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FEBRUARY 35¢



WAYS TO GET A GAL . . . A Brand New Story By P. G. Wodehouse

THE MAN WITH X-RAY EYES—All Secrets Were Revealed To Him

A BUCKETFUL OF DIAMONDS — Vaults Were Paper To His Touch

SEX, LOVE, AND MR. OWEN By Thorne Smith, Creator of TOPPER

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CELE GOLDSMITH

Art Editor
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WAYS TO GET A GAL

By P. G. WODEHOUSE



What was the key to
Mabel's heart—

Mabel had everything any man could ever want. But she couldn't be picked off a tree like a grape. She had to be won like any ordinary gal. So the millionaire, the playboy and the butler tried to think up ways to get the gal. Which one would you bet on?

OPENING his eyes to a new day, young Lord Barminster ("Barmy" to his friends) found Wilson, his valet, at his bedside with the morning cup of tea, and after he had taken a refreshing sip or two he said:

"Tell me, Wilson, have you ever wooed?"

"M'lord?"

"Put it another way. Have you ever been in love?"

"From time to time, m'lord."

"Did any business result?"

"Virtually none, m'lord."

"Ah," said Barmy, "and I'll tell you why. You didn't go the right way to work. You had no system. Ask me what I mean by the word system, Wilson."

"What does your lordship mean by the word system?"

"By the word system," said Barmy. "I mean system. What is technically known as wooing is a thing that can't be rushed. To produce the best results you must ease into it by degrees and operate on a schedule. See what I mean?"

"Not entirely, m'lord."

"Well, first you find the girl. Essential, that."

"Just so, m'lord."

"This done, you look at her. Say for about a couple of weeks."

"Look at her, m'lord?"

"Fixedly. I might even use the word goggle. You stand in front of her and drink her silently in . . . with, of course, the lovelight in your eyes. This goes on, as I say, for about two weeks. Third week, send her flowers. Fourth week, gifts with a bit more zip to them, as it might be something in the nature of jewelry. Fifth week, propose. Softened up by those preliminary doings, she's pretty well bound to say Right-ho. What

do you think of it? I shall be glad to have your views."

"If your lordship will pardon me, I find it a trifle elaborate. In Lower Smattering, I remember,—"

"What on earth's Lower Smattering?"

"The village where I spent my boyhood, m'lord. The prevailing practice there was to take the young person for a walk and kiss her."

Barmy shook his head.

"I dare say that sort of thing might work in a village," he said, "but for London you need the scientific approach. This is by far the best way."

It was some ten days later that Wilson, bringing in the before-luncheon cocktail, was requested by his employer to go out and purchase two dozen of the best red roses. There was a significant look in Barmy's eye as he gave the order.

"Flowers, Wilson."

"Very good, m'lord."

"Get the idea? Third week. The good old system."

"M'lord?"

"Don't tell me you've forgotten what I was saying about the system."

"Oh, no, m'lord, but I was a little surprised. Am I to understand that your lordship

is contemplating matrimony?"

"That's right. And of course I'm trying out the system. For two weeks I have been standing in front of the adored object, goggling silently."

"Did not that make your lordship somewhat noticeable?"

"I wanted to be noticeable. That was the whole idea. I wanted to get her saying to herself 'Hell, this bird seems to be cropping up a bit these days. What can this signify?' But I see what you mean. You imply that she might have called a cop."

"Or a medical gentleman specializing in aberrations of the brain."

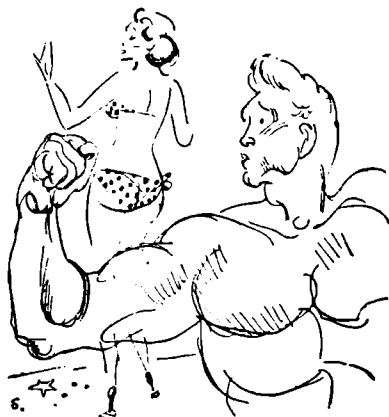
"Ah, but at the same time I

was buying gloves. She who I hope will shortly clock in as Lady Barminster — Mabel Parker is the name—works in the glove department at Harridge's Stores, and I did my goggling across the counter. Take those roses to her this afternoon, Wilson, and I shall want you to deliver a similar nosegay each day this week. I am convinced," said Barmy, "that this system of mine will bring home the bacon. Reason it out for yourself. When a girl sees a man come in day after day and buy gloves and stand gazing at her spell-bound, she's going to think a bit and put two and two together. I would offer attractive odds that it won't be long before those wedding bells are ringing out . . . blithely, as the expression is. Of course you'll stay on with me after the nup-whatever-the-word is."

"Nuptials, m'lord. I fear that will be impossible. I had intended to inform your lordship this morning that I must regretfully tender my notice. I am retiring and buying a small restaurant."

"Golly! Been robbing a bank or something?"

"I was fortunate enough to place a substantial sum on a long-priced winner at a recent race meeting, m'lord."



Masculine muscles—?

"Some fellows have all the luck. That was how Mr. Galloway started. Had a good day at Belmont Park, bought a restaurant, branched out and now owns half the eating houses in America."

"Indeed, m'lord? A romance of commerce. I should have mentioned earlier that Mr. Galloway rang up on the telephone while your lordship was out this morning."

"He did? I'll tell you what that means, Wilson. He's in England."

"Yes, m'lord, and he hopes your lordship will dine with him tonight at his club."

"I will," said Barmy. "Give him a buzz and tell him I'll be there not only with bells on but with my hair in a braid."

He was always, even at the shortest notice, at Mr. Galloway's disposal, for the latter was the fountain head from which he drew his handsome monthly allowance.

Barmy's mother had been a Miss Galloway of upper Park Avenue, and Andrew Galloway, the multiple restaurant owner, was her brother. Between him and his young nephew there had always existed the most cordial relations, and it was generally understood that when the superfatted old gentleman eventually succumbed to the

apoplectic seizure which he had been courting since his early thirties, Barmy would come into the money which the other scooped in each year in such heaping handfuls.

It was an arrangement which suited Barmy down to the ground. This is the age of the specialist, and even as a boy, hardly capable of connected thought, he had become convinced that his specialty, the thing he could do really well, was to inherit money. There was always the danger, of course, that Mr. Galloway might marry again and this time start supplying the world with little Galloway's as well as restaurants, which would naturally upset the form book a good deal, but the betting was very much against it. He had tried the holy state thrice, each time unsuccessfully, and after his third divorce some years ago had appeared to have packed up. Enough was enough it seemed.

It was consequently with no premonition of impending doom that Barmy made his way to the tryst, and after a couple of strengthening cocktails seated himself opposite his uncle at a table in the corner of the dining room.

Dinner with Andrew Gal-

loway was never just a quick-lunch-counter scuffle. He believed that a man who is running a large chain of restaurants should build his strength up. It was not immediately, therefore, that the meal became a feast of reason and a flow of soul. Indeed, the two revellers had lighted their cigars before the elder gave forth any remark that was not purely gastronomic. When he did jerk the conversation up into a higher plane, he jerked it hard. He sent it shooting into the realms of the soulful with a whizz.

"George," he said, for that was Barmy's name, "do you believe in love at first sight?"

Barmy, in the act of sipping a liqueur brandy, lowered the glass. It would be absurd to say that he looked at his uncle keenly, for he was not capable of looking keenly at anyone. But he did look like a rather puzzled halibut. His host's table talk had never before run on these lines.

"Oh, yes," he said guardedly.

"Me, too," said Mr. Galloway. "Amazing," he proceeded, "how young I'm feeling tonight. And, darn it, I'm not so very old. Men have married at twice my age."

Strictly speaking, this was

incorrect, unless one counted Methuselah, but perhaps Mr. Galloway spoke figuratively.

Barmy had paled. The cigar trembled in his nerveless fingers. He did not at all like the way things seemed to be shaping.

"Are you . . . Were you . . . Are you thinking of getting married again, uncle?"

"You have guessed my secret. You have probably often wondered why, being in the prime of life and having had a romantic nature since early boyhood, I have remained single all these years. The reason is simple. I could never find a woman who was not on some kind of a diet. Every time I contacted a likely prospect and passion was beginning to burgeon, it would transpire that the misguided female's idea of a square meal was a slice of Melba toast and a piece of pineapple. Naturally, on discovering this, I was off over the horizon like a jack rabbit, and any attempt to drag me to the altar would have been fought with tooth and claw. And so things went on until this morning, when I had a remarkable spiritual experience. I had gone into Harridge's Stores to buy a pair of gloves. When all of a sudden—"

Mr. Galloway was a sub-

stantial man, two hundred and fifteen pounds on the hoof, but as he spoke these words he seemed to his nephew to flicker like an old-time silent picture.

"Gug-gug-gloves?" faltered Barmy.

"Leather, for motoring purposes. And as my eyes fell on the girl behind the counter, something seemed to go all over me like the hives. Love at first sight," explained Mr. Galloway. "It frequently happens, of course. Look at Romeo."

He sighed sentimentally. He may have been wheezing, but it was more probably a sigh.

Barmy did his best.

"I know the girl you mean," he said, trying to keep his voice from shaking. "I buy my gloves at Harridge's. Tallish girl with blue eyes."

"And also hair like molten gold and teeth like pearls. Her name, I ascertained, is Mabel Parker."

"That's the one. Well, I'm sorry to tell you, uncle, that she is on that diet where you live, if you can call it living, mostly on black strap molasses."

Mr. Galloway shook his head.

"You must be thinking of some other girl. This one

would draw herself up like an offended princess if you so much as showed her a spoonful of black strap molasses. This is no hastily formed impression. I speak of what I know. I chanced, being in something of a hurry, to go for my lunch to a little restaurant across the way from Harridge's. She was there with some other girls, and I gathered from their conversation that she had won the store Derby sweep and was celebrating. And did she celebrate! Hors d'oeuvres, soup, some kind of fish and two goes at the Hungarian goulash. And when she topped it off with strawberry shortcake smothered in whipped cream, I knew that I had found my affinity. My heart stood still."



Immortality on canvas—?

Barmy eyed him with fallen jaw. His liqueur had turned to wormwood.

"You certainly would appear to have got it up your nose," he said dully. "Er—when is it to be? The wedding and all that?"

"Almost immediately. I shall propose to her tomorrow."

Barmy moistened his lips with the tip of the tongue.

"I wouldn't do that, uncle. Rather rushing it, what? The cagey move is to ease into the thing by degrees and operate on a system. What I would advise is that for a couple of weeks you just look at her. Third week, send her flowers. Fourth week . . ."

"I see what you mean. Give her time to become accustomed to seeing me about the place, you think?"

"Exactly. You want to sink in, as it were."

Mr. Galloway puffed thoughtfully at his cigar.

"There may be something in that. You're not such a fool as you look, George. Well, it would hardly be possible for you to be, would it?" he said reasonably. "All right, then. For the next two weeks I'll look at her, but I won't send flowers the third week, not to a girl like that. I'll send pâté de fois gras, caviar,

hams, chickens and champagne."

If somebody had told Barmy, as he left his uncle's club that night, that he was standing at a young man's cross-roads, he would have gaped and said "Eh, what?", not getting the gist, but that was of course precisely what he was doing.

Two courses were open to him. He could withdraw from the contest, leaving Mr. Galloway to carry on as planned, or he could continue to pursue his wooing. Love suggested the latter policy, Prudence the former. If, Prudence pointed out, Mr. Galloway were to discover one morning that his nephew had just married the girl whom he, Mr.



Baubles from Tiffany's—?

Galloway, had been hoping to marry himself, he might well be expected to look askance at that nephew. Few things so speedily modify an uncle's love as the news that his sister's child has jumped in ahead of him and snaffled the bride-to-be. In such circumstances an uncle is extremely likely to call for his lawyer and his fountain pen and start altering wills and cancelling allowances.

It was a problem that called for much weighing of this against that, and the only thing to do when you have a spot of this-against-that-weighing on your hands is to get away from it all and seek some rural nook, far from the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, where you can give yourself up to quiet, uninterrupted meditation. There was a fishing inn about fifty miles up the Thames where Barmy went occasionally when he felt the urge to try to catch a gudgeon or two. He decided to go there now and plunge into thought. He notified Wilson of his plans next morning over the early cup of tea.

"Today's Saturday, isn't it, Wilson?"

"Yes, m'lord."

"So tomorrow will be Sunday. Well, I shall be going off to that place up the river this

afternoon and shall be away till . . . what's the name of the day that comes after Sunday? It's on the tip of my tongue."

"Monday, m'lord."

"That's right, Monday. Expect me back to dinner on Monday night."

It would be distasteful to describe in detail the soul torments which the young man passed between the hours of 4.30, when he started off in his Jaguar, and 7.30, when he started back. These morbidities are better left to the Russian novelists. Suffice it to say that with Love pulling him this way and Prudence that, till he felt like a worm that has had the misfortune to be grabbed at both ends by two simultaneous Plymouth Rocks, he suffered considerable agony of spirit. It was only after an early dinner consisting of steak and two veg that he made his decision.

He would obey the dictates of Love. His uncle, as Prudence kept repeating like a parrot, would unquestionably stop his allowance and cut him out of his will, but what of that? What, if you came right down to it, was money? Looking at it squarely, just dross. And, anyway, if you wanted the stuff, all you had to do was to pop over to America, win

one of those \$64,000 questions, and there you were.

It was consequently with as much as he could remember of a popular song on his lips that he braked the Jaguar outside the building where he lived and went up to his apartment. But scarcely had he turned the key in the door when it—the song, not the key—died away in a hollow gurgle, and a sharp “Well, I’ll be dashed!” escaped him. He halted in his tracks. Like Othello, he was perplexed in the extreme.

The dining room of the apartment was to the left as you entered. Its door was closed, and through it there had come a sudden laugh. And not Wilson’s laugh, either. Barmy would have had no objection to Wilson indulging in a guffaw or two, if so disposed. This was a feminine laugh, and it outraged Barmy to think that in his absence his personal attendant should be using his apartment for the entertainment of lady friends.

“Wilson!” he bellowed, and a moment later Wilson emerged, looking like a personal attendant who has been tucking into chicken and champagne.

He seemed a little ag-grieved.

“I had not expected you

back, m’lord,” he said, and in his voice there was a touch of rebuke.

“So I should think!” said Barmy. “So I should surmise! I like your crust, turning my respectable home into an abode of love.”

“Love conquers all, m’lord.”

“I dare say it does, but that doesn’t alter the fact that you’re fired. Though wait,” said Barmy, reflecting. “It’s no good firing you, is it? I mean, you’re leaving already. Still, I should like to mark my displeasure. Consider it marked.”

“Very good, m’lord.”

“Have you been doing this sort of thing often in my absence?”

“Never before, m’lord. This was a special occasion. Wedding breakfast, m’lord.”

Barmy gaped.

“When did you get married?”

“This morning, m’lord.”

“Well, blow me tight! You might have let me know.”

“I felt that sealed lips would be more advisable, m’lord.”

“Perhaps you’re right. Nice girl, is she?”

“Extremely, m’lord. I believe your lordship knows her by sight. Until this morning, when she resigned her portfolio, she held an executive

post at Harridge's Stores. In the glove department, m'lord. If your lordship recollects, I have been delivering long-stemmed roses to her throughout the week. It was indeed," proceeded Wilson, a soft glow in his eyes, "this that brought us together. I rather fancy, thinking back, that I may inadvertently have given her the impression that the blooms were a personal tribute from myself. From remarks which she let fall I suspected that some such misunderstanding had occurred, but these things are so difficult to put right, particularly if one's mind is elsewhere."

"Your mind was elsewhere, was it?"

"Precisely, m'lord. It still is."

"Yes," said Barmy bitterly, "I suppose it's riveted on that cold chicken you've swiped from the ice box. And I've no doubt you've helped yourself liberally to my champagne."

"Oh, no, m'lord," said Wilson, shocked. "I would not have dreamed of taking such a liberty. Both chicken and champagne were a gift to Mrs. Wilson from a gentleman who was in buying gloves a day or two ago. Caviar and pâté de fois gras were also included in the hamper."

A thrill ran through Barmy

from his stay-combed hair to his heliotrope socks. He had forgotten all about Andrew Galloway, and suddenly being reminded of him like this had much the same effect as the sight of a silver lining in the clouds has on a man who likes nice weather. True, he had lost the girl he loved and his heart, of course, was broken, but then it had been broken so many times before by the loss of so many other girls that nowadays he scarcely noticed it. The salient point, the point on which to keep the eye fixed, was that now there would be no nonsense about cutting off allowances and altering wills.

He was conscious of a



Or an iron constitution?

gentle glow of happiness and a strong desire to toast his good luck.

"This gentleman," he said, "this glove-purchasing gentleman, is the champagne he sent all right?"

"Excellent, m'lord. A very good vintage year."

"Then lead me to it, if you don't mind me butting in for a couple of minutes."

"Not at all, m'lord. I am sure Mrs. Wilson will be delighted to make your lordship's acquaintance."

"Tell me, Wilson," said Barmy, as they made for the dining room. "Touching this little

business, I imagine you didn't try the system, what? More the Lower Smattering method, eh?"

"On those lines, m'lord."

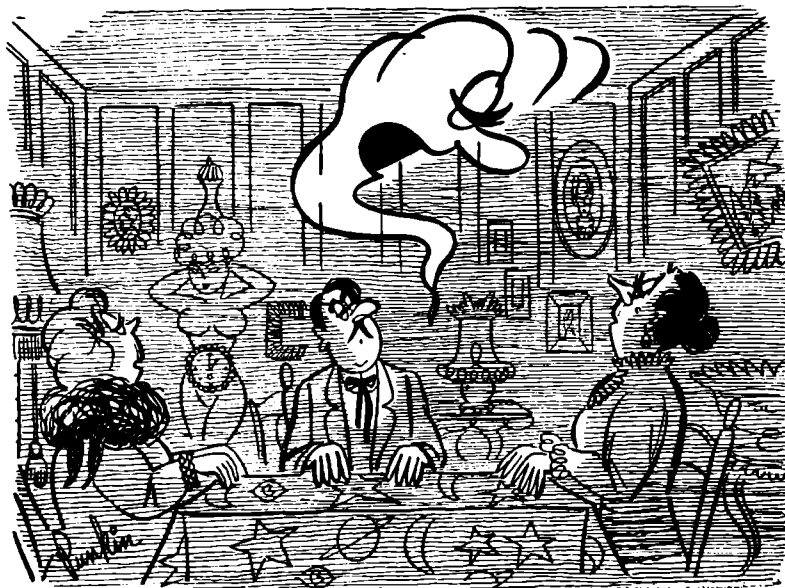
"Does everybody in Lower Smattering carry on like that?"

"Yes, m'lord."

"Gosh; if those are the conditions that prevail in Lower Smattering, one tends to ask oneself what life in Upper Smattering must be like. Caviar, did you say, Wilson?"

"And pâté de fois gras, m'lord."

"I can do with both," said Barmy. "Lead on." **THE END**



"Don't call us—we'll call you!"