WHEN CUPID WAS ON TIME

By LUCIUS L. WITTICH

Copyright, by Short Story Pub. Co.

Miss Ballard hastily opened the letter, having scarcely convinced that the identity of the author could be certain. Relief to a greater degree of certainty in that manner than by merely scanning the exterior of the epistle. As she saw the pokerish open a bit of crisp pale blue paper fell from within and Barbara hurriedly dropped abashed in the arm-chair to read.

"A check, a wedding remembrance," she almost gasped reading the peculiar pattern of taper writing material and turning it several times in her nervous fingers before realizing its full significance. Then she made out the following words in scribled on a big mannish hand on the face of the check.

[illegible]

Miss Ballard finally opened the letter. Having scarcely convinced that the identity of the author could be certain. Relief to a greater degree of certainty in that manner than by merely scanning the exterior of the epistle. As she saw the pokerish open a bit of crisp pale blue paper fell from within and Barbara hurriedly dropped abashed in the arm-chair to read.

"A check, a wedding remembrance," she almost gasped reading the peculiar pattern of taper writing material and turning it several times in her nervous fingers before realizing its full significance. Then she made out the following words in scribled on a big mannish hand on the face of the check.

[illegible]

In large, dark red letters across the top of the check Miss Ballard saw printed the name, "Springbrook National Bank," and she realized that the gift was not bogus. Her next move was to rush to the telephone and tell Mr. Mefford the joyous news.

Thus the early morning happenings of two eventful days were identical. After phoning Miss Ballard returned to the perusal of the letter which had arrived in the envelope with the check.

"Springbrook, Kan., July 2. Dear Marjorie:" the missive began, and in many respects it was a similar production to the one of the morning before. In one detail, however, it differed materially and Miss Ballard soon reached the detail in question.

"There is one thing, though," she read, "that I must insist upon, Marjorie. The check must not be indorsed until after 12 o'clock noon, of July Fourth." Following this was an account of the wager made 12 months before and also a request that if the prospective bride cared to accept the offer she should appear at his home, unmarried at the hour specified.

"Oh, the horrid creature," murmured Miss Ballard. "This is not a real, sure enough wedding present, either. It's only a horrid bribe like the other check was. And the worst of it is we cannot accept it if we accept Uncle Ezra's, and we cannot accept Uncle Ezra's if we accept Uncle Dudley's."

Mefford studied over the proposition a long while that evening.

"Well," he finally said, "it seems to be a case of five thousand for us any way we fix it. I reckon it doesn't make so very much difference whether we are married before sunup or after dark. It's all the same to me, but the quicker the—"

Suddenly he paused.

"I have it," he finally ejaculated, scrambling to his feet and performing an impromptu jig on the plank walk. "I have solved the problem. Marjie, we shall accept both, ah, or bothers as you term them. Now don't ask questions, dear. It is growing late. Good night, dear and say, by the way, be ready to accompany me to your uncle Dudley's home shortly before noon tomorrow. No, not another word this morning." And as he turned toward the gate

The guns and crackers were still resounding merrily when Miss Ballard arose late on the morning of July Fourth. Arriving herself in wedding attire and evading the volley of congratulations hurled at her by mother and sisters as soon as she caught sight of the arrival of Mefford, who soon appeared in a surrey with Roy Mr. Stone.

"Good morning, Marjie. Tell your mother and sisters to drive out to Mr. Hochkins' place," called Mefford, halting the team for a stand-still in front of the Ballard residence. "And tell them to be there early if they wish to witness the fun."

Miss Marjie delivered the message and, seated by her fiancee, was soon speeding away in the direction of Dudley Maybrit's residence. Arriving there they were welcomed as if heard by Mr. Maybrit.

"Ahem!" he cleared, kissing his fiancee, "you are still single, eh, Mr. Mefford?"

"Yes, Uncle Dudley, we have decided to be married," she gushed, hopefully at Albert.

"She is quite right, Mr. Maybrit," exclaimed Mefford, "we have decided to accept your offer. We shall remain single until after 12 o'clock."

"Good," exclaimed Maybrit, but it was not until after the hall clock had tolled the hour of 12 that he looked entirely satisfied. Then glancing at his own timepiece to resolve himself no doubt, that it was actually noon, he heaved a great sigh of relief.

"The agony is over," he cracked. "The ten thousand is mine. What will old Ezra say? Mef—oh wow but he'll be happen. It'll be worth a twenty mile walk to see the old badger take on so, he, he, he!" The laugh of victory was still echoing in the air when the wedding party left shortly after. The check, by the way, had been properly indorsed to Miss Marjorie Wint[illegible]

[illegible]

"Yes," she replied, "Uncle Dudley, we have decided to accept your offer. We shall remain single until after 12 o'clock."

"Good," exclaimed Maybrit, but it was not until after the hall clock had tolled the hour of 12 that he looked entirely satisfied. Then glancing at his own timepiece to resolve himself no doubt, that it was actually noon, he heaved a great sigh of relief.

"The agony is over," he cracked. "The ten thousand is mine. What will old Ezra say? Mef—oh wow but he'll be happen. It'll be worth a twenty mile walk to see the old badger take on so, he, he, he!" The laugh of victory was still echoing in the air when the wedding party left shortly after. The check, by the way, had been properly indorsed to Miss Marjorie Wint[illegible]

[illegible]

"Good morning, Marjie. Tell your mother and sisters to drive out to Mr. Hochkins' place," called Mefford, halting the team for a stand-still in front of the Ballard residence. "And tell them to be there early if they wish to witness the fun."

Miss Marjie delivered the message and, seated by her fiancee, was soon speeding away in the direction of Dudley Maybrit's residence. Arriving there they were welcomed as if heard by Mr. Maybrit.

"Ahem!" he cleared, kissing his fiancee, "you are still single, eh, Mr. Mefford?"

"Yes, Uncle Dudley, we have decided to be married," she gushed, hopefully at Albert.

"She is quite right, Mr. Maybrit," exclaimed Mefford, "