

How Bertie Was Arrested

By John Worne

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There was a rather stormy scene. It was not the first time there had been a stormy scene, for Eva, though a dear thing, was a little apt to give way to temper, and Bertie, certainly was lax in his view of the duties of a fiancée.

But not nearly half the things that people said of him were true. In this case, for instance, it really was his cousin with whom he had been seen at a theater the evening before. She had just denounced him hotly at some length, making it clear that henceforth their paths lay far asunder.

"Well, I suppose that's all we need say about that," he said, cheerfully. "I see what you mean. Let's talk of something more pleasant."

"Never speak to me again," she replied, haughtily. "And kindly leave the house."

She turned contemptuously and left the room, and finding it dull alone, he left the house.

Next day he appeared at the door at his usual time, and found the footman had had strict orders.

"Miss Rowen at home?"
"No, sir."
"Mrs. Rowen?"
"No, sir."
"Mr. Rowen?"
"No, sir."

"Any of the little Rowens?"
"No, sir."
"The door closed."

Bertie stood outside and studied the beautiful brass knocker. A carriage drove up and two men got out. He knew them, shook hands and rang the bell. John appeared. The elder



Beautifully Dressed. He Sat Just Outside the Door.

of the two asked if Mrs. Rowen was at home. John looked at Bertie, hesitated for a fraction of a second, and said: "Yes, ma'am."

The two stepped inside, expecting Bertie to follow. But he only said: "Is Mrs. Rowen at home?"

John coughed, and said: "No, sir." "Miss Rowen?"

"No, sir."
"Mr. Rowen?"
"No, sir."
"Any of the little Rowens?"
"No, sir."

"Very well; shut the door, there's a draught," he sighed.

It was Mrs. Rowen's absence, not a fact which Bertie knew, by the drawing-room Eva had to invent elaborate explanations on the spur of the moment of the unhappy position of dear, Mr. Pittinghame.

"He came to see papa," was no good at all for they had distinctly heard him ask for everybody. Eva was very hot and red, and changed the subject.

The poor girl had just succeeded in turning the conversation when John announced Lord Bobby Dalmainham (pronounced "Dum") a recent imperator of Bertie's.

"How do you do?" said Lord Bobby. "I say, you know, Miss Rowen, what have you been doing to your young man?"

So Eva, feeling an almost irresistible impulse to hurt things about, began again the same poor, threadbare explanation, and glancing by chance out of the window she saw a small boy collecting and collecting, looking suspiciously from the opposite side of the road. It was a most uncomfortable afternoon.

John came in. Eva looked at him with apprehension. This time he carried a tray. It ought to be mentioned that he had just been presented with a five-dollar bill and a promise of immediate employment in case of dismissal. He came up to the tea table and held out the tray.

"Well," asked Eva. He replied sulkily: "Mr. Pittinghame says, miss, that he will have his tea very nice on the doorstep."

There was a pause in the conversation, and all eyes were turned on her with interest. She gulped down her wrath, tried to laugh lightly and with trembling hands poured out a cup of tea for him. It would look too absurd to say "No," or tell the man to send never, never, never be allowed to come in.

"Two humps, he usually takes, miss."

"He put the sugar in, and John went

out with the tray and a cake basket. As he reached the door he turned and said: "And I was to say, miss, that as it is just beginning to rain, have you got such a thing as an awning?"

"Take him—take him—an umbrella," she stammered, too miserable now even to care what all the people were thinking.

"Shall I take him some hot toast?" asked Lord Bobby, mischievously. She pretended not to have heard the question.

Each visitor on departing found a most elegant young man, beautifully dressed, sitting, with legs crossed, under an umbrella just outside the door. He was cheerful but would give no explanation. He promised to call soon on all those he knew, provided they would let him in.

"I wouldn't care to do this sort of thing often, you know. Excuse my not getting up, won't you? I've got a nice dry paving stone at present and it will get wet if I do. Wet paving stones are so uncomfortable, aren't they? Yes, indeed, Good-bye."

As the last guest went John was hastily summoned to the drawing-room, where Eva was looking out of the window in fury after an outburst of years.

"Why do you allow that person to annoy us like this all the afternoon?" she said, angrily, turning round.

"He wouldn't go, miss. I told him you'd call on every time anybody came. It didn't seem to make no difference."

"Why don't you send him away?" She stamped her foot.

"Can't the police do anything?"
"Well, miss, they would remove him if they knew you wanted it."

"Want it? Of course we want it! Tell them to send him away at once!"
"Very well, miss," said John. He went to the door. The shades of evening were falling and the crowd was getting larger, noisier and less respectful. There were three policemen standing at hand in earnest deliberation, with note books. Eva watched the proceedings from behind the curtains.

"I am afraid you must go, sir," said John. "I'm very sorry."

"Not at all," said Bertie. "Who says so?"

"Miss Rowen, sir."

"I thought you said she was out," John coughed. "Yes, sir, so she was—in a manner of speaking."

"Who's to send me away?" said Bertie, looking thoughtfully up into the umbrella.

John beckoned sorrowfully to the policemen, who approached in solid formation. The crowd cheered.

"Kindly remove this gentleman, who is trespassing."

"Ha!" said Bertie, "you use force! Mind, I'm only coming by force. Where are the handcuffs?" He held out his hands.

So they put them on. Eva saw it and felt a twinge of remorse. The party moved off with the rabble at their heels.

An hour or so later a policeman called with a ragged and dirty scrap of blue paper folded and addressed to Miss Rowen. It contained in shaky writing, done with some red substance which might have been blood, but was probably ink and embellished with many blots and splatters which were caused possibly by emotion but probably by a police station pen, the following words:

"My heart is broken. You may have forgotten my very name. I do not shame you. I am sitting on a very hard bench. I am sure you are a very old lady. She is very drunk. Her head is in my shoulder as I write, but I cannot go without one last word to one who I once loved me once. The very old lady has awakened! Darling, I cannot speak of her language. Farewell; may you be happy. Think of me sometimes in my lonely cell. Oh, my broken heart! Bertie, forever."

"P.S. Any time will do of course, but let Mr. Rowen to come as soon as you can, dear."

She read this pathetic document twice through her tears, and then, though it was nearly time to dress for dinner, she hurried on her hat and coat. All the blots on his noble countenance would mean in dealing with a wife through her tears, and then, though it was nearly time to dress for dinner, she hurried on her hat and coat.

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A TALE WITH A MORAL

Why a Drummer Cut a Town Off His Visiting List.

EYE OPENER FOR A FARMER.

Thought He Had Been Getting Bargains by Buying From Mail Order Houses. The Drummer Gave Him Something to Think About.

Half a dozen men sat in the office of the hotel in a town of the middle west, any possessing eye that is accustomed to the distribution of persons in the average town could have picked out the local merchant, the editor, the doctor and the farmer. The hotel clerk, who sat around the big stove with the others, was looking at the ten or twelve men sitting around the table. He had a look on his face that anybody could see was a drummer for a city house.

"Yes, it's pretty tough," the drummer was saying, he glanced at the farmer. "Times are good, and yet trade seems to be falling off in some places, and I'm around here for my stance, is it worth so much as it might be? Your town is running down at the keel, you might say. You all know I've been making this place for ten years, but I've got to cut it out. This is my last trip. Nothing doing any more."

"I reckon Bob's right, boys," said the merchant, looking blue. "We're certainly sorry he's going to quit making this town, but business is business. Eight or ten years ago I used to buy a bill of goods every time he came round that made him happy enough to shut a big city house."

"You sure did, Jim," replied the drummer; "but this time my order book shows just \$27.50. The other two fellows didn't order a thing, that's not worth the stop over, you see."

"What's the matter with you fellows, Mr. Wilson?" the farmer inquired, with a glance at the merchant. As he spoke he took from his pockets a pipe, a package of tobacco and a box of matches. He proceeded to fill and light his pipe, puffing away contentedly.

"Extracting a match, he struck it on the prepared surface of the box.

"Very handy matches," he remarked. "Where do you buy 'em?"

"The farmer looked a little shamefaced.

"Why, I—I bought that box in Chicago."

"Ah, I didn't know you'd made a trip to the city," said the merchant, puffing placidly.

"Well, to tell the truth, I haven't admitted the farmer. "You see, it was this way. My woman folks are great hands for reading these here catalogues and things. I happened to run across a match bargain in a catalogue, and so I sent to Chicago and got six boxes—a whole package for a dime."

"Very nice," said the merchant, smiling at him. "Yes, very nice matches, but I happen to have the same kind in stock, six boxes for 12 cents. Your stamp cost you 2 cents, and then there were the stationery and the trouble of writing. So you didn't get much of a bargain after all, Mr. Hines."

"I reckon I didn't, Mr. Wilson," admitted the farmer, "but I didn't know you kept 'em."

"No, because you don't come around to the store like you used to. I happen to order those matches from Bob Rhodes here."

"You mean you had to order 'em," corrected the farmer, "but you told me today you had had 'em down of the last order of mail, you remember. I think I'll send 'em myself. Mr. Hines, if you'll bring some me for a piece of the wood."

The farmer handed over his tobacco. The drummer read the label as he opened the package.

"Buy this by mail, too?" he asked quickly.

"Well, yes," said the farmer. "You see—"

"Yes, I see. Cost you 8 cents a package besides the postage, the stationery and the trouble. Mr. Wilson keeps the same brand for 10 cents. I say he keeps it. He doesn't sell it to any great extent, because you people who live here and live around send your money off to Chicago or some other big city to those large mail order houses, and Mr. Wilson and your other merchants here can't light trade that poor old Bob Rhodes has got to cut the town off his visiting list. Another result—town quits growing, your land doesn't increase in value, and they're growing a nice crop of grass in the streets. They ought to move it and compete with your affairs or clover-hey? Now, ain't that just about the size of it, Hines?"

Mr. Hines coughed. The tobacco was middling strong.

"And, say, Brother Hines, I'll just bet you a dollar that you bought that pipe by mail, too," continued the drummer.

"I'm no betting man, Mr. Rhodes," returned the farmer defensively.

"But you are a thinking man," suggested the drummer, "and I think I've given you a little food for thought. Thanks for the tobacco, Mr. Hines."

BURR JOYCE.

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