty good business proposition," she added, with an apologetic laugh.

"Yes, I'm aware of it," he said slowly.

"But you don't think I'm much of an actress?"

"I think you do what you do more charmingly than any woman on our stage," he answered quietly; "but, to be quite honest, what you do is n't what I want done in my play."

"Mansfield started as *Ko-ko*, and ended as *Peer Gynt*," said she. "We all have to do what they'll let us. Besides, I could n't hurt your play much just reading it, could I?"

There was just a touch of pleading in her tone, and of wounded pride and sweet-

tempered irony. She lifted large eyes to Winthrop's face as she spoke.

"You ought to write a tragi-comedy some day, called 'The Ambitious Ingénue,'" she added.

Winthrop met her gaze, and a slight smile crossed his grave, thin face.

"There's no denying you," he said. "I won't even point out the intimate connection between *Ko-ko* and *Peer Gynt*. I'll bring the manuscript to-morrow. But please don't try to take my play away from me!"

Marcia bit her lip.

"I ought to be mad at you," she said. "A lot of playwrights would be tickled to death if I wanted to act their pieces."

"I'm delighted at your wanting to," Winthrop answered, "so long as you don't do it."

He smiled gravely at her again, she fancied with a certain mockery in his eyes, and rose to go.

"You'd better take your brother," she said, "or I might exercise my fatal fascination on him, too."

"I fear it's too late to save him," said Winthrop in the same tone.

"And I'm sure he does n't want to be saved," the boy cried gallantly, but with comic sincerity.

"You are much nicer than your brother, but I have to study now," she said smilingly. "Even my silly little parts take some study."

She patted the boy familiarly on the sleeve, and put out a friendly hand to Winthrop; but her eyes challenged him, and Bob was suddenly jealously aware of some sex spark passing across between them, over his head as it were. He went, moody and reluctant.

The next morning Winthrop left the manuscript before Marcia was up, and right after breakfast she took it out to her favorite pasture knoll to read it. It was a strange play, and her first thought was, "Why on earth did Cohen and Glass accept this?" It was called "The Beauty." The heroine was a lovely, gracious being who cast a spell of sex enchantment over every male she met, till after two acts she

had a veritable procession at her chariot-wheels, all variously diverted from their most useful channels in life. So natural, even artless, was her sex spell that her conquests cost her nothing, and she gave nothing in return. She was not at all a vampire in the vulgar sense; she was the apotheosis of the pretty girl. So far the play ran in a vein of youthful and romantic comedy, just tinged with the underlying satire. Then tragedy entered, grotesque and startling. There was an accident, the heroine was terribly burned about the face, and she actually appeared on the stage disfigured with a livid cheek and forehead, and one saw her admirers drop away, some brutally, some pityingly, but all go, while she, who had no weapons but her sex charm, who had given nothing to them for bond, grew into a miserable figure of woe. It was *Timon of Athens* in terms of the boudoir. Only one man stood by, whom she had least favored because he was least flattering. He offered his skin to save her loveliness, and it was not until she had accepted the sacrifice and then suddenly waked to the realization that it was sacrifice, and rejected it, and in that rejection found a soul within herself, that she became woman.

The bald synopsis can convey nothing of the skill and tact and psychological truth which made this bizarre tale enthralling. At first Marcia instinctively recoiled at the third act, and thought of the fate of any pretty actress who would show herself thus disfigured to an audience. It was grotesque, and impossible in the theater. But then she began to realize that it was only as the girl became unlovely to look at that she became pathetic, at first merely painfully so, then tragically so. It was this brutal wiping away of the physical charm, the sex appeal, that bared the soul of the woman, and ultimately enabled her through suffering to reach sacrifice, and through sacrifice, love—love, which thus stood up above the romantically sensual suggestion of the early acts, a thing of calm and exalted beauty. Marcia turned the last page of the manuscript with glowing eyes. This

odd play of a butterfly in a boudoir, this thing of modern silks and the latest smart patter, which Cohen and Glass were going to toss out to Broadway, was burning with a high sincerity, a deep purpose, was, perhaps, the life creed of the strange, aloof, lean Yankee across the valley there in his weathered farm-house. And what a chance for an actress! To tempt, to cajole, to fascinate, and flirt through two acts, and then to fight an audience with almost the odds against her of the woman in the play, and just by sheer emotional poignancy and spiritual power to drive through to victory! A great ambition seized her. That *must* be her rôle! Of course she could play the first two acts better than any actress in America; she knew that. And the last two? Well, it was her chance. She sat there in the pasture planning the rôle till her maid came searching for her to tell her lunch was cold.

That afternoon Winthrop rode up on horseback. She was glad to see that he had left his brother behind.

"Put your horse in the stable," she said, "and let 's walk out in the pasture. I can't talk so well in a veranda chair, and I 've got to talk awfully well to-day!"

The man noted her shining eyes, with a question in his own, and followed her.

"I think it is a wonderful play," she said without skirmish. "I don't see why Cohen and Glass accepted it, to be sure, and act three has got to be played like Duse to get by; but if it is so played—oh, it will make real people, real husbands and wives and lovers, look into one another's eyes in silence!"

Winthrop shot her a quick glance.

"If some critic should say that," he declared, "I 'd have hope for the tribe. Cohen and Glass took it because Cohen has a funny little streak of idealism in him, and Glass thought the third act was 'some-thin' new, my boy, a brand-new punch.' You don't think it 's too grotesque for the stage?"

"I did think so at first," she answered, "till I 'd read the whole act. Then I began to see how it could be played—"

The man stirred uneasily.

"You would n't consider me for the rôle?" she switched quickly.

He shook his head.

"Why not? Frankly, please. Let 's talk right out. I love the play, and I 'm crazy to act it. Cohen and Glass would have to give it to me, too, if I wanted it, or I 'd quit 'em, and they don't want that. It 's fired my ambition as nothing else ever did. I feel sure I could do it, and I don't care if that sounds horribly egotistical. But we must think of the play first, must n't we?"

"I 'm afraid I must, anyhow," Winthrop answered a little drily. "It means a lot to me to have it succeed in the box-office sense, and I know your pull there; but there are things more important than the box-office to an honest writer—hang it, don't make me drool platitudes! You know what I mean."

"Yes, I know what you mean; but you have n't yet told me why you think I could n't play it."

"I—I don't know that I can tell you," he answered evasively.

"Have you picked somebody, if I may ask?" she tacked.

"Yes, I have. I don't know about C. and G."

"Who, if I may ask again?"

"Rita Norman," he said.

Marcia turned away quickly to repress what she knew was an unpleasant look on her face; then she brought her sweetest smile full upon him.

"You 'll admit I could play the first two acts better than Rita could," she said, "won't you?"

Again a faint smile crossed his lean face as he met her gaze.

"In a way you could," he replied, "and in a way you could n't."

"I don't understand. You think I 'm about like *Elsie* in the play,—oh, yes, you do!—so I 'd just be playing myself. What could be easier than that?"

"Ah, you 're wrong!" he exclaimed. "It is n't easy to play oneself; it 's very difficult. If a play is trying to point out the wider significance of a character, it can't

be played by a person like that character, but only by a person who can stand outside of the character as well as inside and make its meanings clear."

Marcia bit her lip.

"You *are* frank," she said. "And you don't think I could play acts three and four either, I suppose, because they get beyond what I am, so I could n't understand 'em. You don't leave me much scope for the practice of my profession, Mr. Winthrop."

He looked at her thoughtfully and not unkindly. Indeed, his eyes dwelt on her flushed face with a lingering regard.

"You said to be frank, Miss Morse," he finally began. "The difference between my plays as I try to write them and the plays I have seen you in is that I try to go below the case to the meaning of it, while your authors are content to accept the romantic illusions of the crowd and never go below at all. Whenever I have seen you, you have been the woman being loved or, rather, desired, never the woman loving. Like my *Elsie*, you have cast the sex spell of youth and loveliness, as you 've cast it over my brother in real life, and as you could cast it over me if you tried—"

"You flatter me!" she put in.

"But you have never made me feel that you could play with a double edge," he went on quietly, "at once casting this spell and explaining to an audience its significant lack. For the pathos of the small soul finding itself suddenly alone, for the glory and beauty of sacrifice, out of which real love is born to make a religion of desire, I honestly doubt the present adequacy of your art. Yet without that pathos my third act fails; without that glory the whole message of my drama remains undelivered. I 'm very sorry—"

"You need n't be," she said briefly. "It is I who am sorry that I ever spoke to you about it. So you think I 'm just a pretty little vampire!"

"My dear girl," said he, "are n't you rather reducing to off-stage personalities a question of acting? I think you have the lure of feminine youth and loveliness, yes. But to say, or even remotely to imply, that

you lack the sacrificial flame would be something of which I am quite incapable. I only say that in my poor judgment your art is not yet mature enough to suggest these emotions on the stage. Please, I'm not a boor!"

She looked at him narrowly. He was dressed in a last year's suit, she noted, and his hair needed cutting. His hands were hard and brown, and the back of his neck was tanned almost leathery; yet he had the same high forehead, the thin face, the sternly kind eyes of her maternal grandfather. After all, she reflected, she was of his blood; she could see through him. Sacrifice! Her grandfather had sacrificed her mother to his bigoted Puritanism. Now this man would sacrifice the success of his play to his ideal of its representation, ignoring the fact that the public would rather have youth and charm than the skill of a Duse, and brutally telling her, too, that she was a little flirt whose ambitions were hopeless till, no doubt, she had gone through some kind of suffering. Yes, that was the idea, the old conventional idea, that the artist must suffer before she can act or sing or play. Imagination is negligible. Well, no wonder such people could n't understand imagination.

"It is perfectly true I have never loved a man," she suddenly found herself saying; "it is perfectly true I've never had to sacrifice anything in my easy, selfish life. I'm very sorry. I should like to love somebody. I even hope it is n't too late yet, though I'm twenty-six, you know. But because Salvini had never murdered a woman did n't keep him from giving a tolerably good performance of *Othello*, I'm told. Of course, I never saw him. There is a thing called imagination, you know."

Again Winthrop smiled that grave smile of his.

"But doubtless Salvini had felt like killing a woman," he said.

"And doubtless I've felt like loving a man," she retorted, not letting her eyes fall from his.

There was an electric moment of silence.

"And why did n't you?" he asked.

"Because he was too much like my grandfather," she replied.

"And your grandfather was—"

"One of them was a teacher of the violin in France," she answered, and rose abruptly.

Marcia spent an uncomfortable evening. She was quite unused to being denied anything she wanted, and it seemed to her that she had never wanted anything so much as to act this part. Her imagination was on fire with it, and all that was sincere and ambitious in her artistic consciousness urged her on to the trial. Yet this proud, cold, self-sufficient author was going to give it to Rita Norman! Rita Norman! Why, she was thirty-five, if she was a day, and looked it, too, if you used glasses on her, and had *never* been as pretty as she was right this minute. Of course Rita had had more training, but that could n't make up for the lack of youth and beauty. Besides, *she* 'd had training, also. She knew a thing or two Winthrop did n't give her credit for.

Well, if she wanted the part so badly, why did n't she go to Cohen and Glass and ask for it? A lot Winthrop would have to say about his leading lady if they made up their minds differently. Why did n't she?

Suddenly she knew why she did n't, and it was n't because her pride made her want to win the rôle from Winthrop's own hands, either, which she had at first told herself. No, it was because she could n't go behind his back. Why? She had schemed for rôles before now—rôles she far less desired than this. Well, he was Harold Winthrop, and she just could n't.

Yet why should n't she? Why should n't she get even with the man who had told her she did n't know how to act with a double edge, and who had virtually told her that in real life she was always the woman being loved—or, rather, desired—and never the woman loving? She blushed in the dimness of her chamber, where she had turned the lamp low. So he would n't even call it love! This spell she cast, this spell she could n't help casting, this spell she admitted she had used at times to

further her own ends, had to be transmuted by some mysterious chemistry of suffering or sacrifice, or wrapped in some aura of spiritual ecstasy, before he would call it love. "He who would find his soul must first lose it"—the words came to her out of memory. Love, for Winthrop, seemed to be something akin to the soul, to religion, about which she had never so much as thought. What a gulf there was between her and him, after all! And yet there was her grandfather.

"Why should I be sitting here thinking about him, anyhow?" she suddenly said aloud.

Then, in the dimness, she knew why; the answer came. She put a white hand on her bosom, and her lips parted as she stared out of the window across the moon-soaked fields.

The next morning it was a resolute Marcia who took the manuscript of "Mary's Silk Stocking" up to the pasture for three hours of study. She had been working only a short time, however, when she saw a high-powered car pull up into her drive. Hastening to the house, what was her amazement to see Sam Cohen standing on the veranda, clad in a ridiculous motor-cap and long duster, while a chauffeur in plum-colored livery sat stolidly at the wheel of the great car in which the little man must have bobbed about on the rough road like a pea in a punch-bowl.

"Hello, my dear! Surprised to see me, eh?" he said, patting her hand. "Out hoein' potatoes, eh?"

"Out studying this silly part," she answered, showing him the manuscript.

"Well, well, let's sit down. I want to talk to you about that. Came up to see you and Winthrop and Sawyer, and this Homes feller who paints scenery the high-brows are all dippy about—you know, Gordon Craig stuff. Stopped the night at an inn down the road—rotten place. But it's hot in town, my dear; thought I'd get away. You got a pretty place here. Ain't much noise. A chicken woke me up this mornin'—regular chicken, I mean."

"How mean of him!" Marcia said, and smiled. "You were going to talk to me about 'Mary's Silk Stocking'?"

"Oh, yes. Like the part?"

"I hate it."

"Nonsense! It's a typical Morse part; you *love* it, my dear. However, how'd you like to tackle a regular part, the kind the Fisks and Marlowes want to eat up?"

"What are you giving me?"

"A chance, dearie, a chance—what the critics say we managers never give you actors. Morrie and I have plunged on a play by this guy Winthrop, and Morrie's getting cold feet on it an' says it needs you to pull it through; an' I told him he was balmy in the bean, that the peepul would n't never stand for seein' you in a high-brow rôle, Sardoudlin' all over the shop. But he said they'd stand anythin' from you,—once, anyhow,—and it kind o' tickled me to put you across in a regular show. So it's yours, my dear, if you want it."

Marcia suppressed all signs of excitement. Instead, her eyes narrowed, and she regarded the little man shrewdly.

"What are the terms?" she asked.

"Just the same, of course. Five hundred per, and fifteen per cent. of the gross over seventy-five hundred."

"But you don't believe it'll run so much over seventy-five hundred as 'Mary's Silk Stocking' would, do you?"

"My dear, ain't you willin' to make a sacrifice for your art?" he asked plaintively. "Besides, you ain't dropped below ninety-five hundred in five years, not even in 'Betty's Big Match,' and God knows—"

Marcia smiled.

"Does Mr. Winthrop know of your choice?" she asked.

"Huh! he's only the author!" said Cohen. "I'm goin' to his house now,—it's across the valley, ain't it?—and I'll send the manuscript back to you by Patrick-Alphonse here," with a jerk of the thumb toward the impassive driver. "You read it, an' give me an answer to-night, eh?"

"I've read it," she said briefly.

"Eh? You have? What do you think? Some darin' show, ain't it?"



"'I THOUGHT I KNEW A LOT ABOUT WOMEN,' SAID HE, 'BUT I WAS A FOOL'"

"Yes, it's an interesting play," she answered judiciously.

"Well, will you do it? I'd like to know before I see Winthrop. He'll holler at havin' you, my dear."

"Will he?" Marcia spoke with sudden bitterness. Here was her chance. Why should she let it go? She could say "Yes" now, and it was settled. Besides, she whispered to herself, it was really for his good. She could send Bobbie through college for him. With Rita Norman in the part, the play was as good as done for. All around, then, to say "Yes" was the thing to do. Yet she hesitated.

"I—I'll tell you to-night," she finally said. "Come here to dinner. Do me one favor, will you? Don't tell Mr. Winthrop that you've seen me. Promise? He—he'd think I'd put you up to it, and then he'd *never* consent."

"O. K.," Cohen answered. "I get you, dearie. But you'll play it, or I miss my guess. I knew you had an itch to be a real actress. I've seen you scratchin'."

That afternoon Marcia had her horse harnessed, and drove off down a back country road, through the woods and beside a tumbling brook. She wanted to get away, to think and not to think, to make up her mind and not to make up her mind. What she desired above everything in all her career was in her grasp at last, and so easily in her grasp, as everything had always come to her! And yet to grasp it was to strike a blow in the dark at him—at him and his silly, narrow idealism, or his rarefied standards, or whatever you called it. Call it what you please, though, it was the essence of him; it was what made him—how should she put it?—not "splendid," not "noble," perhaps just "fine" was the best.

She was five miles from home on the return journey, her mind and heart still in chaos, when, jogging around a bend, she saw him just ahead, striding along in the same direction. Turning at the sound of her buggy, his eyes flashed recognition, and he cried:

"Whoa! I just this minute wanted to see you. Will you give me a lift?"

"Certainly," she answered, pulling up. He wasted no words.

"I was tramping to settle my mind," he said. "Who do you think came down on me this morning like a bomb from a Zeppelin? Sammy Cohen! He says he and Glass have picked you for *Elsie*, and he won't listen to Rita Norman—"

"And now you want to ask me to refuse?" said Marcia, quickly.

"Oh, no," he answered. "That would n't be reasonable or even within my rights. I've simply been debating whether I should refuse to sign the contract at all, try the play on somebody else, or take a chance on Cohen's faith in you—and your own faith, which is more to the point, of course. It was n't an easy decision, Miss Morse, as you can guess after our talk yesterday. The play means a lot to me, more than you can guess, and if its message is n't got across, I shall bleed heart's blood. But Bobbie—well, Bobbie's got to go back to Cambridge, that's all. He's *got* to; I promised father. So I was coming to tell you, Miss Morse, and to ask you to do your best for our little play,—it is ours now, you know,—and to believe me when I say that I'll never speak another word of doubt now we're in the boat on the open sea. We'll work and pull together; and there's my hand on it!"

Marcia was looking straight ahead at the bobbing head of her horse, which she saw through the blur of a sudden mist of inexplicable tears. She put out her hand mechanically, and felt his big, hard fingers close over hers. "Fine"—yes, that was the word. She did n't want to take back her hand. Indeed, she let it rest in his a long moment without daring to meet his glance.

"You've said some very hard things to me," she almost whispered, "and I tried to be angry with you; but I could n't be more than vexed, because I know you are honest, and I'm afraid correct, too, in some ways. But I can't help my faith in myself, and we both have faith in the play, and I'll work for it as I never worked before."

She gave his fingers a little pressure, and withdrew her hand. Then something

made her turn her face to his, and she saw him looking at her wistfully, almost sadly.

"Why—why do you look at me that way?" she said.

"Because you are so young and so lovely," he answered. "Perhaps I am losing *my* faith in the play. It seems to me the world was made for youth and loveliness, this road with its shadows, that brook with its lisp, the June wind, and the but-tercups. All the rest is but an evil that we have glorified to make necessity endurable."

Again she averted her face, and made no answer for a long time. Finally she said:

"You must n't lose your faith. You—you must n't!" And then she drove on again in silence—a silence so charged that the road seemed interminable; and yet she would not believe it when he asked to be let down at the bars that opened on a short cut to his farm.

Cohen arrived at her house half an hour later.

"Well, my dear, a busy and successful day! Sawyer is going to stage 'The Beauty,'" he cried, "and Homes is going right to work on artistic scenery that will be the final, ultimate, last word in bug-housiness."

"You mean Mr. Winthrop has accepted me?" she asked, with a show of incredulity.

"Yes, my dear. He had to walk the pill down,—ten miles, he said,—but he got it swallowed, and is feeling better already. So it's all right. I'm going to beat it for little old New York right after dinner, and tell Morrie, and ease what he calls his mind. I like to drive at night, just borin' a hole into the dark. Better'n a play, I call it."

Marcia was tapping the veranda floor slowly with her foot.

"You're not forgetting something, are you?" she asked.

"What, my dear?"

"You know, you've not asked me yet if I consented."

Cohen's fat sides shook.

"Oh, that's a detail I *had* forgot!" he

laughed. "Sure, *you* 'll consent all right. I seen that all along."

"You understand women almost as well as Mr. Winthrop, don't you?"

"I understand *actresses*, my dear," he said.

"Thanks," said she. "What would you do with the play if I *did* n't consent?"

"That's one o' them hy—hypo—what do you call 'em?—questions, ain't it? You *will* consent. It's the play we've picked for you this season, my dear."

A note of disagreeable harshness entered his voice, and Marcia met it with compressed lips.

"I would n't forget, if I were you, that I've not sent my new contract back yet," she retorted. "You won't pick any play for me that I don't like, this season or any other season. Just get that fixed in your head. I asked you, What 'll you do with 'The Beauty' if I don't play it? That's a fair question. Can't you give me an honest answer?"

"We'd put Rita in it, if you want to know. How'd you like to see her in a rôle that's the chance of your life? Those first two acts are just *made* for you, dearie, and after that, Lord, how you can make 'em sit up and rub their eyes!"

"You'd still keep the play, then?"

"Say, we know a good thing. What's your dope, anyhow?"

"Simply, that I won't take the part, that's all. I did ten miles to-day, too, and I've decided it's not for me."

"Oh, now, dearie, that's all bull!" he cried. "What 'll Morrie say to me? You *know* you can do it. You know you *want* to do it."

"I did want to, but I don't now. I—I'm not ready for that rôle yet. I'd spoil the play. You and Morrie are wrong. An actress can't save a good play by her rep that she spoils by her bad acting. That's final."

"Now, dearie—"

"I said it's final," she broke in. "Come to dinner. I want to talk about 'Mary's Silk Stocking.'"

"Well, you *are* a bum actress!" he cried. "I don't understand you at all."

"Perhaps I 'm only a woman," she retorted quietly. "You 've never had much to do with them, have you?"

She was deaf to his further pleading, and finally he desisted, knowing when he was whipped. Immediately after dinner he left in a huff, and she watched the red tail-light of his car disappearing rapidly down the road in a fog of dust, like an angry, inflamed, backward-glancing eye.

Then she went out on her pasture knoll, in the flood of summer moonlight, and the antiphonal chorus of frogs in the meadow below, the shrill of night insects all around her, was like the chime of a myriad tiny sleigh-bells. She felt a great peace take possession of her breast, and looking across the silvered haze of the valley, she saw a yellow point of light where his house stood under its protecting maples, and her thoughts were of him; neither of his play nor of hers, neither of ambition nor of success, but all of him. She wondered what he was doing now. She wondered if he and his nice little brother were sitting by the table—a family table that his grandparents had used—talking of Bobbie's career. It must be sweet to have a brother, she thought. It must be sweet to have a home, with all its subtle, fragrant ties of memory and love. She felt her heart go out across the moon-soaked interval and enter the imagined room, like a disembodied thing, and instinctively she put her hand over her bosom to feel if it was still beating in her breast. Then she smiled softly, foolishly at herself, and went back to her own lonely dwelling, glad beyond words that she had no disturbing guest.

In mid-morning there was a clatter of hoofs, and Winthrop rode his big horse right up the pasture to her side.

"What's the meaning of this?" he cried. "I get a telegram from Cohen saying he 's decided on Rita Norman, after all. It 's not my doing, honestly. You must believe that! After I 'd consented, you don't think I'd—"

"Of course not," she said, and smiled up at him. "It—it was my doing, Mr. Winthrop. Sammy did n't want to con-

fess he 'd failed to persuade me. He really has the box-office mind, you know; all managers have. But I could see finally that I 'm not ready for the rôle. I—I got cold feet, and would n't risk it."

She smiled at him again as he gave his horse a slap that sent him grazing, and stood looking down into her face.

"I 'm sorry," he said.

"You 're sorry?" she asked, incredulous.

"Yes. In the first place, I shall always feel guilty for fear my clumsy words may have made you doubt a little your own powers, and that 's a crime, the more so as I was selfishly thinking of my own play and not at all of you. In the second place, Bobbie will be broken-hearted, for he loves you madly and adores me. In the third place, I 'd begun to want you in the part myself, because—well, I 'd begun to want you in the part."

Marcia twisted the wisp of lace and linen she called a handkerchief around her fingers.

"I 'm not sorry," she said, looking out over the pasture. "We—we will be better friends for my not being in your play. Some time, perhaps, you will write me another when I 've learned to act better."

She was aware that he was still looking down at her, and raising her face she met his grave, kindly smile.

"I thought I knew a lot about women," said he, "but I was a fool."

"Then you are learning!" she managed to say.

"Yes, I 'm learning," he said slowly. His voice grew grave and deep. "Miss Morse, I want to be your friend. I want you to forget, if you can, much that I 've said, and let me know the woman behind that snare of loveliness which is the public you."

"The woman!" she half whispered. "I—I 'm only an actress, and a poor one, Mr. Winthrop."

"You would have to be a very good one to persuade me," he answered, sitting down beside her. "But let 's not talk of plays and acting this lovely morning; I 'm sick of 'em all."

"Wha-what shall we talk about?"

"We might even just sit still and listen to that white throat singing in the birches," he said, and smiled.

She clasped her hands about her knees for reply, and looked out across the valley, sun-flooded now, to the little house beneath the maples. But now her heart did not cross the spaces. It beat hard within her breast, hard and happily. She was

silent so long that the man leaned forward to see her face, and suddenly she averted it, and raised her handkerchief up to her eyes.

He took it from her presently, and spread it on his big, lean knee.

"It's such a silly little rag!" he said.

Then he put it back into her hand with the least shy pressure of her fingers, and once more they were silent.

Jugoslavia, a New European State

By MILIVOY S. STANOYEVICH

THE terms *Jugoslaveni* (South Slavs) and *Jugoslavia* (South Slavs' Land) are of recent date. The adequate substitutes for these names in bygone times corresponded to the words *Illyrians* and *Illyria*. The older Greek historians, Herodotus and others, very often mentioned Illyria and its tribes, who were living in a state of intermittent warfare with their neighbors and one another. In the second and third centuries B. C. the Illyrians formed a kingdom of which the borders extended along the eastern shore of the Adriatic from Rieka to Drach and inland as far as the Danube and the Serbian rivers Timok and Vardar. This region comprises the modern provinces and state of Serbia, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia-Slavonia, and Albania.

In the third century (229 B. C.) the Greeks and Romans defeated the Illyrian queen Teuta, and a considerable part of her territory was annexed by the conquerors. In the fifth century began a series of invasions which profoundly modified the ethnical character of the Illyrians. Between 600 and 650 almost all Illyria was occupied by new invaders, the Slavs, who came from Galicia. Two groups of tribes which settled the lands of the Adriatic were Serbs and Croats. They virtually spoke a single language, and were so closely related that they were almost

always regarded as one nation. The Croats settled in the western half of Illyria, the Serbians in the eastern. The former came inevitably under the influence of Rome and the latter under the influence of Byzantium. Hence the distinction between them became a marked difference of civilization and creed, which has always tended to keep the Mediterranean Slavs disunited. In this manner old Illyria became entirely Serbo-Croatian in population, language, and culture. Its name disappeared from history. Politically it was revived by Napoleon. According to the treaty between France and Austria (October 14, 1809) the Illyrian provinces (Carniola, Dalmatia, Istria, Gorica, Gradiska, Trieste, with parts of Carinthia and Croatia) were occupied by French troops and governed in the interest of Napoleon. The Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) was annexed to them in 1811, but about the end of 1813 the French occupation ceased to be effective, and they reverted to Austria. In 1816 *Ilirska Kraljevina* (The Illyrian Kingdom) was formed from these provinces, and recognized by the Vienna Government as Austrian crown lands.

The Austrian and Hungarian domination over the Southern Slavs aroused indignation when Croatia, Istria, and Slavonia were declared simple appanages of the Hungarian crown, *partes adnexa*