



Davis and Carol



Lilith and Henry



Bill and Helen

Marriage '48

By VERA CASPARY

Beginning a new and significant novel of today in which the distinguished author of *Laura* describes the erratic and stormy course of three modern marriages, each conceived in love, faith, and shining hope—and all haunted by the bitter specter of divorce



NO MATTER how unsentimental you think you are, nor how sturdily you vow you'll not let it affect your heartbeat, when the day comes, you go hollow. Some say it's like butterflies in your stomach, but to Lilith it was more like scorpions. If this had been her first wedding there might have been excuse, but now, on the fifth of June in the year of Our Lord, 1948, she was sufficiently aged and ripened (or so she thought) to take a dispassionate view of marriage.

With a formal wedding there would have been a million details to absorb her anxieties. Her first had been a nightmare tangle of caterers, striped trousers, silver mayonnaise bowls and distant cousins. She had been eighteen then, her fear dewy-eyed. Today, with two marriages behind her, fear was the fleshless image of failure. The only thing that kept her from putting on her old slack suit and whisking off in the roadster was her faith in Henry Fowler. Lilith had once described him as having bowels; a

nasty word but good enough for Shakespeare. Like everyone else Henry had his weaknesses, but he was not afraid of the diving-off place.

She rose that morning quite as if it were an ordinary day, had her fruit juice and coffee in bed, read the newspaper and dressed in her gray suit. As a last-minute concession to the day's importance she chose a pair of new white gloves which had been sent to her from Paris, with eleven other pairs, by an old admirer. Except for Henry's white orchid, she was less like a bride than a worldly young woman setting out for a morning cocktail party.

She had her best friend and business partner, Margery Sears, standing up with her, and Henry had brought Stanforth Grimes, a solemn pathologist in rimless spectacles, as best man. As they got into Henry's sedan, it looked more like a double date than a wedding, with Margery making coy advances to the pathologist.

OUTWARDLY Lilith and Margery were somewhat alike—the sort of young women who walk arrogantly into the best restaurants and make demands on headwaiters. In the tilt of their hats, the way their gloves crumpled at the wrists and the manner in which strings of small furs were slung over their shoulders was the air of breeding, experience and superb self-confidence. Lilith was softer, more appealing. Although she had tried, with all the perversions of fashion, to deny conventional prettiness, she could not disguise the symmetry of her features nor the fresh charm of her coloring. A slight slant gave distinction to her bright blue eyes and the freckles dotted on her nose were a welcome flaw. She wore her dark brown hair untinted.

"Nervous?" asked Henry as he started the car.

She pushed off the memory of an item she had read in the morning paper, and said, "Of course not."

"Well, I am."

"When you've been married as often as I have, darling, you'll find it's no worse than a hang-over." The metaphor she thought, was apt; falling in love being the intoxication, marriage the hang-over. But she wisely kept it under her hat. Although Lilith had often laughed at Henry for taking life seriously and had teased him about his righteousness, she loved him for his virtues rather than in spite of them.

Why else had she consented to a church wedding? It was not at all necessary for moderns of their sort. Neither she nor Henry had a relation within three thousand miles. But he wanted to please his mother. Old Mrs. Fowler had never been near California, but she was an invalid and amused herself with movie magazines so that she knew more about the Little Church in the Vale than Lilith who lived within ten miles of it. To please his mother Henry had chosen an altar at which many movie stars had taken their vows. Corny, Lilith had termed it, adding that if her friends knew, they would die laughing.

No, she was not at all nervous. When once the ceremony was over and she was safely Henry's wife, she would look back upon this journey and wonder why she had suffered. It was no worse than facing a half-hour in the dentist's chair, or the first dive into cold water. In her twenty-ninth year she ought to have learned that no reality can come up to the pain of apprehension. And she had promised herself sternly that she would not talk about her previous marriages, nor even think of them. If only she had not noticed that item in the morning paper!

They seemed to be creeping along the boulevard, but when they entered the canyon, Henry slowed down to forty. "Couldn't you go just a bit faster, darling?"

Henry shook his head. The road was steep and full of curves. "Suppose we get there five minutes later?"

Lilith looked at her wrist watch, pouted and beat her white-gloved fists against the cushions. "It's the first time I'm late to one of my weddings." As soon as she had said it, she was sorry. Her mind should have been fixed on the bright future with Henry, and not on her dark past. One marriage out of three, the newspaper had said, ended before the year was up. That was the latest statistic, not only for Los Angeles County where so many divorces were front page news, but for the entire nation. She was angry with the newspapers for having printed the item on her wedding day, quite

as if the editors had known and put it there to worry her.

"Perhaps, darling, it's a sign, a warning, perhaps they won't hold the church if we're late," warned Margery, captious because the best man, after staring through his rimless glasses, had not given her a second squint.

"At the risk of being called a sourpuss for the third time today," the best man said, "I'm going to remind you girls that Henry and I were on time."

"For the first time in Henry's life," Lilith said.

"Yes, I take marriage seriously. I'm a stuffed shirt," teased Henry, throwing back words she had used in violent argument. "I happen to think that on your wedding day, you should forget business." Because he had contrived with fate to keep any of his patients from having babies that morning, he felt that Lilith could certainly have discouraged her customers.

She had locked the doors of her interior decorating shop, but her apartment was above it and there was an extension telephone. "Is it my fault that my best sucker got back to town this morning? After all, darling, business isn't so hot that I can afford to snub the Leveret millions. If it weren't for their new beach place, Margery and I might have to shut up shop."

"And let your husband support you. What a tragedy!" mocked Henry.

"I thought we'd come to an agreement about that," Lilith reminded him, bristling because he refused to take her career seriously.

"Sorry, dear. It was tactless of me to mention it." He bowed his head in mock humility.

They wound out of the canyon, crossed the boulevard and sped along an avenue lined with eucalyptus trees which had been planted as wind guards for the orange groves. It was a bright Chamber of Commerce day, June but not rare in a climate where such perfection is as typical of December. The gold of the oranges contrasted with the dark sheen of their foliage; on every fence giant roses grew; beyond were purple mountains. The only flaw in this picture postcard perfection were the trails of smoke made by the skywriters attempting to find a new advertising medium in the heavens.

THE little church was set cunningly among the live oaks of the hillside. Its stone terraces were guarded by low stone walls over which the roses ran riot.

At the determined picturesqueness Lilith shuddered. "I can't take it." She groaned and covered her eyes.

"Be brave," counseled Margery. "They don't shoot brides at church weddings. Although in most cases, it'd be the merciful thing to do."

Henry opened the car door but Lilith would not move. Having worked for years to shed convention, she found herself embarrassed by its shadow. "Couldn't we just duck down to the City Hall and be married respectably?"

"Hurry, we're late," Henry said.

"You could write your mother and tell her we'd been married in the church. How'd she ever know?"

He was not the sort of man to start his marriage with a lie. As if he had not heard her nonsense, he took her hand and helped her out of the car.

"I give you one last warning." She stood as if she had cast anchor in the pavement. "If they sing, Oh Promise Me, I'll scream."

"Will they sing?" asked the best man. "I thought if you wanted a singer, you'd have to hire him yourself. Or at least ask for it."

Even at this hour the tourists thronged, popped from behind bushes with cameras and stared hopefully at the girls behind the orchids. The church management guaranteed privacy to all wedding parties, and had an attendant posted at the door. When he saw the girls' corsages he knew these were no ordinary tourists. "Fowler-Clark?" he asked, consulting a typewritten page clipped to a wooden board. "You're late."

"Sorry," said Henry, "but circumstances . . ."

The attendant had not time to listen to excuses. "Your minister's waiting in the Groom's Chamber. He's been here seventeen minutes. The Bride's Boudoir"—he scowled toward Lilith as if he knew instinctively that she was to blame for the tardiness—"is up the staircase in the rear. I trust you won't be long. We've got three weddings this morning. The next party's here already."

Unconventional she was, but still woman enough

to want her hair tidy while she was being married. She went up to the Bride's Boudoir while Margery remained in the vestry garden, having a cigarette with the best man.

At the door of the Bride's Boudoir, Lilith paused to cast an experienced eye over the interior decoration. It was what she had expected, all charm and chintz like a movie set designer's interpretation of the word cozy.

At the dressing table a girl in a white gabardine suit was combing a blond shoulder-length bob. She had taken off a white, flower-trimmed hat with short veil, which lay beside her gloves, and a white leather prayer book. When she saw Lilith she started gathering up her things.

"Excuse us, please," she said. "We were a little early and they let us wait up here."

At the window were two young girls in rayon taffeta and cartwheel hats.

"You girls needn't leave, I'll only be a couple of minutes," Lilith told them.

The girls in taffeta giggled, whispered something about the ladies' room and scuttled out.

The girl in white gabardine offered Lilith her place at the dressing table. "You're ahead of me, I guess."

"Are you being married this morning, too?"

"Yes, I am. At ten. Only we were all so nervous, we looked at the clock wrong and got here almost an hour early. I'm so nervous I'm sweating. Look," and she held out her palms for inspection. "That's very unusual for me, I don't usually sweat much." Her voice was soft but rough in texture, a working girl's voice.

VENETIAN blinds had been closed against the morning glare, and the dimness of the room along with the gardenias' heavy scent made the room solemn, more like a funeral chamber than a bride's boudoir. The two brides had little to say to each other.

"Cigarette?" said Lilith at last, and held out her gold case.

"No, thank you, I don't smoke. I don't know why. I got nothing against it, some of my girl friends smoke like chimneys, but I never got started."

Down below, in the parking space allotted to members of wedding parties, a car rattled to a stop. "That's him," the little bride said, her pallor mottled by a rising blush. "My boyfr—the bridegroom, I mean. I can always tell by listening when that jalopy comes along. He got here early, too." She laughed as in triumph.

It was not like Lilith to waste so much time over her make-up. Twice she smeared the lipstick, had to remove it and start all over again.

"I guess you're not having a formal wedding, huh?" the young girl said, looking at Lilith's suit and hat.

"No, I'm not."

"We're not either. Just two of my girl friends standing up as maids, and my cousin and his wife from Glendale. I'd always dreamed of having a wedding at home with all the folks around, but when you think of the cost of everything nowadays, it's hardly worth it. I mean, when you've got to get a home started and all. My folks are back East."

"Where?"

"Colorado."

Lilith ordinarily would have been amused by this gauche Western geography, but she only half-heard the girl's coarse-sweet voice. Irrelevantly there had appeared, out of some guarded cavern of her mind, the face of her (Continued on page 64)

Lilith was reminded of the pale blue ribbon on the imported slip that she had worn at her first wedding, and of the borrowed handkerchief tucked in her cuff. She couldn't refuse this girl now







On the first anniversary of his dismissal from the Truman Cabinet, Henry Wallace rails against anti-Russia hysteria. This was September, 1947, in New York

How The Reds Snatched Henry Wallace

By LOUIS FRANCIS BUDENZ

IF HENRY WALLACE should be elected President of the United States on November 2d, what would happen? Don't shrug your shoulders. Sure, it's unlikely—but you'll be better prepared to understand what I have seen and what I know by accepting the question.

First of all, there would be great rejoicing at the Kremlin, and delirium on the ninth floor of No. 35 East Twelfth Street, in New York, the headquarters of the American Communists. The party everywhere, in fact, would celebrate the election as a major victory and as the first long stride toward the sovietization of America. And with good reason. For although it seems certain that Wallace, a man of extraordinary unawareness, doesn't realize the extent to which he has been engulfed by the shifting quicksands of the Communist conspiracy,

he is their man. But Wallace himself is not a Communist.

Moscow placed the stamp of approval upon him more than four years ago. Since he returned from a visit to Siberia in 1944, the Communists have never doubted that he would support any policy put forward by the Soviet Union and denounce any attempt by the United States to counter Russian aggression. As early as February, 1945, Alexander Trachtenberg, a top party boss who always knows what the Kremlin wants, said at a meeting of the Communist hierarchy in New York, "We are taking Wallace into custody." I attended this meeting as managing editor of *The Daily Worker*, the Communist newspaper published in New York.

Whether he realizes it or not (and he would be loud in his denials) Wallace is a prisoner of the Communists. Assuming his election, we could ex-

pect an inaugural address as woolly and unrealistic as anything he has said so far, plus loud guarantees of peace and abundance for everybody. Then would come the payoff. Belatedly, he'd begin to see what he'd blundered into—how he had been captured. It might at last become clear to him that he owed more to the Communists than to any other party or group.

He would be reminded brusquely that the Communists conceived the idea of a third party, that they organized it, named it and chose him as their candidate. The comrades would be swift to point out that not only had Wallace failed to repudiate Communist support, he had specifically refused to do so.

If Wallace had dismissed his Communist followers (and if they had accepted the dismissal) he would have been left almost alone. From the mo-

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