

ONE DAY, ONE LIFE

The story of Eleanor Huntington, who married for money—which could buy her neither forgetfulness nor release from the conditions of her bargain



BY FREDERICK BORG

SHORTLY after she was married, Eleanor had Cartier design an appointment book for her. It was like a businessman's engagement pad except that it was smaller and of course more elegant, being bound in lizard with gold trim, and had a facsimile of her signature on a gold plate set in the cover. Inside, it was a little different, too; for, though her day began the same time as a day in the office—at nine—it did not end at five but went right on, past midnight, to one in the morning. A little gold pencil, no bigger than a wooden

match, went into a leather sheath at the edge of the book, and with it she jotted down the things that kept her busy. Occasionally there were blank spaces, but not very often, for besides being beautiful and rich she was one of the most active young women in New York.

This is how, with the aid of her little book, she spent the thirteenth of November, 1947. . . .

Promptly at nine, after having been awake for nearly an hour, she arose and did her exercises. These lasted the usual ten minutes, and as usual they

were strenuous. When she was finished she stood glowing and panting before the full-length mirror, searching her body for signs of fat. There were none. At twenty-eight she had the figure of a dryad, with flat hips and stomach, long legs, and a small, enchanting bosom. Satisfied with what she saw, she got back into bed and closed her eyes, and then, to take the place of the unpleasant thoughts that had been scurrying through her mind, began reciting memory selections she had learned as a child.

Halfway through *Thanatopsis*, at

nine fifteen exactly, she was interrupted by Angela, her English maid, with breakfast—half a grapefruit, two slices of Melba toast, and a small pot of coffee. Also on the tray were the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune*.

At nine thirty, nourished and informed, she got up again and bathed, allowing herself the customary ten minutes; dried herself with long, brisk strokes to stimulate the circulation, and was dressed and waiting for the elevator with Papa Moreau at one minute before ten. Papa Moreau was a French poodle with a long, sad face

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and the wise and patient eyes of one who has seen and done everything the world can offer. He was a birthday gift from Clay, her husband.

Joseph, the old elevator operator, opened the door and said, "Good morning, Mrs. Huntington." On the way down he took out his watch and said, "You're late, Mrs. Huntington, it's one minute past ten." It was an old joke between them, for everyone knew Eleanor was as reliable as the bells of the Church of the Redemption, which were chiming as she stepped out into the lobby.

HAVING walked Papa Moreau down the waterfront to Fifty-third, and north again as far as the bridge, she was back in her bedroom at ten thirty, looking over her appointments for the day. These she knew as well as she knew her own name, but it gave her a certain satisfaction to see them in black and white. At eleven, she saw, she was due at the church to help make up packages for the poor in Europe; at one she was having lunch at the Colony with Mildred Stahle; at three there was a lecture by Tetsuo Fujihara at the Feinstein Galleries on Eighth Street . . . and so on, hour after hour, till one in the morning, where, as usual, she had printed in extra-large letters the word BED. That was one entry she could always be sure of. She was always in bed by one.

She walked the six blocks to the Church of the Redemption and arrived at one minute to eleven. In the parish hall the Reverend Doctor Standfast was at the bulletin board, putting up an announcement. He turned at the sound of her heels, and a broad smile appeared on his round, red, innocent face.

"Right on time," he said, as the bells began their metallic conversation. "You know, Mrs. Huntington, if all our ladies were as prompt as you, we'd really hum," and the marble walls echoed the word. "How's your husband?" he asked, as they started toward the assembly room.

"Fine," said Eleanor. "Very busy, of course."

"I can imagine. Captains of finance." He sighed. "And their wives, too. Sometimes I wonder how you manage to stay so fresh and young-looking, keeping yourself geared to such a frantic schedule." He paused. "Which brings me to another matter . . . ah . . . You remember last week my mentioning our projected drive for completing the orphanage? Well, I was wondering—of course I know how busy you are—but I was wondering if you could possibly spare next Thursday afternoon to gather with the trustees and myself . . ."

"What time?" asked Eleanor, getting the book out of her bag. She turned to *Thursday 20 November* and saw she had no engagements for the afternoon at all, and only one—*Pick up Lowestoft teapot at Fix-It Shop*—for eleven in the morning. She held the book at such an angle that the Reverend Doctor Standfast could not see how empty the page was.

"Would four be convenient?"

"Four," said Eleanor, frowning a little as she consulted the book again. "Four—yes, I believe I can just sandwich it in. It won't be long, will it? I have to be home by five."

"Half an hour at the most."

Together they entered the assembly room, where long tables had been set up on trestles. Against the walls were hundreds of cartons of canned goods, pyramids of sugar in cotton bags, and boxes of surgical supplies and vitamin

tablets; while on the tables were the cardboard containers in which these articles were going to Europe.

"The other ladies seem to be a little late," the Reverend Doctor Standfast said.

"They'll be here."

"Well . . . I'll just be running along, then. Thank you, Mrs. Huntington. I only wish they were all as prompt and energetic as you."

After a while, in twos and threes, chattering, laughing, the rest of the volunteers came in—sleek young women like herself, mostly, though there were a few exceptions like Mrs. Vandercamp, the chairman, who was over sixty; and Eleanor's mother-in-law, Mrs. Douglas Huntington, who was nearly eighty and who did not choose to arrive till nearly one, just as Eleanor was getting ready to leave.

Ordinarily the old woman spoke to her daughter-in-law only when it was absolutely necessary, for she had never become reconciled to her son's marriage; but now she came straight to her and in her harsh voice demanded: "What's the matter now?"

Eleanor wedged a can of coffee into a corner of the container, closed the cover and sealed it with gummed tape. She looked up and said, "What do you mean?"

"What's wrong with you and Clay?"

"What makes you think—"

"He probably told you I had lunch with him yesterday."

"Yes."

"Of course he didn't say anything—he never does—but I didn't think he looked particularly happy. You two haven't been quarreling, have you?"

"Of course not."

"I know this sounds silly, coming from an old woman, but after all he's my only son, and I don't think I could bear it if I thought he'd made a mess of things. He's always been so successful in everything else . . ." Her voice trailed off. She was tall and very lean, with a nose like a scimitar and bright brown eyes that glittered with an almost feverish intensity. She was one of the wealthiest women in New York, with vast holdings on upper Fifth Avenue, where her father's sheep had once roamed.

Eleanor put a hand on her arm.

"I'm very happy," she said.

"Well, I'm glad to hear it. I was just thinking last night, when I should've been asleep, that Clay's exactly twice your age. Did you ever realize that? You're twenty-eight and he'll be fifty-six next month. It came as quite a shock—"

"Age doesn't mean a thing."

"I suppose not, if people love each other. Well . . . How about lunch?"

"Today?"

"Of course."

Eleanor picked up her bag and jerked at the zipper. Perversely, the little leather tab came off in her hand, and she uttered a soft exclamation. Then, with sudden clarity, as if the book were already open, she saw the page for tomorrow, Thursday, and that annoying gap in the afternoon between *Lunch with Duncan—Waldorf and Bendel, for fitting*; and she smiled, for now she knew how she would fill that gap. She would take the bag to the Fix-It Shop, and while she was at it she would drop into that little French bookstore on the corner and pick up a few of those paper-backed novels that looked so effective on the library table. Still smiling, she dropped the tab into the bag, took out the little book and opened it to *Thursday 13 November*.

"Look what I'm up against," she

said, tapping the page with a sharp red nail; and then, trying to keep the triumph out of her voice, for it was seldom she got the best of the old woman, she went on: "Some other time, perhaps? Tomorrow, say?" and turned the page.

"All right."

"Oh, sorry," said Eleanor, as though she had just discovered what she had known for the past three days. "Tomorrow I'm having lunch with Duncan Strove."

"Who?"

"You know, the decorator. I was thinking of having Clay's room done over—something a little lighter, perhaps, than all that Jacobean stuff."

"You just had it redecorated last year."

"I thought he might want a change."

"He might, at that." The old woman sighed, and the cords in her thin neck stood out. "I'll call you one of these days," she said. "Maybe I can catch you when you're not so busy."

"You do that," said Eleanor, and went down to the end of the table, where Mrs. Vandercamp was working. "Terribly sorry," she said, "but I'm afraid I'll have to run along. I'm supposed to be at the Colony at one and I've only got ten minutes to make it." Abruptly, unconsciously, her hand went toward the evidence in the bag; but Mrs. Vandercamp was smiling that easy smile of hers, and Eleanor changed her mind. Poised and serene, she completed her excuses, knowing the others were taking her in, tabulating the cost of her outfit, from the smart hat to the snakeskin shoes that a little man on Madison Avenue had made for her; and inwardly she smiled, because she knew there was no one in the room who did not envy her.

"Thanks, Eleanor," said Mrs. Vandercamp.

"I'll be around next week."

"I really appreciate it. I know how busy you are. Give my regards to Clay and tell him I think he's got a wonderful little wife."

ELEANOR arrived at the Colony punctually at one. She went up the steps and through the door, and there was Mildred waiting for her.

"Darling."

"Hello, Eleanor. My, don't you look swell!"

"Thanks, dear. Shall we go in?"

Following the headwaiter to their table, Eleanor was conscious of a change in the rhythm of the eating and the talking around them; it was like a split-second break in a power line, when the lights go dim but do not go out, or when a motor slows down but does not stop. A few yards away she saw Frances Benham and Martha Giovanni. Martha had stopped her everlasting chatter right in the middle of a sentence, apparently, with her mouth still open, and Frances was holding a forkful of salad an inch above her plate. They were appraising her, as were the others in this small, elegant, and somehow formidable room, those who knew her and those who did not know her but remembered seeing her pictures in the fifty-cent magazines—photographs of Eleanor at her dressing table and Eleanor standing at the Adam mantel, under the Gainsborough, and Eleanor, like a naiad, letting the breeze blow her hair back as she posed on the terrace looking at a fuzzy bridge and a still more fuzzy shore line on the other side of the river. They were

appraising her hat which two weeks hence would blossom by the hundreds down in Union Square, and her man-tailored suit and the amusing scarf she had picked up in a little Korean shop on Second Avenue. A smile tucked up the corners of Eleanor's mouth. She knew what she looked like: she looked proud and beautiful and essential all at the same time; a woman who, despite a schedule that would drive a man to drink, still managed to achieve the serenity of a Renaissance madonna.

She watched Mildred slide into her seat—collapse was more like it, for Mildred, never particularly graceful, was going to have another baby, and her movements, governed by consideration for the little life so obviously burgeoning within her, were slow and awkward. There was no glamor about Mildred. Her hair under the exuberant hat she had probably purchased in a White Plains department store, was dull and discouraged-looking, with strands emerging here and there and waving with each turn of her head as if they were endowed with independent motion. Her skin was good, but it had been too long in the sun—after all, this was November, when the summer tan has yielded to the pallor of autumn—and her hands were rough. As for her eyes—well, they were bright, all right, but it was the brightness of a little girl with a new doll, or of the traditional yokel on first seeing the Empire State Building. She could not help turning around, for example, to stare at Ilona Case, who was lunching two tables away with a well-known dress designer; she was breathless with the realization that she was sitting with immortals. Eleanor felt sorry for her.

Over their cocktails—Mildred had an old-fashioned and Eleanor a dry sherry—they talked about what had happened in the six years since graduation.

Mildred said, "Remember Alice Koestler?"

"No," said Eleanor, putting her glass down. "I don't believe I do." But she did. Alice was the class poet, the class intellectual, a short, dumpy girl with a face like an unbaked pie and thick glasses that made nightmares of her eyes. She came from somewhere in the West, and her father was several times a millionaire. Eleanor did not even speak to her. She was afraid to, because every time she thought of how rich Alice was—fat, dumpy Alice—and how poor she herself was, her throat grew tight and her nails dug into her palms and she wanted to scream.

Well, she could speak to her now without screaming. "What about her?" she asked.

"My dear, she's married. I ran into her a couple of weeks ago in the Biltmore. That was the day I called you—remember?—and you couldn't make it because you were rolling bandages or something."


"Packing clothes for China."

"Well, anyway, she married this instructor from Columbia. You knew she took a postgraduate there, didn't you?"

"No, I didn't."

"Her husband teaches political history and I guess he gets his orders from the Kremlin; but they did seem terribly happy. First thing she did was take me upstairs, and, my dear, they're living in a suite that must set them back fifty dollars a day—set her back, I mean—and the pay-off, the absolute pay-off . . ." She plucked the cherry

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In the mirror she could see that he was regarding her with a speculative eye. "You need any help?" he asked



The Blooming of Margaret Rose

BY COLLIE SMALL

Elizabeth is safely married. The spotlight in England turns on her little sister. Here is a close-up of the 17-year-old girl whose chances of becoming queen are very slight

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, the Princess Margaret Rose, has been described at various times as beautiful, not beautiful, tall, short, slim and graceful, narrow-shouldered and bandy-legged, excruciatingly witty, unbearably precocious, and both delighted and dismayed at the fate that cast her as the kid sister of Princess Elizabeth, Duchess of Edinburgh and heiress presumptive to the throne of England.

The confusion generated by this sort of reporting is naturally very disconcerting to the average Englishman, who likes to keep a steady eye on the royal family, but until recently, of course, hardly anyone had bothered to describe Margaret at all except as an afterthought. The architects of the royal legend were too busy concentrating on Elizabeth.

Now, with Elizabeth safely married to the Duke of Edinburgh, the microscope has been trained on Margaret. Margaret is the new *idée fixe*, and whether she enjoys it or not (there being no overwhelming evidence that she doesn't), she has suddenly become Britain's number-one item for public scrutiny. At the moment, in the realm of controversial subjects, Princess Margaret is running miles ahead of Commons, the Prime Minister and the hard-currency question.

Opinion, naturally, is divided. A youth leader in Kent, although she has never been any closer to Princess Margaret than a newspaper clipping, thinks her eyes are too close together and suspects that she may be bad-tempered because of it. A civil servant in Harrow is sure she is charming and unspoiled. A miner in Newcastle, representing a definite minority but exercising what is undoubtedly an inalienable right, refuses to pay any attention to Margaret whatsoever, on grounds that princesses belong in fairy tales.

Everyone feels obliged to pass his own judgment on Margaret and to a young American naval officer has fallen the distinction of supplying the crowning absurdity. Having been introduced to the young British princess at a royal garden party, he concluded patriotically, "Why, she's cute as a button—just like an American girl!"

If there is anything that Princess Margaret is *not* like, of course, it is an American girl. Although she will be eighteen in August, Margaret has never sat anywhere at the movies except in the specially constructed royal box. She has never hailed a taxi, and, so far as is known, she has never been caught out in the rain.

She has never mixed with crowds except on V-E Night, when she and Elizabeth walked with two detectives from Buckingham Palace to Charing Cross, a distance of about two miles. She has had

only one subway ride, a ten-minute jump from St. James's Park to Tottenham Court Road, and even then she was reprimanded by the ticket collector for failing to hand in her ticket, which she tried unsuccessfully to keep for a souvenir.

As for her other characteristics, they are mostly human instead of British, American or anything else.

Physically, Margaret is shorter than Elizabeth, being only a shade over five feet. Her hair, which distresses her because it is not naturally curly, is darker than her sister's. By the usual standards she is not beautiful but she is blessed with intense blue eyes, impossibly lovely skin, and an engaging smile. Margaret actually is bandy-legged and narrow-shouldered. She tends to be witty, but her audiences are exceedingly indulgent and in their haste to applaud they sometimes fail to distinguish between Margaret's "wit" and what is simply native exuberance.

Fortunately, Margaret is aware that this sort of acclaim accrues to her because of her royal station as much as for her own legitimate conquests. She has known it, in fact, ever since she and Elizabeth won prizes at the Windsor Horse Show some years ago.

"Were the prizes for us just because we are princesses?" they asked their governess.

"Well, partly," the governess conceded.

"Oh," the princesses said, the dawn breaking over their heads. "We see."

Not Eager for the Cares of Empire

According to palace intimates, Margaret is not disposed to brood over the fact that, barring almost total disaster, she can never be queen. In this connection, a rather moth-eaten anecdote is frequently trotted out to illustrate Margaret's lack of concern with the throne. According to most versions, Princess Elizabeth, acting as councilor of state in the temporary absence of King George, was required one day to reprimand Margaret rather sharply for some breach of court etiquette. In her anger, Margaret is supposed to have snapped, "Oh, go mind your empire and leave me alone!"

This anecdote, of course, can also be used—and sometimes is—to illustrate exactly the opposite: that Margaret is actually jealous of Elizabeth's position and gives herself away by occasional fits of temper. Most people who have entry to Buckingham Palace, however, believe Margaret is sincerely not interested. The only thing that she seriously objects to is the tendency of people to look upon her as Elizabeth's little sister.

In any case, she could ascend to the throne as

Queen Margaret I, only if her father (the king) and a childless Princess Elizabeth should both expire. One thing seems fairly sure, though: Should they, unhappily, die, their demises would probably not occur simultaneously, since the royal family takes special precautions not to tax the laws of chance and probability.

The king and Princess Elizabeth, for example, never fly in the same aircraft together if they can help it. The usual arrangement is for the king and Princess Margaret to go in one, with the Queen and Princess Elizabeth in the other. When Elizabeth has her expected baby, this arrangement will hardly be necessary since Margaret will then be demoted even further down the line of succession to make room for the newcomer.

Margaret's life inside the plush, red-carpeted palace is anything but easy. For a seventeen-year-old girl, her days are full to overflowing, and ordinarily by eight, she is up and dressed and at breakfast, which she sometimes has alone and sometimes shares with the king before proceeding to the business at hand. The queen is reputed to have a notoriously difficult time getting up early, and consequently she seldom appears at breakfast.

Lunch is usually a family affair. If the king and queen are away, Princess Margaret lunches with the Lord Chamberlain, the king's equerry, and other members of the royal household in their dining room. Elizabeth was different. If the family was gone, she ate alone. Until recently, Margaret was considered too young to appear at the family dinner table and was required to eat a so-called "nursery dinner" in her rooms. Now, however, she has been promoted.

Margaret is still studying under special tutors and spends most of her mornings in close communion with constitutional history, taught her by the provost of Eton; French, in which she excels; geography, with special reference to Australia and New Zealand in anticipation of the royal visit next year; the English novel as exemplified by Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters, her favorite authors; and the piano.

Margaret's talent for music is considerable, and while in the eyes of her teacher she appears to have less real feeling for music than Elizabeth, her technique is superior, a fact which Elizabeth is gracious in acknowledging. Margaret plays for the queen nearly every morning about eleven, and also takes a leading part in promoting the regular Thursday-night madrigal sessions.

The palace has a list of about thirty-five people who can carry their weight in madrigals, which are Elizabethan part songs, and a different group of eight or ten is invited each Thursday night to the

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