

How a Brisk Westerner Starts a Sleepy New York Town

Q WHO'S WHO IN "Q"?

Real name Q. T. Kinswiden, a brisk cowboy-usher, who comes to New York to improve his deficient education. He is a good-looking and intelligent, though unlettered. He plans to marry.

MARY GRINSCOMBE, a sophisticated word while acting as her guide. She is a beautiful and intelligent, though unlettered. He plans to marry.

FERDINAND FADDEN, a dominating millionaire, who is a member of the same party as Q.

MARY GRINSCOMBE, Heloise's cousin, a charming girl of rich character and fine education. Her father, a gentle, unpractical old man, has been dismissed for carrying out of his class. She teaches to add of her pupils.

MRS. GRINSCOMBE, aunt of the girls, who gives a home to the girls. She is a self-reliant, but this does not prevent her being under the influence of the evil influence in the life of the community. It has been a source of contention between Q and her.

DR. SALZER, who has helped Q out in an embarrassment. He loves Sophie, a waitress, to whom Q has been kind and who has caused some trouble.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

After a turn or two he walked over to the window. "It's been three years," he muttered; "hasn't she forgotten yet?"

"In three years?" Q drawled. "Your Sophie, gel? Not in thirty will she forget."

He stared at Sales' lack and Sales stared down into the street. Into the distance came the muffled tread and the faint clinking of ice followed by a knocking at Q's door. He had told Sophie to bring him a pitcher of iced lemonade at four o'clock. Now, "I'm an going to send her away," he said firmly, and crossed the room.

But Laurie was ahead of him and an instant later, a tray crashed to the floor outside Q's door. Sophie stood inside the closed room and Laurie had her in his arms.

Q walked to a window, clutched its sill and, looking down into Main street, wished himself in the saloon. Back of him there was a quick-breathing silence, until Sophie spoke. She said two words, sobbing. "My heart."

It frightened Q, who faced about. He saw that here was a heart unbearably, swiftly enlarged by joy. Laurie's, however, was already shrunken with pain. He was walking to and fro about the room, his red head bent, his under lip bitten, his eyes looking at him so that the knuckles were white. Lines had sprung into visibility around his mouth. Sophie was watching him; her beauty paled.

"I didn't know," she faltered. "It wasn't any doings of mine, Laurie."

"Of course not..." He jerked this out. Then he turned upon Q, his quick, restless eyes ablaze.

"Will you give me your room for five minutes, mister diplomat, while I try to put some broken pieces together again? You might gather up what's left of the pitcher—it won't be half so hard to get as I've got to do. Sophie"—he went over to her as Q hastened to the door—"didn't you know that I was engaged to be married? I wrote to you."

Her lips were set in a white, noiseless motion. Q shut the door and found himself across the hall, gripping the balustrade of the stair-well and gazing blindly down at the white and chocolate squares of the floor three flights below him. He could hear the murmur of Laurie's voice. It went on after the first sentences more evenly. Q was remembering the branding of small calves. He had always had that—bated the way their soft eyes rolled, trying to find the lost protecting mother body—there had been something like that in Sophie's eyes. He gripped the balustrade more tightly. Gradually he became aware of Benton's head bending in his cage, and his long, endeavorous hand making cramped writing therein. Benton, long and flabby and lukewarm, whose breath always reminded Q of the exhalation of a steam radiator, meant to marry Sophie. She would walk out of her enchantment into Benton's slack and absorbent embrace.

"You are willing," Mary had asked. "to take the responsibility of bringing these two people together?"

The voices in the room had altogether stopped. Q's fancy summoned pictures. He saw Sophie crumpled into a chair, Laurie stroking her cold hands, murmuring out his meaningless remorse, his worse than useless consolation. The picture was different from the truth, for, though Sophie had thrown herself down by his bed and had smothered her weeping in her arms, Laurie was attempting no consolation, expressing no remorse. He was sitting in Q's chair, the width of the room away, his hands between his knees, his eyes fixed upon the carpet.

After an interminable while, "Stop crying, my dear," said Laurie, apparently to the carpet; "I see now that it won't do."

He pulled a long and shaken breath, looked slowly back in his chair and began to fill his pipe.

"I've Been Deceiving Myself"

He was thinking, it might be imagined, vividly. His brown, nervous eyes were seeing consequences. This was evidently a man at once intellectually cool and emotionally hot, an adventurer by instinct, a conservative by conviction, romantic in feeling and cynical in philosophy, a gifted and tormented being for whom life would be forever thwarted. "The heir of a father who decided nothing until fate gave him some ignoble lead, had left unsmiled, perhaps, all this flame and swiftness, all this untried and cool decision, to afflict the delicate organism of the son. Laurie had been trapped, not only by circumstances but by his nature. Now he was at work, one half fighting the outer, trying to release his heart from the toil's and at the same time to clear his honor of an obligation. "I didn't know until I heard your step outside the door, Sophie, that these last three horrible years have just made no difference at all. I've been deceiving myself."

"I knew."

She had lifted her head from her arms and, still kneeling, was looking at him across the narrow white counterpane. It was a beaten face, deep-eyed. Pain had released every last secret of its beauty.

Laurie's brain looked at it through the tumult of his blood.

"I'd forgotten that I loved you," he laughed softly. "Isn't that queer—so—Sophie—to forget?"

"I knew you'd only to see me—men are like that!"

His face narrowed into keenness.

"Oh, no," she professed instantly, "it wasn't my plan. It was his—Q's. I told him—you'll have to forgive me for that, because I couldn't help it. I had to tell him what I'd been going through. Laurie, he's the only one I've told. You don't know Q? These three years have been awful long—and hard—for me."

"I know," Laurie bit in under his lip, for she hurt him.

"But you are going to marry some one else," Sophie faltered, touching the words with a voice that shrank from him.

"No. That's what I'm trying to tell you. I see now that I can't. Sophie, we're back where we were three years ago—this is the only way I can remain, only in the meantime, trying to free myself from you, I've hurt somebody else."

She stood up slowly. "I see. Poor Laurie, a hand over his eyes."

"Don't! Don't you say that!"

She came around the bed, knelt beside him and put her long arms about him.

"You are not to be unhappy—you are not, Laurie. With a soft sudden little cry, you are getting gray!"

"Am I?" she laughed shakily, drawing herself away. "I deserve to be a cetter go. I can't stand much more of this."

She brightened as if fire had come close to her. "Oh, please, Laurie, let me just be near you for a little while. I won't speak to you, I won't touch you, I won't even look at you. I want to be near you. It rests me. I feel all the time now—so tired."

She was still kneeling beside his chair and she sank back on her heels, and folded her hands and looked up at him with a large, simple, childlike look, as though her eyes fed upon him.

THE GUMPS—Youth Will Be Served

THERE GOES LITTLE MINERVA—SHE CERTAINLY KNOCKED A FLOCK OF YEARS OFF HER APPEARANCE WHEN SHE BOBBED HER HAIR—BUT WHAT HANDS ME A LAUGH THEY SAY THEY DON'T DO IT FOR APPEARANCE'S SAKE BUT BECAUSE IT'S COOL AND CONVENIENT—

WELL, WHO WANTS TO LOOK OLD EXCEPT A DOCTOR WHO HAS JUST GRADUATED—AND HE WANTS TO INSURE CONFIDENCE—AND JUST AS SOON AS HE'S GOT IT OFF COMES THE FOLIAGE AND PRINCE ALBERT FOR A PINCH-BACK COAT—

IN THE OLD DAYS WHEN A MAN GOT ALONG IN YEARS AND WASN'T WORKING HE WORE A LONG COAT AND A SILK HAT AND CARRIED A GOLD HEADED CANE—WHERE ARE THOSE GUYS NOW? ON THE GOLF COURSE IN KNICKERS WALKING EIGHT OR TEN MILES A DAY AND THEN THEY GO TO THE CLUBHOUSE AND DANCE UNTIL MIDNIGHT—

AND IN THOSE DAYS WOMEN WERE OLD AT FIFTY—BUT NOW WHEN THE GRAY HAIR COMES PEERING THROUGH OUT COMES THE MINERVA AND WHEN IT GETS NICE AND YOUTHFUL THEY CUT A FOOT OFF THE BOTTOM OF THEIR SKIRT, PUT ON SILK HOSE AND HIGH HEELED SHOES—WHY, THEY WON'T EVEN BOW TO AN UNDETAKEER UNTIL AFTER SEVENTY-FIVE—

SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Miss Scratch

HONEST, MARY, I MUST WRITE TO POOR MISS SCRATCH. SHE MUST BE HAVING A DICKENS OP A TIME HOLDING DOWN MY JOB. THE POOR KID SHE'LL BE ONE RELIEVED GIRL WHEN I GET BACK!

AU FERGIT THE OFFICE AWHILE!

DEAR MISS SCRATCH WE ARE HAVING THE LOVELIEST TIME IN CAMP. THE WEATHER IS SO WONDERFUL AND COOL DOAT WORK TOO HARD IT WON'T BE LONG 'TIL I'M BACK. I APPRECIATE THE WORK YOU ARE DOING FOR ME HOLDING MY JOB IS NO CHINCH! LOTS OF LOVE, DEARIE—COW

HAAAA! THE POOR FISH! THE WEATHER'S NICE AND COOL—IS IT? IT ISN'T IN IT WITH THE COOLNESS SHE WILL FEEL WHEN SHE GETS BACK HERE IF I CAN WORK IT!

WHAT? YOU CAN'T FIND THOSE BONDS THAT WERE IN THE CENTRE DRAWER OF THE SAFE?

THEY'RE NOT THERE MISTER SMITHERS—I'VE BEEN THINKING. DO YOU THINK THERE'S ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THOSE AND THE THOUSAND STAMPS YOU GAVE MISS O'FLAGE BEFORE SHE WENT AWAY? REMEMBER? YOU SAID WE COULDN'T POSSIBLY HAVE USED THEM ALL!

MISS O'FLAGE IS A LOVELY GIRL! I WOULDN'T SAY ANYTHING AGAINST HER FOR THE WORLD—BUT—

Q's Recuser

Q's FACE was regularly assaulted by checks of red. He was profoundly amused. Last of all people had he expected to see in Laurence Sales the keen, clever, red-headed young man that had resided at the comfortable New York experience. The very apparent superiority of this admiser, his shrewd humor sense, his authority, his self-reliance, had impressed themselves forcibly on the sensitive observation of Q. Sophie's "Laurie boy" who needed "one of them long bones down his back," whom he had been minded to shake into manliness to get into a decision favorable to romance, if necessary—vanished into a thin, thin mist. What face to present to the man with humorous and impatient eyes Q could not now decide.

"What's wrong with the wrist? You haven't been reseeing any more ladies in distress, I hope?"

Q had stepped back and had sat down on the edge of his bed.

He was meditating soberly and wifely if it would be possible then and there to gash his wrist convincingly with his pocket knife or to do some other self-justifying damage. Under Laurie's sardonic, dancing eyes he relinquished the idea. He decided to hold his peace—it was the method that had always served him best, out in silence, across the wrist ran a violet scar and Laurie bent over it and felt it with clever fingers.

"It's not inflamed or swollen," he said. "Any pain?"

"It's almighty difficult for me," said Q truthfully. "to handle a pen."

"You mean you feel a stiffness in your fingers? Flex them?"

"What in thunder?"

"Bend them."

Q obeyed, his eyes lowered. The strong, long fingers clenched and unclenched powerfully.

Laurie, impersonal and interested, felt carefully up and down the muscles of the arm and made some tests to which Q surrendered himself with Socrates-like grace.

"Tell me the story of the wound," demanded the baffled surgeon, sitting down in the chair opposite his queer patient and looking at him with a bewildered air.

Q slowly obeyed him. "A lady," he said, had "knifed him"—by accident. She had meant to cut a stick and she had cut his arm instead. Laurie, seated by Dr. Sales—any relation? A father? Is that so? It had seemed to heal. If it wasn't for the trouble with a pen—"

Laurie rose impatiently, produced a tablet and pencil and prescribed them to Q.

"Here—write something for me."

Q stared for a moment into space, then laboriously fashioned a phrase. "I am reskuing a lady now," he wrote. "I am reskuing a lady for you."

Room 50 was dangerously silent while Sales read this message. He read it and looked up sharply. His face revealed an unsuspected haggardness.

"Will you explain yourself?" he asked, and Q remembered that red-headed people were apt to be inquisitive.

"I don't rightly know how I can," he said, speaking very quietly and rather soothingly, as to a restive mare. "I've been thinking you was one of these fellers that needs to be franked by the collar to get their circulation goin'."

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The Young Lady Across the Way

LOOKOUT BELOW!

ATTA GIRL!

THRILLING ESCAPE OF TOMBOY TAYLOR AFTER OLD MAN FLINT THOUGHT HE HAD HER CORNERED AT THE TOP OF THE LADDER IN HIS APPLE TREE.

TOMBOY TAYLOR

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SCHOOL DAYS

IT'S FUNNY THE LITTLE RASCALS DON'T COME. I HEARD 'EM PLANNING TO BE HERE AT FINE O'CLOCK FOR A SHOWER! MEBBE THERE ALL ASLEEP!

I RAISE YOU TWO BONES I WOULD YOU RIGHT O'AL FOR TWO BUCKS

MEANS FOR HARRY WILSON

ONLY A PIECE OF RUBBER HOSE

BORROW SOME EGGS FROM HOME BARN

SOME CORNWALK FOR SOMETHING OR OTHER

HOME!

HEAR DEER VOICES! MEBBE REGULARS ARE ROBBER THE CLUB HOUSE! BILL PEEPS IN WINDOW AND SEES HIS PAM AND HARRY'S PAM AND DOLM'S PAM PLAYING SOME KIND OF A GAME

FOOTPRINTS IN ON THE SANDS OF TIME

BILL CLIMBS OUT OF HIS WINDOW AND STARTS OUT TO THE CLUB

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PETEY—That Ought to Settle It

—UM—THERE'S A PEACH—I RECOMMEND THAT GIRL BE CONSIDERED AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE PRETTIEST BATHING GIRL CONTEST.

—IMPOSSIBLE—LOOK AT HER COSTUME!

—YOU KNOW COSTUMES MUST BE CONSIDERED IN CHOOSING THE WINNER—

—OH, WHY ARGUE ABOUT A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT!

GASOLINE ALLEY—On Avery's Economy Run

I'M GOING TO STOP AND ASK SOMEBODY ABOUT A PLACE TO EAT IN THIS TOWN. I'M HUNGRY AS A COUPLE O BEARS!

SAY MISTER, I'M A STRANGER HERE. WHAT'S YOUR BEST RESTAURANT?

THE PALACE

WHICH ARE THE SECOND AND THIRD BEST?

THE SAVORY AND THEN McTIGGS I S'POSE

McTIGGS SOUNDS GOOD LETS GO!

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CONTINUED MONDAY