

Don't Send Flowers

BILL said, "How do you do?" Betty said, "How do you do?" "Dance?"

Betty did not reply with polite syllables. She merely nodded her head in a sort of angered acceptance. He felt the abrupt violence of that nod, and he held her more closely than he would have held any other strange girl. He whirled out on the floor. Their faces were a little rigid, as if they were trying to hurt each other by dancing together.

The music stopped. Betty inclined her dark head toward the table where Evelyn sat with John Baldwin. "She's your fiancée, isn't she?"

He would have said, he should have said, that Evelyn was not his fiancée, that they were friends, that they had known each other for years, that it was possible that some day they might be married. But he did not. He said, "More or less."

Music again.

"John's crazy about you," Bill said.

"He's swell."

It wasn't the way they meant to talk. Young men and young women of good family hold no such conversations upon first meeting.

Bill, in fact, was celebrated in his set for his ability to say the right thing at the right time. He should have made the mental note that Betty was dark and dazzling and very much alive, and, as they danced, he should have poured into her ear (under her raven curls, under a perfume that was alluring and agitating, that he decided at once he hated) some such monologue as, "John's perhaps my oldest friend in New York. We went to college together. He was noted there for his mathematical ability, his predilection for beer on Saturday nights, and his unwarranted desire to sing. Evelyn Trent is the buyer of gauzy what-nots for a large department store. She's also the best late-supper and short-order cook in the East Sixties. And now you'll doubtless want to know about me. The irresistible fascination of red hair and steely gray eyes. All women wonder. Let me de-hypnotize you. I'm an architect. I design factories." He should have said that.

But he did not.

She asked, "What do you do?"

He answered, "Draw."

She said, "I think artists are a bore."

"I plan refrigerators and high-speed tool-machine housings," he answered.

Betty murmured, "Oh."

THEY went back to the table, then, and glared at each other.

Evelyn looked at them and a subtle light came in her eyes. It was amused, in one way, and sad, in another. She turned to John, "See what happened?"

"What happened?" he asked. "Somebody fall through a drum?"

"More or less."

"Let's go somewhere else," Betty suggested abruptly. "It's hot and congested here."

"I always liked this place," Bill heard himself reply. "There's a good show—"

Betty was picking up her coat.

They went out of the Saffron Moon to the Island Club. The difference between the two cabarets was only in the hues of their interior decoration.

"Much better," Betty said.

"Terrible," Bill answered.

That's the way it is.

He looked at her and she looked at him. Under her rosy make-up and her dark eye-shadows, her skin was splotted red and white. His heart

Disliking people, ordinarily, is a pretty aimless business. But Bill Jackson and Betty Green were not ordinary. When they did a thing they did it well. How well they hated each other we will let you judge for yourself

By Philip Wylie

ILLUSTRATED BY IRVING NURICK

hammered and his head swam. He felt as if he had had too much to drink—although he had not tasted his second highball—and as if someone had kicked him in the shins. He seethed with a frustrated indignation.

The party, the long-planned four-some which would introduce a new girl discovered by John, failed.

At one o'clock the two men took their gentle partners home.

"What the devil was the matter with you this evening?" John asked. "First time I ever saw you sour at a party."

"Working too hard."

"Oh." A taxicab drove them through the glimmering night. "How'd you like Betts?"

"Where did you meet a girl like that?"

"She's swell! Family had a lot of money. Lost it. Now she runs a catering and maid-training business. Good-looking."

Bill gazed moodily at the spigot of light on a passing lamp-post. "My eye," he said. "She's too thin. Looks like a wet chicken."

"You ought to spend a couple of weeks in Bermuda," John said, laughing. "Otherwise you'll be found at work on paper dolls some day—"

"I'm not so crazy as to think a girl is Venus de Milo just because she has a lot of phony vitality."

John chuckled. "Paper dolls. Why, man, that's a swell girl. Personality—charm—everything."

MORNING. A gray and foggy summer morning with a promise of mid-day heat and dampness. Bill bent over a design on the drawing table of one of his employees.

"We can use the same conduits for ventilation"—the draftsman began—"that we are going to use for—"

Bill walked away, unmindful of what was being said. He went into his own office and dropped limply behind his desk. "I can't do it!" he muttered.

His secretary, overhearing the remark, turned in her swivel chair. "Can't do what, Mr. Jackson?"

"Get—" he shut off the current of his words. He was on the point of saying, "Get that damned girl out of my mind." He changed it to, "Get across to my staff that we've got to economize."

BETTY stood in front of a large mirror. She wore a negligee. Her face was washed and pale. Concentrated introspection made it sharp. Her mother came into her boudoir. "Aren't you going down to your shop this morning, dear?"

"No!"

"Are you ill?"

"Of course I'm going."

"It's very late."

"Fine!"

"Didn't you have a good time last night?"

"I had a rotten time. I met a man who insulted me all evening."

Her mother sighed. "Young men in

my day had graceful manners, at least. But now—you can never tell how people are going to behave."

"He behaved beautifully—to every one but me. He's an architect—or something. He's crazy about a blond girl named Evelyn. She looks like a dead sea gull."

"Why—Betty!"

"I'm going to ask him up to the beach next week-end. Just so I can get back at him."



He looked much stronger in a bathing suit. A gorilla, she thought

When Bill heard her voice, his heart leaped. But his words in response were dull and dreary. "Why, Miss Green—I'm not sure that I can get away. I can't make any promises at all."

"Just forget about it, then. There's nothing to do anyway but swim."

"I'm not much of a swimmer—but I like bathing—"

"Well—come up and bathe, if you can make it and care to."

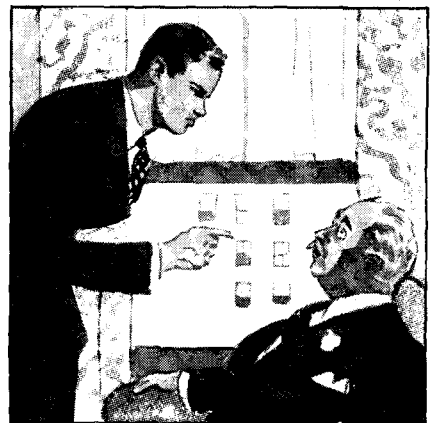
Bang!

He slammed down his own receiver.

There is supposed to be a necromancy in these matters. Gentle murmurings beside sibilant waves in the evening and falling magnolia petals. "On such a night—"

HE HAD said he was not much of a swimmer.

She watched him as he appeared from the house. His shoulders were tanned a smooth walnut brown, and as his arms idly swung, she could see muscles bulge and slide in them. He looked,



"Twenty or nothing," he thundered. "Write me a letter about it"

"You sulk and whimper and leave beaches and tables," he said. "In fact—" So she hit him, as hard as she could





"Do you think I let men trifle with me every night like this?"
She picked up a stone and threw it through a kitchen window

"What would you suggest, dear?"
"Beer and pretzels," said Betty

"Possibly," she continued, "you feel
that the act is a trifle ridiculous?"



in a bathing suit, much stronger than she had previously imagined him to be. A gorilla, she said to herself.

He nodded to each guest as he was introduced. He said, "I'm still city-stained. Mind if I take a dip?"

"The ocean doesn't mind, either."

Florence said, "Golly, Betts! Where did you find him! He looks like a life-guard with an intelligence quotient."

"He can't swim. Just bathe."

Bill strolled to the water, stared dramatically toward the horizon, complained that the sea was cold, and plunged.

He swam straight out with an eight-

beat crawl and championship form, smacking into the waves, neither turning nor slowing his pace, until his head was a dot on the distant water.

"I thought he couldn't swim!"

Tears of rage filled Betty's eyes. She rose. "I've had enough," she said. "Think I'll get dressed. Excuse me, everybody."

At dinner she made her first direct speech to him since the afternoon. "Were you ever a professional life-guard?"

He looked up from his plate and regarded her coolly. "When I was young," he said, "my mother and father and I

lived in a one-room apartment over a fish store in Coney Island. On my sixteenth birthday my father was taken to an alcoholic ward with delirium tremens and died shortly afterward. My mother, the only sane child in a family of seventeen, was so unnerved by the shock that she spent her last days in a paupers' sanitarium. I tried to drown myself, but in doing so learned by accident the art of swimming, which I have practiced since—only, of course, as a preventive measure against drowning."

The eight dinner guests were stunned. Mrs. Green, in a dilemma of revulsion and pity, sought for words.

Florence exploded in a gale of laughter. Betty turned a beautiful cerise.

"My aunts and uncles," Bill continued with savage malice, "are mostly dead. Of the seventeen, only nine remain, and of them only four are regularly out of strait-jackets. You see, my mother's maiden name was Jukes—"

Betty left the table.

After dinner, Bill was invited to play bridge, but he refused. He went out into the night and walked through the Greens' gardens, which grew informal as they approached the sea and finally merged with the rugged flowers and boulders on the edge of the beach.

There he found Betty. She was sitting in stony silence and, although she noticed him, she did not budge. He sat down insolently, beside her but facing her, with his back to the ocean.

He felt feverish and lost. He had an impulse to apologize, to beg humbly for forgiveness. But he could not bring himself to do that. Instead, after a long and obdurate silence, he said, "You're not much of a conversationalist."

"Not as gifted a one as you."

"Hope my little pleasantry didn't disturb you?"

"Wasn't it true?"

SHE thought that the statement was childish and idiotic. A burning desire to slap him began to gnaw at her. She could see his profile etched against the silver moon-track on the water. She drew a trembling breath and, thinking that she had never hated anyone so fervently before in her life, she said casually, "I'd always believed until the other day that the word 'cad' was obsolete."

He chuckled, but it was not a good-humored chuckle. He picked up a pebble—tossed it and caught it, tossed it and caught it.

"The trouble with girls like you is," he said judiciously, "that you have to be the center of attraction, the focus of adulation, to be happy at all. You little girls—cream puffs—seem to be worse than the rest. If by some incredible mischance you happen to meet a man who is not a monkey on a string ready to do parlor tricks for you, you sulk and whimper and leave beaches and tables. In fact—"

So she hit him.

She hit him as hard as she could, and sat still again.

The slap made a loud sound.

It was followed by a melodious strain of music from the radio in the beach house—music that was wafted over the garden on a scented wind, music that merged with the rippling water and lost itself on the dancing pathway of light that led to the high, voluptuous moon.

Bill Jackson's face stung fiercely. He stood up and took Betty by both shoulders. He yanked her up on her feet. He shook her. An ornament fell from her hair.

Then he held her at arm's length. And afterward, without the slightest forewarning of what he was going to do, he kissed her. It was not a sweet kiss, or a delicate one. It was not amorous or technically pretty. It did not end lingeringly.

He let go of her. That was all.

She stood in front of him in the moonlight. She was panting and her eyes shone bright and hard. Neither of them knew what to do. There was nothing in the lives of Romeo and Juliet to suggest a proper conduct. And, although the kiss had been administered with primordial fury, it was not intended to promulgate a languid and yielding response.

Betty said, "Well!" in a surprised manner and knelt to look for the ornament that had fallen.

Bill saw it glittering in the grass, picked it up, and handed it to her.

Then he said, "Really—"

"Go ahead," Betty interrupted wrathfully. "Tell me it was the moonlight. Tell me it was the wine you had at dinner."

HE STARED at her, turned, and went slowly back to the house. In the bridge-room a Mr. Wheaton had just been saying to Betty's mother, "I was rather surprised at Mr. Jackson's behavior during dinner. I know him by reputation. That Coney Island story was wholly rubbish. His family comes from Boston—Back Bay. One of the most distinguished. And he's not given as a rule to any sort of levity or irony on such occasions. A rather overconventional fellow—if I may say so."

"He looks," said Betty's mother, "haggard—as if he'd overworked."

"Doubtless. He's extremely successful!"

Bill entered at that point. He was invited to play bridge. He shook his head in a rude and moody manner. "Going to bed," he said.

He went to his room and irritably read parts of seven books—small parts—and fragments of the contents of many magazines. He did not like the world and he did not like himself. His bad manners had reached elaborate proportions. He decided finally, however, to add one more piece of effrontery to them. Manifestly he could not face Betty in the morning. It was not far to the station and there would be a train sooner or later.

The household and the week-end guests had retired. He wrote a note to Betty's mother. "I have suddenly remembered that a most important duty was left unfulfilled in the city," it said in part, "and now I can think of no way to avoid it. I must be on hand early tomorrow morning, so I am taking the liberty of departing with postponed farewells. I am extraordinarily sorry—"

He pinned it on the bed.

HIS suitcase had not been opened. He picked it up and, with his hat in his hand, tiptoed down the stairs. He made a quiet exit from the house. He almost ran to the station. Its lights were still burning, and a single person stood on the platform, keeping a late vigil for the next train to town.

It was a woman—Betty, in fact.

She looked at him with sultry eyes. "I suddenly recalled that I'd made an appointment I simply couldn't miss tomorrow," she said. "I hoped to be back here again before you all had finished breakfast."

"That's a lie," Bill said.

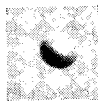
"Not even a very good one," she agreed.

"Shall we go back?"

"We'd better."

They walked through the warm night, under a row of maple trees. Bugs trilled, and frogs croaked in a distant pond. Bill looked at her—at her hat and curls beneath it, at her shoulders moving beside him, and again he was assailed by a violent and indescribable emotion. It was like none in all his varied past experience.

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How's your Ground Stroke?

By Quentin Reynolds

PHOTOGRAPHS BY IFOR THOMAS
Collier's Staff Photographer

It's just as easy, so the experts say, to play tennis right as to play it wrong. And it's a good deal more fun. Get out your racket and see for yourself. Here are the rules

IT IS getting so that a man can hardly turn around without bumping into a tennis court peopled with enthusiastic but inept racket wielders. They are building tennis courts everywhere except on penthouse terraces and as soon as the present penthouse dirt-farming fad dies down the tennis court will no doubt replace the radish bed on the rooftops of our large cities.

Not that there is any valid objection to this sudden increase in tennis, although I do think it would be a better game if you could play it while sitting in a rocking-chair. The objection concerns the fact that although more tennis is being played in these United States than ever before—most of it is very bad tennis. So let's attend to that right away.

Not long ago Karel Kozeluh, once a great tennis player, now a great tennis teacher, was watching Cliff Sutter and Sidney Wood playing a practice match.

"Those two players," Kozeluh said, "are the best advertisement we professionals have. They are both great stylists and both learned their game from good professionals. They know all of the strokes, they don't depend upon sheer power and strength—but only upon their tennis."

Now if you wanted to learn to box you wouldn't go to Jack Dempsey, who in the long run always depended upon his tremendous stamina and punch. You'd go to Gene Tunney, who really knew his trade. In tennis there's no use going to Stoefen or Shields because, like Dempsey, they too rely on power. Go to Sutter or Wood and you'll really learn about this game. So let's trot along to see Sutter, Number 4 on the National list, who incidentally is one of the few tennis players who earn a living by working in an office eight hours a day five days a week.

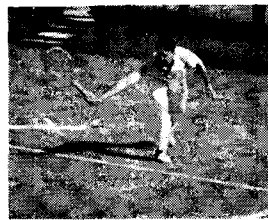
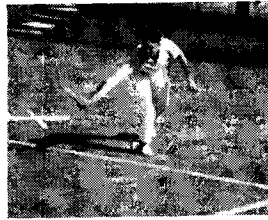
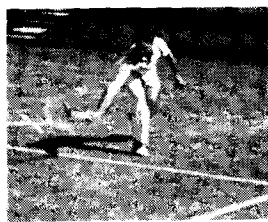
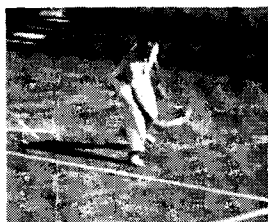
More Fun if You Know How

"There is no excuse," says Mr. Sutter, "for bad tennis being played at all. There's nothing mysterious about tennis—there's a right and a wrong way of playing and the right way is just as easy as the wrong way. Go out into the public parks of any large city and what do you see?"

I knew the answer to that one: "Signs that say 'Keep Off the Grass,' squirrels, people pushing baby carriages, trees . . ."

"Nonsense." Tennis to Mr. Sutter is a very important subject. "You see hundreds of youngsters playing tennis. You see them banging the ball all over the place and having a lot of fun. But they'd have so much more fun if they only knew how to play."

"Well, let's teach them," I suggested brightly.



Cliff Sutter, No. 4 in national tennis ranking. At the left, he demonstrates the proper form for the backhand. Chalked X marks the spot to which the beginner should teach himself to return after each stroke



The Eastern grip (left) may be easier for the beginner. You just "shake hands" with the racket (below). For the Western grip the racket is picked up from a flat surface (right)



"Now the chief fault of the ordinary tennis player (and we're here considering him and not the expert) is his insistence upon murdering the ball," Sutter began. "He murders it before he has learned how to hit it properly. You see boys hitting a forehand or backhand shot while facing the net. That is absurd. When Babe Ruth gets up to bat he plants his feet and turns his hip to the pitcher. That's what a man should do when hitting a forehand shot in tennis. He should turn his left hip toward the net, face the right sideline and hit the ball. He should follow through. When you do that your whole body gets behind the stroke—not just your arm."

"Like in golf?"

"Exactly." Mr. Sutter seemed surprised at that gleam of intelligence. "Follow through as in golf when you hit a forehand drive. And you should lock your wrist so that the strain of the drive is distributed through your arm. A beginner might look at a picture of Fred Perry finishing his drive. His right arm is across his body. He has followed through. His form is perfect. Now at the beginning a player shouldn't try to put too much loop on the ball while driving."

"What do you mean by loop?" You've got to watch these experts. As soon as you look the other way they turn technical on you.

Learn the Easy Ones First

"Loop," Mr. Sutter explained, "is topspin. Young players are always trying to put top-spin on the ball or trying to 'cut' it. They should first perfect an ordinary flat drive. If a flat drive is good enough for Tilden it ought to be good enough for them."

"I'll bet you say that to all the girls," I suggested, but Mr. Sutter ignored my pleasantry. He was well warmed up now.

"The same thing is true of the backhand stroke, which should be learned next. A beginner ought to watch Jack Crawford hit a backhand stroke. His right hip is facing the net. He himself is facing the sideline. His feet are well planted and he's all set to hit that ball. First, of course, the beginner should concentrate on getting himself an accurate backhand. Afterwards he can fool around with spins."

"All this time he should be experimenting with his grip. There are different ways of gripping a tennis racket. There is the Eastern grip used by Tilden. There is the Western grip used by George Lott, and the Continental grip used by Perry and most of the European players. A beginner would do well just to go up and shake hands with the racket."

"That's the basis of the Eastern grip. Place the racket on the ground, not face down but with the head perpendicular to the ground. Then just shake hands with the racket. Hold it just like that in hitting a forehand shot. When you shift to a backhand you want to grasp the handle of the racket firmly with your left hand and then, still maintaining that 'shake hands' grip, twist your right wrist one quarter turn to the

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