

FANCIFUL TALES

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The TYPEWRITER

BY

David H. Keller, M. D.

"When I married you I thought that I was going to have a husband," exclaimed Amy Hunting. "But, instead I have found only a living death with an author, a slave to a machine."

"When I married you I loved you and I still do," replied her husband. "I do not see why you should complain about my work, as long as I make a living for the two of us."

"The same old argument!" retorted the wife. "When we married, you were a bond salesman. Your work brought you into contact with living people in the daytime and with your wife at night. We went places and saw things, played bridge, entertained. We had many mutual interests. Now, there are only three interests in your life, reading, thinking and writing. Everything else that you do, such as eating, talking, dressing and sleeping, you do only because it is necessary and not because you want to. You begrudge the time spent at meals and you used to enjoy eating."

"At least, I am making a better living than I did selling bonds. You have everything you need, and even some luxuries," John Hunting said with a smile. He knew that it was a hard statement to deny.

"I was happier when we were poor," his wife cried. "Then, selling bonds was your vacation and your wife your avocation. Now, I am just a piece of furniture. Our friends used to call me Amy Hunting! Now they refer to me as the

wife of the man who wrote THE PERPETUAL HONEYMOON. And for every person who knows you are a married man there are ten thousand who speak of you as the creator of Angelica Lamereaux, the wonder woman the perfect sweetheart, the modern Lilith, the eternal feminine perfume. Ten million women try to imitate her, twenty million adore her. Her picture is in every home; her image in every man's heart. And, because you created her, fifty million men envy you and as many women feel that because you understood Angelica Lamereaux you understand them. Perfumed letters, requests for your autograph, invitations for the week end, requests for lectures—those are my surroundings."

John Hunting looked at his wife. It was not the first time that they had talked over the matter of his national popularity, but it was the first time that he had come to a realization of the real psychology of his wife's reaction.

"You are jealous," he said slowly. "Jealous of a character in a book. I believe that your reaction is not unusual. I have read that many authors from Dickens to Cabell had similar experiences. Personally, I never could understand it, I understand it less. Why should you feel that way? You spend twenty-four hours a day with me; every minute of the time you know where I am; you open all my mail, and you and the secretary answer all of it. Just what more do you want?"

"You never would understand," she replied, talking slowly as though to a child. "If I talked to you a million years in words of one syllable, you never would understand. Putting it just as plainly as I can, the trouble is just this: I am your wife, and I want to come first in your life. If you are happy I want it to be because you are living with me."

"You lived with your mother for twenty-seven years and

when she died I found you, and because I did I want to keep THE PERPETUAL HONEYMOON. Angelica Lamereaux came you. Now you have gone and spoiled it all by learning to peck on a typewriter and by falling in love with another woman. What is the result? You spent a year of days at a typewriter and nights of insomnia imaginations and wrote into your soul and there was no room for Amy Hunting. Now, you are working on a sequel. You are polite when I speak to you, you answer me, but all the time your spirit is far away with that other woman."

"Just a character in a novel; a paper woman!"

"I wish I could believe it! Either explanation is terrible. If there is a real woman, then you have been more than false to me: if she is only a figment of your imagination, then you are insane. If she is real, I could fight the issue out to a finish with her, but how could any real woman fight a fantasy? If you loved me as you say you do, you would help me. You would put away your typewriter, stop dreaming of her, go back to selling bonds, pay some attention to me, and show me that you do not love her."

John Hunting shook his head. There was a tone of finality as he gave his determined answer.

"You simply do not understand; anything I say you will not understand. This lack of comprehension is the result of your jealousy. I always wanted to write. Before I knew my letters, before I knew how to read, I made up little stories and verse. It was an urge, with it came the will to attain. You know how I bought my typewriter. I told you at the time how I saved the money by going without my lunches. But perhaps I never explained to you the reason for buying that special machine. I had to buy it. I went into the pawnshop and told the man that I wanted a machine.

He had even forgotten that he had one. I had to tell him where it was. I knew! I had seen it in a dream. This part of the story I cannot blame you for not understanding, because I cannot comprehend it myself..

"The basic idea is simple, provided you are willing to believe it. A book had to be written, a heroine created, and I, of all the men in the world, had to write that book, had to create that heroine. I had to do it, because no one else could do it, and I could do it only with that particular typewriter, lost in a pawn shop and covered with dust. Separate the typewrite and the man, and nothing would happen in a million years; place the two in conjunction, and *THE PERPETUAL HONEYMOON* is given to the world.

"You remember the day that I brought the machine home, how I would not trust the repair man to take it from the house, how I had to sit and watch every movement that he made lest in some way he would injure it forever. After it was put in perfect condition, it had to be placed in the proper position, on the right kind of a table, on a bronz and gold velvet scarf. you must remember the day that I resigned from my position as a bond salesman and started to write. There was never a moment of hesitation.

"The title the name of the heroine, everything about her, each little twist of her charming personality, every action, conversation, even her dresses were familiar to me before I wrote a word of the book as A. B. C. or 2 plus 2 make 4.

I wrote the boog. I really did not write it. I simply copied it from a book that I could read in the deepest memories of my soul with my eyes shut. There was never any hesitancy, not a moment of doubt. Her name had to be *Angelica Lamereaux*!—how could it be anything else when that was

her name?

"The book sold. That was a part of the program. There was a publisher waiting. I handed him the book and told him the title. It never occurred to him to reject it; in fact, he seemed to have been waiting for the manuscript.

"I never met the woman. I do not even know that there is such a woman. But I feel that I know her. At first I thought that I was her creator! Later there has come the thought that I am only the mirror that she has used to alloy her perfect personality to become known to the waiting world. I may be peculiarly sensitive to vibrations from the spirit world vibrations not perceptible to other men, so that this spirit of Angelica Lamereaux simply uses me to make her tangible to a world starving for some symbol of perfect love.

"It has been a year since I finished the book. Since then she has grown more real to me. For a while I was not sure, but now I know that I must write another book about her, and this book shall be a better book. I and my typewriter shall write that book, but we shall only put down on the white pages the story of the life of Angelica Lamereaux as she whispers it to me. And that book will give pleasure to the millions who have learned to love the one perfect woman of all the ages."

"If you write it, you will lose me. I shall divorce you!"

"I am sorry," he replied softly, "but if I do not write it, you will lose me anyway, for I shall die of longing and desire to write the story that she has given to my soul."

She looked at him, an incredulous cunning in her eyes.

"No other typewriter would do it, would it? You have to use the one you have?"

"Yes, I have to write on that special one. In some way

it is definitely entangled with the story and the woman."

"Suppose we stop talking and have supper," Amy Hunting suggested.

She put a sedative in his coffee, not much, but enough to take the edge off his restlessness and to change his insomnia into tranquil sleep. When she put it in the coffee her only thought was to tear his consciousness away from Angelica Lamereaux for at least a few hours. The real reason did not come to her 'till he was asleep.

Then it occurred to her. Suddenly she realized how she could once again be happy, even though, in the process, her husband returned to his former position of selling bonds.

She went to the cellar and picked up an ax. It was a very old ax that had not been touched for many years. She went back to her husband's bedroom to make sure that he slept. Then she went to his library, where he kept the typewriter, covered with a silk handkerchief. Not daring to take off the cover, she brought the ax down in a single, sullen, savage smash.

A cry came, a shrill, piercing scream of a woman in death agony. John Hunting heard the cry, sat up in bed, clasped his bleeding head, then started, staggering, twisting, moaning from his bedroom to the library. His wife met him at the door.

"Someone has killed Angelica Lamereaux!" he moaned, and, pushing her aside with unseeing arms, he tottered slowly to his desk and dropped on the wrecked typewriter.

FINIS