

The Love Trouble of a Perfect Lover

And How Ten Thousand Flappers Spend an Anxious Day or Two, Not Because of the Sheik's Arrest for Having a Wife Too Many, but Because He Has a Wife at All.

Rodolpho Valentino in "Blood and Sand."



A Love-Making Pose That Set Thousands of Hearts a-Flutter—Valentino and Alice Terry in "The Four Horsemen."

WHEN the news went abroad 10,000 maidens sighed and removed his photograph from the central position on the dresser. At about the same time the clerk of the Los Angeles divorce court took a sharp look at a desk calendar, consulted a file of legal documents in his drawer and whistled. Almost immediately thereafter the district attorney declared that to the best of his knowledge and belief Rodolpho Valentino was a bigamist. Whereupon 10,000 maidens said "ah," or words to that broad and general effect, and restored his photograph to the central position on the dresser. As long as he was nobody's he was theirs.

The Great Lover of the Screen was put under arrest before he had had a chance to begin his honeymoon excursion. His legal wife—for Miss Jean Acker still had that title even while Rodolpho was being wed a second time—collapsed when she heard the news. Winifred DeWolfe Hudnut, the alleged illegal but none the less devoted wife, departed hurriedly for New York and with a softly muttered "damn" went into seclusion while a corps of attorneys started straightening out her perfect lover's love tangles.

Thomas Meighan and June Mathis went bail for the Great Lover.

An interlocutory divorce decree was granted Miss Acker and Valentino last January but Valentino evidently overlooked the fact that the decree did not become effective until a year had elapsed. Less than three months later rumors of an engagement between him and Winifred Hudnut, step-daughter of the famous perfume manufacturer and herself an artist and a dancer, were heard about Hollywood. Before the rumors could be tracked down, Miss Hudnut and her Sheik had rushed across the border into Mexico and there married.

"Marry in Haste, Repent—"

"I couldn't wait," said Rodolpho, when he found himself afool of the law. "I had heard about men who had been divorced in New York going over into Jersey and marrying immediately and I thought this would be the same thing."

The Perfect Lover might have read the danger signal in the experience of Frank Mayo, well-known actor in the world of motion pictures, and Dagmar Godowsky, actress and daughter of Leopold Godowsky, piano virtuoso. They married Oct. 3 last at Tia Juana. He secured an interlocutory decree of divorce four days before. Maj. Thomas McClelland, assistant district attorney of Los Angeles, has had this marriage under investigation for some time.

Before tracing the entanglements of Rodolpho from their beginning, it is only fair to the 10,000 sighing maidens that his real sentiments about love be made known. These maidens know him as the Torrid Sheik, or the swashbuckling Julio in "The Four Horsemen," or as the debonair wooer of Gloria Swanson in "Beyond the Rocks." The real Rodolpho is quite another person, with quite a different love credo.

He admits to a certain experience with women even outside the screen. But out of this experience come the three major articles of his credo. Here they are:

1. Never play at love unless you feel the urge. Insincere lovenaking is cheating—and you cheat yourself most of all.
2. Never try cave-man tactics on the woman you love. That's a sure way to lose her if she is worth winning.

3. Be patient. Never try to kiss a woman at the first or the second time you meet her. And never reveal your purpose, whatever it may be, until she is used to you and trusts you.

Rodolpho began to learn about women when he was quite young. There was a girl—Carlotta—who used to sit with him in front of a small cafe in Naples.

He never did more than touch her hand. But life with her was very sweet. Finally he went to Paris. Another world opened for him, a world of riches, gaiety and deceit. But what Carlotta had taught him he remembered. He never forgot that without speaking a word or moving a finger he expressed to her a complete enthrallment, an overwhelming adoration. He never forgot, even though the women in Paris seemed bent on proving that love was only a casual thing after all.

It was in Paris that Rodolpho became proficient in the Argentine Tango—an accomplishment that he afterward used to such striking advantage in "The Four Horsemen." With this as his chief asset he came to New York and danced in cabarets along Broadway.

After a while he drifted West. Somebody noticed his regular, chiselled, features, and coal-black eyes and started him in the movies. The role of Julio in "The Four Horsemen" was his first of any importance. And it made him.

About the time he was getting his start in pictures he met Jean Acker. By now the Neapolitan girl was remembered more as a principle than as a woman. The memory was still sweet. But the persuasiveness of the woman he could see was more potent. He married Jean Acker.

This marriage, he soon found, was an entanglement, for it is Rodolpho's definition that any condition which binds and chafes is an entanglement. This union lasted less than a year. When it was that Winifred Hudnut came into his life is not clear. Long before Valentino was more than locally known Winifred Hudnut, under the name of Natacha Rambova, had made a reputation as a dancer.

This spritely, colorful girl who is the focal point of Rodolpho's present entanglement, was born Winifred DeWolfe. She is the daughter of Mrs. Edgar DeWolfe who afterward married Richard Hudnut, the millionaire perfume manufacturer, and the niece of Elsie DeWolfe, the noted interior decorator.

In 1916 she startled her family and friends by disappearing. A continent-wide investigation was started which resulted in her being located in Chicago as a member of Theodore Kosloff's Russian ballet. She had determined on a stage career and when her family objected started out on her own hook. It was then that she took the



Frank Mayo and Dagmar Godowsky, Whose Tia Juana Marriage Is Also Under Investigation.

name Natacha Rambova, which she has borne professionally ever since.

When it became rumored around Los Angeles that Rodolpho and Natacha were engaged no thought was given to the recent divorce proceedings. Those who thought about it the way they do his second marriage. And doubtless Rodolpho thought the same thing or he wouldn't have been so naive about his return to California.

Douglass Gerrard, who acted as Valentino's best man, says that if that wedding was not legal he has lost his faith in all ceremonies.

Before leaving with his fiancée for Mexicali, the Mexican city which is across the border from its twin, Calexico, Valentino obtained a letter from the Mexican consul at Los Angeles, directed to the mayor of Mexicali.

Newspaper Feature Service, 1922.



Winifred Hudnut, Who Asks Her Lawyers "Am I or Am I Not a Wife?"

Just After the Marriage Ceremony in Mexico When Miss Hudnut Believed She Was Mrs. Valentino.

ABOVE—Jean Acker, the Wife to Whom Rodolpho, Says the District Attorney, Is Still Married, the Divorce Decree Not Having Become Effective.

The mayor, or the Jefe Politico, as he is known there, was routed out of bed and presented with this letter when the Valentino party arrived. Even though his slumbers had been interrupted the Jefe Politico, assured Valentino in his best Spanish that all arrangements for the marriage would be expedited. But the Mexican law is such that it took all of

three days to complete these arrangements. When all the usual documents had been signed, and all the proper officials fixed, the wedding party gathered in the Jefe's own home, where the senior judge of that district performed the prescribed rites.

At the last moment, when some questions as to the legality of the wedding arose, both Valentino and Miss Hudnut hesitated about allowing the ceremony to take place. Everybody present, however, urged them to go on. The Jefe assured them that everything was in order and that he would stand back of the marriage himself. A deputy sheriff from across the border assured the principals that a marriage in Arizona under similar circumstances would be legal.

Like a Reel Wedding

After the ceremony, the Jefe, who was an ardent admirer of Valentino's screen impersonations, saw that the whole town turned out to do him and his bride a sufficiency of honor. A fete was held in the Mexican style. Valentino, who is adept in all the romance languages, made a flowery speech in Spanish after he and his bride had been eulogized by everybody present, including the alcalde, the Jefe d'Policia and other magnificoes.

Pretty girls crowded around and threw flowers, a musician played languorous love tunes, wine was passed and after a while the military band marched and played American, Mexican and Italian airs. It was a successful international occasion.

The fete lasted until late. The band then accompanied the party to the border. The party returned to Palm Springs, California. Three days later Valentino was put under arrest and Winifred—whether Hudnut or Valentino she is not prepared to say—started on her journey east.

The complaint was sworn to by an attaché of the district attorney's office, who investigated the marriage and declared that the Valentinos had been entertained by Hollywood friends, including



Mme. Nazimova at Palm Springs. Mrs. established the fact that he was in California.

Valentino declared that he would have to be patient; that he and his beloved would stay apart for a year, after which they would remarry.

"It is needless to say," he continued, "that the year's separation will in no degree lessen our love."

But the 10,000 sighing maidens are hopeful. And Rodolpho, the Perfect Lover, still holds the piece of honor on the dresser.

Henry Walthall, screen star, vigorously denies that he is in a similar situation. He married his leading woman, Mary Charleston, in Indiana, ten days after he was divorced from Irene Fenton. He says:

"There are absolutely no grounds for investigation into my second marriage. I married my first wife, Isabelle Fenton, fifteen years ago. We couldn't get along and separated. I obtained a divorce at Chicago five years ago. I was given a final decree with the provision that I would not marry again in that state. The Indiana judiciary decided that my second marriage is entirely legal."

