

Rowland Helen

The Sayings of Mrs. Solomon



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Helen Rowland

The Sayings of Mrs. Solomon / being the confessions of the seven hundredth wife as / revealed to Helen Rowland

GREETING

Hearken, my Daughter, and give ear unto my wisdom, that thou mayest understand *man*— his goings and his comings, his stayings out and his return in the morning, his words of honey and his ways of guile.

Beloved, question me not, whence I have learned of man, his secrets. Have I not known *one* man well? And verily, a woman need know but one man, in order to understand *all* men; whereas a man may know all women and understand not one of them.

For men are of but one pattern, whereof thou needest but to discover the secret combination; but women are as the *Yale lock*— no two of them are alike.

Lo! What a paradox is man – even a puzzle which worketh backward!

He mistaketh a sweet scent for a sweet disposition, and a subtile sachet for a subtile mind.

He voweth, “I admire a discreet woman!” – and inviteth the froward blonde of the chorus to supper.

He muttereth unto his wife, “Lo! I will go unto the corner for a cigar” – and behold, he wandereth unto many corners and returneth by a circular route.

He kisseth the woman whom he loveth *not*, and avoideth her whom he loveth, lest his heart become entangled. Yea, he seeketh always the wrong woman that he may forget his heart’s desire.

Yet, whichever he weddeth, he regretteth it all the days of his life.

SELAH

BOOK OF HUSBANDS

CHAPTER ONE

Verily, my Daughter, an husband is a Good Thing. He giveth the house a “finished” look, even as a rubber plant and a door-plate.

He suggesteth ready-money, and is an *adornment* like unto a potted palm upon the piazza.

When he sitteth beside thee in the tabernacle, he is as a certificate of respectability; yea in the eyes of society, he is better than a written recommendation.

Verily, he is as necessary unto thy dinner table as a centerpiece, and more impressive than cut flowers and a butler in livery.

When he taketh thee abroad to dine, the waiter shall not lead thee into dim and draughty corners, but shall run nimbly and place thee in a choice spot within *hearing* of the music.

For a lone woman in a great restaurant looketh pitiful; but an husband looketh like a real *tip*.

When thou goest unto an hotel in his company, the clerk shall not offer thee a room upon the air-shaft; and the bell-boys shall answer thy ring with flying feet and a glad smile. For an husband is as good as much credit.

Yea, when thou goest forth to shop, saying “Send this thing to *Mrs. Jones*”, the clerk shall treat thee *almost* as an equal.

Women shall not gossip about thee, and men shall come unto thy teas with an easy mind, knowing thou canst have no designs upon them. Thy family shall call thee “*settled*”, and no woman shall call thee “Poor Thing!”

Therefore, I say unto thee, if thou findest thine husband less than thine ideal, weep not, but be of good cheer.

For what profiteth it a woman, though she have every other luxury in all the world, and have not a *little husband* in her home?

CHAPTER TWO

A perfect husband, who can find one?

For his price is far above gold bonds.

The heart of his wife rejoiceth in him, and he shall have no lack of encouragement.

He worketh willingly with his hands and bringeth home *all* his shekels.

He riseth without calling and lifteth the ice from off the dumbwaiter. He starteth the kitchen range. He considereth his wife, and kisseth her *occasionally*.

Six days of the week doth he labor for his moneys, and upon the seventh doeth chores within the house for *relaxation*.

With his own hands he runneth the lawn mower and washeth the dog.

He layeth his hands to the parlor curtains and putteth up the portieres.

He hooketh his wife's dresses up the back, *without* mutterings.

He putteth the cat out by night.

He is *not* afraid of the cook.

His ashes fall not upon the carpet, and his cigarette burneth not holes in the draperies.

For he doeth his smoking on the piazza.

He weareth everlasting socks and seweth on his own buttons.

His overcoat doeth him two seasons.

Yet, when he ventureth abroad with his wife he donneth a *dress suit* without grumbling.

The grouch knoweth him not and his breakfast always pleaseth him. His mouth is filled with praises for his wife's cooking. He doth *not* expect chicken salad from left-over veal, neither the making of lobster patties from an ham-bone.

His wife is known within the gates, when she sitteth among the officers of her Club, by the fit of her gowns and her imported hats. He luncheth meagrely upon a sandwich that he may adorn her with fine jewels. He grumbleth not at the bills.

He openeth his mouth with praises and *noteth* her new frock. And the word of flattery is on his tongue.

He perceiveth not the existence of *other* women.

He may be *trusted* to mail a letter.

Lo, many men have I met in the world, but none like unto *him*.

Yet have ye all seen him – in your *dreams*!

CHAPTER THREE

Behold, my Daughter, the Lord maketh a man – but the *wife* maketh an *husband*.

For Man is but the raw material whereon a woman putteth the *finishing touches*.

Yea, and whatsoever pattern of husband thou selectest, thou shalt find him like unto a shop-made garment, which must be trimmed over and cut down, and ironed out, and built up to fit the matrimonial situation.

Verily, the best of husbands hath many raw edges, and many unnecessary pleats in his temper, and many wrinkles in his disposition, which must be removed.

Lo, I charge thee, be wary in thy choice. For, many shall call, but few shall propose. And, a wise damsel shall with difficulty select that which fitteth her disposition and matcheth her tastes – even that which shall not pinch upon the bank account, neither stretch upon the truth, neither shrink nor run nor fade.

At the second-hand counter thou shalt find many widowers, which have been remodelled by another hand. And these are easy to acquire. Yet an hand-me-down may have been spoiled in the making, and become frayed at the edges of the temper, and shiny on the seamy-side.

But a *bachelor* who hath passed forty is a *remnant*; and there is no good material left in him. His sentiments are moth-eaten and his tender speeches shop-worn. His manners shall require much basting and his morals many patches. The gloss hath been rubbed off his illusions and the color hath gone out of his emotions. Yet, a clever damsel shall, peradventure, take one of these and remodel him to seem as new.

For the happiest wife is not she that getteth the best husband, but she that maketh the best of that which she getteth. Verily, verily, an husband is a *work of art* which must be executed by hand; for there is no factory which turneth them out to order.

CHAPTER FOUR

Go to the *lemon grove*, oh, thou Scholarette! For no woman with *brains* hath ever plucked a peach in the Garden of Matrimony.

Nay, it is not given unto one woman to possess both real ability and a real husband.

For unto a successful woman an husband is but an adjunct; and no man yearneth to be an *annex*!

Alas! He preferreth soft, sweet things, and unto him a woman that knoweth her own mind is an abomination.

Verily, verily, a woman with *nerves* affecteth a man as a mosquito that buzzeth throughout a summer night. She wearieith him.

But a woman with *nerve* is as a cold bath on a winter morning. She shocketh him!

Lo, an intelligent *opinion* in the mouth of a woman horrifieth a man even as the scissors in the mouth of a babe.

And a wife with *judgment* which exceedeth his own is more uncanny than a pet parrot which saith the appropriate thing at the right moment. She appalleth him!

My Daughter, in all the land dost thou know of one clever woman who hath been happily married?

Nay! For I say unto thee there can be but one mind, one opinion, and one *throne* in an household; and every man claimeth these for himself.

Then, oh, thou Temperamental One, whatsoever thou receivest in the *love game*, accept it gladly and rejoice thereat.

For, whether it be a babe torn from the cradle or an octogenarian spared from the grave; whether it be a left-over bachelor, or an hand-me-down widower; though thou weddest fourscore times, thou shalt do *no better*!

Verily, verily, in the life of every woman, there cometh a season when she yearneth for *sentiment*, and neither the love of her “art” nor the adoration of a poodle dog is sufficient.

And a little unhappiness *with* an husband is more to be desired than great loneliness *without* one.

Go to! Life without one of these is as spaghetti without sauce and more insipid than bouillon without salt.

Therefore, my Daughter, gather in the Lemon which Fate awardeth thee and let thine heart be comforted.

For though wine is desirable, yet lemonade is not to be despised; and even an Highbrow shall find an husband an agreeable distraction from *serious* things!

CHAPTER FIVE

How long, oh thou Credulous One, wilt thou continue to marry for a *change*; and the lawyers delight in their fees, and the neighbors in their “I-said-so’s”?

For lo, though there be many varieties of men, there is but *one* kind of husband!

Yea, though a man wed seven times seven times, he maketh not the *same* mistake twice.

But the woman who weddeth a second time, *repeateth* her own history.

Verily, verily, if thou wilt but close thine eyes, thou canst not perceive from his words, neither from the cloves upon his breath, nor the ardor of his greeting, whether it be thy *first* or thy *second* husband, that kisseth thee.

For one man’s chin is as rough as another’s, and one man’s lies are as smooth as another’s.

One man’s razor is as sacred as another’s, and one man’s excuses are as old as another’s.

One man roareth, like unto another, when he is hungry.

One man growleth, like unto another, when he is fed.

One man groaneth, like unto another, when he hath over-eaten.

One man looketh as uncanny as another without a collar, and as weird as another without a shave.

One man streweth his cigar ashes upon the carpet, and leaveth his stubs in the pin-tray, even as another.

One man burieth himself in the pillows in the morning, and in the newspapers in the evening, and refuseth to be torn therefrom – even as another.

One man offereth up the morning and evening growl, and celebrateth the Sunday forenoon grouch as regularly as another.

Why, then, wilt thou continue to hearken unto their promises? For, before marriage, *all* men are *promising*; but matrimony is a chemical which transmuteth each and every one of them from a lover into a critic, from an admirer into a scoffer, from an adorer into a judge, and from a slave into a sultan.

Verily, verily, there is this difference only in husbands:

That the first maketh thee weep;

The second maketh thee wonder;

But the third maketh thee weary!

SELAH

BOOK OF FLIRTS

CHAPTER ONE

Lo! wondrous are the workings of a man's heart, my Daughter.

His love is a thing which riseth and falleth as the stock market; yea, like a football that goeth up, it descendeth swiftly.

Behold, when a man first meeteth a damsel, she pleaseth his eyes. Moreover, she is different from the girl *before* and affordeth a pleasant change. He adareth her from afar and indulgeth in foolish pipe-dreams. He investeth in new cravats and is particular concerning his collars.

He calleth at first, timidly; he getteth on the good side of the family. He bringeth burnt offerings of expensive flowers and sweets from Huyler's. He readeth the Rubáiyát unto her and inviteth her to meet his *sister*.

And, behold, there cometh a day when he kisseth her suddenly and without warning.

And another when he kisseth her again – easily.

And another when he kisseth her much and often.

And another when he kisseth her more casually.

And another when he departeth early, and kisseth her but once – “Good night”.

And another when he *faileth* to call.

Then, peradventure, she writeth him a letter – which he putteth in his pocket and forgetteth to answer. She summoneth him over the telephone and he goeth into the booth wearily. She reproacheth and revileth him. He picketh a quarrel.

She sobbeth “All is over between us!” He answereth “Oh, very well! Even as thou sayest!”

And, in time, he meeteth another damsel and doeth it *all over again*. Yea, the selfsame programme he repeateth unto the letter; yet, he *never* tireth.

For lo! though a man hath eaten his fill at one meal, why shall he lack appetite for the next?

Then, I charge thee, my Daughter, when love beginneth, question not any man how it will end; for it is only in the *beginning* of things that a man is interested; even in the cream from off the jug, the bubble of the champagne, the meat on the peach, and – the *first kiss* of a woman.

Yet, what mattereth the end? Is not the end of the cream, skimmed milk; and the end of a cigar, a stub; and the end of a peach, a stone; and the end of champagne, dregs; and the end of love, a quarrel? And which of these would ye choose?

Verily, the flirtations of a man's bachelor days are, in passing, as the courses of the love-feast; but a *wife* is the black coffee which *settles* him.

CHAPTER TWO

Marvellous, oh, my Daughter, is the way of a man with women; for every man hath a *method* and each his favorite *stunt*. And the stunt that he hath found to work successfully with one damsel shall be practised upon each in turn, even unto the finest details thereof.

Behold, one man shall come unto thee saying:

“How foolish are the sentimentalists! But, as for *me*, my motives are altruistic and disinterested; and a woman’s *friendship* is what I most desire.” Yet, I charge thee, seek among his women “friends” and thou shalt not find an *homely* damsel in all their number.

For this is the *platonic* stunt.

Now, another shall try thee by a simpler method.

Lo, suddenly and without warning, he shall arise and catch thee in his arms. And when thou smitest him upon the cheek, he shall be overcome with humiliation, crying:

“I could not *help* it!”

Yet be not persuaded, but put him *down* without mercy, lest peradventure, he kiss thee again.

For this is the *impetuous* stunt.

Yet observe how still another seeketh to be more subtle.

Mark how he sitteth afar off and talketh of love in the *abstract*; how he calleth three times a week, yet remaineth always *impersonal*; how he praiseth the shape of thine hand and admireth thy rings, yet toucheth not so much as the *tips* of thy fingers.

“Lo,” he thinketh in his heart, “I shall keep her guessing. Yea, I shall wrack her soul with thoughts of how I may be brought to subjection. And when she can no longer contain her curiosity, then will she seek to *lure* me, and I shall gather her in mine arms.”

And this is the *elusive* stunt.

But, I say unto thee, my Daughter, each of these is but as a chainstitch unto a rose pattern, beside him that playeth the *frankly devoted*.

For all women are unto him as one woman – and that one *putty*.

Lo, the look of “adoration” in his eyes is like unto the curl in his hair, *always* there; and he weareth his “protecting manner” as naturally and as constantly as his linen collar.

He is *so* attentive and the *thoughtful thing* cometh unto him as second nature.

Yea, though there be twenty damsels in the room, yet shall each be made to think in her heart:

“Lo, I am *it!*”

Verily, verily, all the days of his life he shall be waited on and cooed over and coddled by women; and his way shall be as one continuous path of conquests and thornless roses.

For this is the Stunt of *Stunts!*

CHAPTER THREE

I charge thee, my Daughter, seek not to break a man's heart; for it is like unto family pride, or a pin, which may be *bent*, but *cannot* be broken! Yea, it is as a ball of India rubber which reboundeth easily after the worst shocks.

Lo, the heart of a woman is full of soft spots in which every man she hath *once* loved occupieth a "cozy corner". She lingereth tenderly over the grave of a dead love; but a man flingeth a spadeful of earth thereon and proceedeth to dig a *new* one. And his heart is as a great cemetery!

A woman keepeth a bundle of love-letters tied in faded ribbons; but a man cleaneth his pipe bowl cheerfully with the stem of the rose which the *girl-before-the-last* hath worn in her hair.

A woman remembereth the dress she hath worn and the song she hath sung for each particular man; but a man remembereth not the scent of violet sachet when the odor of heliotrope is in his nostrils.

And, after *six* months, when he cometh by chance upon an old glove or a lock of hair at the bottom of his trunk, he casteth it into the fire, muttering, "Now, who the devil put *that* thing there?"

A woman recollecteth each pet name by which she hath been called; she alloweth no *two* men to label her alike. But unto a man, *every* woman becometh in turn "Little Girl" or "Baby" or "Honey".

Lo, he is as one that playeth with skulls and sporteth with the bones of his ancestors; for he holdeth nothing sacred.

He eraseth one face from the tablet of memory, and draweth another across it.

He changeth his object of thought as readily as he changeth his clothes and his political opinions.

For a woman's love is a slow flame which smouldereth always, but a man's love is like unto a skyrocket, which sputtereth out and cannot be rekindled.

Verily, his "past" is always *quite*

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