

Kissed His Own Wife — She Wants Divorce

Is It Hubby's Privilege or Is It "Cruel and Humiliating" for Him to Wipe the Rouge from the Lips He Loves, the Court Will Have to Decide



The Mark Left by a Pair of Fashionably Rouge Lips—a Sample of What Mr. Traitel Objected to Having Left on His Own Lips When He Kissed His Wife.



Mrs. Mildred Traitel, Who Is Pretty Enough, Her Husband Thinks, Without Resorting to the Artifices of Rouge and Powder.

MRS. DAVID TRAITEL of New York, has left her wealthy husband for a very unusual cause. He kissed her in public!

This reason for legal separation may seem startling to a great number of married people. They may reason that a kiss is perfectly proper and very agreeable when bestowed by a husband to a wife at any time and in public or otherwise. Many will say that the more publicly the kiss is bestowed the better, since it shows that the husband is wildly in love with his wife and doesn't care who knows it.

The gossip such conduct should create should be of the most pleasant kind, disposing of all rumors of any misunderstanding between the two, and causing other wives to wish their husbands were one-half as attentive.

But the young and pretty Mrs. Traitel says it all depends on the circumstances surrounding the kiss. A kiss, she says, can be the most despicable insult in the world. Like everything else, it depends on the intentions of whoever bestows it—and how he does it. No one would say there was anything affectionate or tender about the kiss of Judas, for instance. And she says that her husband's caress was just as wicked and cruel and given with the same purpose in mind—to betray her!

It was last September. They were attending a formal dinner at the home of one of her friends. A theatre party was to follow.

Naturally, Mrs. Traitel had made an elaborate toilette and she looked stunning, she admits herself. Her hair had been painstakingly curled. Her gown was perfect. The natural redness of her lips had been accentuated just a trifle with a dab of the lip stick. She was the most perfectly groomed woman at the party, and she knew it. Moreover, she wanted her husband to know it and looked at him from time to time during the dinner in the hope that his appreciation would be apparent in a look.

Just one approving glance would have repaid her for those hours spent at the dressing table, and she was confident that when her husband compared her to the other women who were present he would show some of the pride he should have felt at the impression she was making on the rest of the guests.

But as the dinner lagged along Mr. Traitel surveyed his wife with deep gloom that

increased with each cocktail until his expression became an angry scowl!

Mrs. Traitel racked her brains to find the reason for his displeasure. She was certain it was not her gown for he had approved of it before. Neither was it her hair nor the arrangement of her jewels—she was sure of that. What was it, then that caused that angry frown?

The other men in the party certainly did not notice anything peculiar in her appearance. Mrs. Traitel could easily tell from their extravagant compliments and appraising looks that she was making a decided hit in the opinion of everyone but her husband—and possibly the wives of the other men who had not achieved the same effect.

This reassured her, and she decided to forget about it until after dinner, when she would ask him in private what bothered him.

The guests all retired into the drawing room for coffee, Mr. and Mrs. Traitel among them. When they were seated the hostess interrupted the conversation long enough to tell Mrs. Traitel how beautiful she looked and to compliment her husband on her appearance.

That was the moment when Mrs. Traitel expected her husband to say something real gallant about her taste in dress, as the rest of the gentlemen were doing; and for a moment it looked as if Mr. Traitel was rising to the occasion in grand style.

Rising to his feet, he bowed profoundly. "She is charming," he declared. "So fascinating, that I hope I may be forgiven if I cannot restrain my affection. I am going to tell Mrs. Traitel how beautiful she looks before the world."

There was a polite ripple of laughter at this remark. It seemed like a charming gesture for a man who had been married eight years to make, and Mrs. Traitel blushed with pleasure and puckered her lips in anticipation of the caress.

But as he moved across the room there was an expression in his eye that made her uneasy. Instead of regarding her with the tender look that should accompany a kiss, he glowered; and when he stopped in front of her there was something so fierce in his expression that she drew back in alarm!

He looked around the room at the other guests and waited until he was the centre of all their attention. Then, with the air of a conjurer, he drew a handkerchief from the pocket of his evening clothes, and,

wrapping it deliberately around his finger he drew it rudely across his wife's lower lip!

He held the handkerchief up to the light. There was a red smudge of rouge on the snow-white linen!

Before anyone—even his wife—could recover from the first shock of surprise he deliberately wiped her other lip, staining the handkerchief a second time!

"Now," he said in the embarrassed silence that followed his action, "I will kiss her!"

He took his wife by the back of the neck and smacked her loudly on the lips. Then he laughed and sat down.

Of course, there was a stony silence and everyone looked at poor Mrs. Traitel, who was white with embarrassment and rage at this insult. It was a situation commanding a great deal of poise, but she carried it off by forcing a smile and suggesting that it was nearly time to go to the theatre. All during the show and during the entr'acts she tried to pretend that Mr. Traitel was just a bit eccentric and that it was all a joke, but when she finally got home she nearly suffered a nervous collapse. And it was many a day before she had the courage to accept another dinner invitation.

Afterward Mrs. Traitel remembered the cocktails and tried to forgive her husband—but as for giving up cosmetics just because of his silly prejudices, that was another matter.

Everyone knows that rouge always has been, and probably always will be, adopted by many as an acceptable aid to a woman's appearance. Besides, Mrs. Traitel did not use it because it gave her any particular pleasure. Certainly not.

In her opinion she was a little more attractive after a dab with the lip stick than



The Guests Were All Assembled in the Drawing Room. Mr. Traitel Approached His Pretty Wife with Measured Steps, and with Deliberation Wound His Handkerchief Around His Finger; Then with Two Strokes He Rubbed the Rouge from Her Lips and Drawing Her to Him Kissed Her.

night and day, although he was too sorry over what had happened at the dinner to mention it very much.

Unfortunately, Mrs. Traitel had been ill a few days before she accepted the invitation to go motoring, and she required a little more rouge than she usually used when the night of the party came. And Mr. Traitel, without saying anything, seemed to think that the extra dab of the lip stick was done deliberately for the purpose of flouting him before her friends.

This thought grew and grew in his mind until he was ten times as mad as he had been at the dinner. Still, he said nothing.

The party met at a fashionable restaurant in Pelham, much frequented by the aristocracy of New York. There was music and dancing, good food and bright conversation. Some one had brought some inspiration for the latter

along, and apparently everyone was having a delightful time—everyone but Mr. Traitel. Without warning, he rose and abruptly left the table, leaving the restaurant.

In an hour he returned, inspired, Mrs. Traitel says, by something that is sold in bottles. At any rate, he moved solemnly across the floor with his silk hat over one ear and an imaginary dotted line traveling from his eye to his wife's lips.

Ignoring the waiters who attempted to intercept his progress, he marched straight over to the table and came to a halt at his wife's chair. He looked at her long and earnestly.

Mrs. Traitel knew that look, and nervously wiped her lips with her napkin. She certainly did not want another scene, and she thought that if she removed the rouge he would sit down and behave himself.

The other guests thought her husband was having a little lark and were preparing to be politely amused when, without warning, his left hand shot forward and curled around the back of Mrs. Traitel's neck.

Roughly, she says, he jerked her to her feet and before all the startled diners in the fashionable restaurant, reached out with the other hand and seized her by the nose!

Mrs. Traitel cried out at this treatment, but she says her husband only took a malicious delight in tweaking the injured feature. The men guests at the party rose to protest, although they still believed it was a prank, but Mr. Traitel, she declares,

waved them aside and started out of the restaurant with a clamp-like grip on her nose!

Outside, she says, he pushed her into their car and ordered the chauffeur to drive back to New York, repeating his cruel treatment all of the way home.

When she reached home and locked herself in her bedroom, Mrs. Traitel surrendered herself to grief and tears. The bitter memory of her earlier humiliation—the time he rubbed the rouge from her lips—returned, and made the second insult one too many.

But, curiously, it was the first incident that she resented the most. Pulling her nose had been cruel and painful, but publicly wiping off her rouge had been more injurious to her feelings. The more she thought about it the angrier she became, and she regretted bitterly that she had not eliminated him from her life at the time.

But it was not too late, she told herself, and as soon as she could get her things together she went to see her father, N. E. Franklin, the wealthy president of the Kny-Sheerer Company, and asked his advice.

Both agreed that a divorce was the only thing, especially as Mr. Traitel's objections to rouge were supplemented by other alleged cruelties and absences away from home. And so the next day Mrs. Traitel went down to the Woolworth Building to see H. Randolph Guggenheimer, her father's attorney.

But Lawyer Guggenheimer told her that, unhappy as everything had been, she could not obtain a divorce because of the New York statutes, which recognize only one reason for divorce. So separation proceedings were started and won. Mrs. Traitel obtained counsel fees and alimony.

Mr. Traitel, in his appeal to a higher court, denies generally that he ever pulled her nose or was mean to her in any way. He disposes of the rouge incident in a single paragraph.

"With respect to this incident," he says, "we had dinner and were leaving for the theatre. I believe there were other guests present. I noticed my wife had rouge on her lips and was otherwise using arts to which I frequently objected and to which she knew I was opposed."

"I remonstrated, but she answered me in a discourteous manner. Then, in indignant protest at her making herself look un ladylike, I attempted to take the rouge from her."

"If this be cruelty," says Mr. Traitel, "make the most of it."

But the courts seem to think so in giving Mrs. Traitel separate maintenance, and Mrs. Traitel is confident that all the married women in America will give a sympathetic shudder as they read the details and learn the purpose of that "treacherous kiss."



Another Picture of Mrs. Traitel, Who Admits That She Really Does Not Need to Powder and Rouge, but Likes to Be in Fashion Because 'Everybody's Doing It'



Lieutenant David Traitel in His Army Uniform.

she was without it, and Mr. Traitel and no one else was the beneficiary of the results. He liked to have other men remark on her appearance. Very well, then, he should have no objections to any means Mrs. Traitel took to improve her appearance.

True, he continued to object to her use of rouge, but that was to be expected. Men never know what they like, and in spite of all Mr. Traitel's objections she noticed that when she respected his wishes he was not half as attentive as before. He had complained about having "to kiss a rouge pot," but when she ceased to use cosmetics he seldom kissed her at all. So she bought some more rouge.

As she expected, Mr. Traitel grumbled a little, but he seemed reconciled and things went along as smoothly as they had ever gone before the kiss incident. Mrs. Traitel never dreamed that underneath her husband's contented exterior he was nourishing the old grudge and that his hatred of rouge was growing all the time.

She had forgotten the entire discussion on the night they accepted the invitation of another of her friends to visit one of the fashionable road houses in a New York suburb—but Mr. Traitel hadn't. It had become a bugaboo that tormented him