

Mr. Harlowe's Fiancee

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John Collins found himself on the waterfront of the Hudson waiting for the "Isle de France" to dock. Everything was in turmoil. People were rushing here and there, everybody excited, some yelling, while others were saying, "There she is!" John wished that he could say the same, but he had never seen the person whom he was there to meet; a fairly good description given by his boss, who was away out in Los Angeles, was the only means he had of recognizing her. Previously he had been in New York on business but never on a mission such as this. He had been sent to accompany his employer's fiancée across the continent.

People were already coming down the gang-plank. There were many young ladies who would easily answer the description given by Roy Harlowe. He didn't dare speak to any of them—surely she would come to him. When everyone was off the boat John became very nervous. Darn the boss and his business. Why didn't he come himself.

Finally he saw her. She was sitting on a trunk looking straight at him. He walked over to her.

"Pardon me, but are you"—?

"Yes, I'm Audrey Day" she replied without giving him time to finish saying what he wanted to say. "And you are John Collins."

John gave a sigh of relief.

"I see your baggage has been examined," said he, "I'll wire Roy that you are O.K. and that we will leave this evening for Los Angeles."

"Don't bother," said the young lady, "I have already fixed that. You see I'm not going across right away. I have some shopping to do."

John did not like this a little bit, but who could tell this domineering young lady what she was to do or what she was not to do.

In a taxi on the way to the Astor Hotel he regarded her for the first time. Yes, the boss sure had some eye for beauty, she was beautiful. He hoped they would leave New York the next day. Being in close company with an alluring young lady was bad for any man.

"I hope you like the Astor, Miss Day," said John. "I think it is very nice."

"I like the Astor, but I don't like Miss Day," she said. "Would you please call me Audrey, and by the way, we are stepping out tonight, so I hope you have your evening clothes with you."

Poor John gulped. He did not like the familiarity shown him by the young lady, and what was more he didn't have his evening clothes with him.

Four days passed quickly and the beautiful fiancée was still shopping and stepping out. In fact she said it was all right for a young lady who was about to marry to have one last fling at life. John did not agree with this, but he couldn't do anything about it. The young lady bossed him around in fine style, but there was one consolation for him, and that was that all would be over shortly.

There was another sad part for John in this affair. He found himself deeply in love with this girl, who by rights belonged to another man. It was true she was not married to him, but that did not give him the right to propose to her. He did not see why she made herself more attractive every time they were together. So he determined to get her out of New York immediately. The boss had said to spare no expense in order to give her every luxury, but he felt that enough money had been spent already.

It was a week before they finally got out of New York. Another wire was sent across the country, and again the girl was the one to send it.

The young man felt that he would never forget the trip home. He purposely avoided Miss Day by spending as much time as possible in the men's smoker. She in turn seemed purposely to hound him, acting like a small child who did not want to be left alone. He wondered if she knew that she was causing him a great deal of embarrassment.

The last morning they were on the train he determined to question her.

"Audrey," it was the first time he used her first name, "Do you,—that is, are you in love?"

"Why, of course I am, John. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, never mind, just a foolish question."

She tried to question him further but he fled to the smoker.

The next morning they arrived at their destination and John sent the porter to help the lady get her bags together, but he came back to announce that she had already left the train. When Collins got off he saw her climbing behind the wheel of a roadster. It seemed that she had no intention of waiting for him. He, determined to do the last part of his mission, dashed up to the car and stepped in; taking the key out of the ignition, he told her that he would drive. She said she wasn't going with him but he persuaded her differently and he drove right to Mr. Harlowe's front door.

"Are you coming in?" He asked her.

"No," was the reply.

"Then I'll send him out."

Roy was just entering the breakfast room when John came in. A puzzled look came over his face.

"Well, I finally arrived with your fiancée," said John.

"What are you talking about?" interrogated his boss. "I'm married for two days now and I would fire you if I wasn't so happy."

It was John's turn to show surprise.

Just then Roy's wife came down the stairs laughing.

"Just a minute," she said, "I'm the cause of all this. We girls planned this on the boat when I found out that Roy would not meet me."

Roy turned around to Collins, but the young man was half-way out of the house. There was someone waiting for him outside.

Truth needs no colour; beauty no pencil.—*Shakespeare*.

In doing what we ought we deserve no praise, because it is our duty.—*St. Augustine*.

Be true to your word, your work, and your friend.
—*John Boyle O'Reilly*.

The childhood shows the man
As morning shows the day.

—*Milton*