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THE ROSE WALTZ

By HARRISON CHASE.

Ted Gibson sat disconsolately on the terraced lawn sleeping to the lake in front of the country club. From the direction of the ballroom came the sound of soft music, and Ted, recognizing the waltz the stringed orchestra was playing.

Months had passed since he had last heard it. It had been at the junior prom at college, the last dance of a series of the most wonderful dances he had ever known. Sylvia had been there.

He had planned to make that prom a turning point in his life. Sylvia had promised to be his guest and had smilingly consented to give him twelve of the twenty-four dances. At the end of the last number on the program, Ted had planned to ask Sylvia to marry him.

The affair had started off with every promise of success. They had motored to Kingston in the long, low runabout with just enough room for two. It was a beautiful night, with a full moon casting long shadows over the quiet roads and a touch of spring in the evening air. It was an ideal night for Ted's purpose. He seemed to sense in Sylvia's attitude the kind of answer he wished for.

And then Sylvia had spoken. She didn't say much—only a single sentence—but after the words had fallen from her lips the glory of the night seemed lost.

"Tom Ainsley is going to be at the prom," she had said.

Tom Ainsley! Ted's hands had gripped the wheel more tightly. Ainsley was the name which gossip had linked with that of Sylvia's. For two years, while Ted was away at college, the two had gone about together almost constantly. There had been rumors of an engagement which Sylvia had ignored, and Ted, returning to Westwood, had taken the girl at her word and had progressed his own suit. A

short time later Tom was left for the West, and Ted and the girl to whom Tom's friend had been engaged had been in each other's company continually. The announcement that Tom was to be present at the prom had filled Ted's heart with vague misgivings. For him the remainder of the ride had been without charm.

They had reached the gymnasium just before the first dance. Ted had left Sylvia at the door and had hurried into the smoking room, and when he had returned to the ballroom he had found Sylvia and Tom in earnest conversation. The girl had turned to him with a bright smile in each cheek.

"I've given Tom three of your dances," she had said. "We haven't seen each other for months, and I knew you wouldn't mind."

Ted had nodded.

"Which ones are they?" he had asked. "You might tell me so that I can check them off."

"The thirteenth, sixteenth and twenty-third," she had answered.

The evening had worn away. The girl had noticed Ted's rather restrained silence and had chided him about it. But he had refused to respond to the chiding, and finally Sylvia, too, had grown quiet. And then the twenty-third dance had arrived.

"The next dance is the last," Ted had told her just before Tom had come to claim her. "It's 'Mighty Like a Rose,' and that is our dance, you know."

"Yes, that is our dance," she had repeated absently.

But it hadn't turned out to be their dance, after all. For when the music started Sylvia had been walking along one of the shaded campus paths with Tom.

She had seemed sincerely sorry about it.

"I didn't know the dance had begun," Ted had explained. "We walked too far, and I'm sorry that I missed it. You believe me, don't you?"

Ted had told her that it hadn't mattered so very much, but during the ride home that night he had not proposed.

That was six months ago, and since the prom Ted and Sylvia had not once

been together for more than five minutes at a time.

The yearning to talk with Sylvia came to him with renewed force as he sat on the porch of the Country club listening to the strains of "Mighty Like a Rose." So he sat, his chin in his hand, looking with unseeing eyes over the rolling green of the golf links. And then a figure suddenly appeared beside him and a soft voice called his name.

He looked up almost unbelievably, for Sylvia was standing so near that he could touch her. He leaped to his feet.

"What are you doing here?" he asked, blankly.

"Do you really want to know why I came here?" Sylvia asked.

"Yes."

"It was because this waltz always reminds me of a man who used to be nice to me," she explained. "Once he said that it was our waltz, and then, because I made a mistake and didn't get to the last dance at a junior prom, he didn't want it to be our dance any more."

Ted caught his breath sharply. "How about you?" he asked.

"I always wanted it to be our dance."

And then they went back to the ballroom and danced the last half of the waltz together.

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Infancy of Whist Playing. According to an authority, whist or "whisk," as it was called, was generally played three centuries ago. For many years the game, under the appellations of "whisk" and "swobbers," was played only by servants and others of the humbler classes, and it was not until more than a century had passed that it reached the drawing-rooms of the wealthy and the nobility.

The first mention of whist in literature was made by Taylor, the water poet, in 1621. He refers to it as "whisk," the name having probably been derived from the practice of whisking the tricks from the table as soon as played.

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Why Not? Thomas, aged four, was having the mysteries of the thunder storm explained to him. His mother explained that the lightning was electricity in the air that God sent it and that the thunder was caused by the bumping together of two clouds. Thomas parried with the query, recalling that the back fence kept him from communication with the driveway beyond: "But, mother, why don't God build a fence between the two clouds, so they can't bump together?"

Purest Irish Blood. The purest Irish blood is not to be found in Galway proper, for the town was long held by the English, and centuries ago it did an immense trade with Spain that resulted in mixed marriages, producing sundry heads of black hair and black eyes. But across the little river, by the bay, is a fisherman's colony where the oldest Irish blood is still pure. This little group have married strictly among themselves, and their stock is said to go back to Irish natives who even antedated the Irish Celts. They are still recognizable as a slightly different type going about the streets of Galway selling their fish, as they and their fathers before them have done for centuries.

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