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HANDLE WITH CARE

By Charles Belmont Davis

Who knows how to manage women? Not one of the five men who declared they would willingly die for her understood Jeanne Lee, but it was David Norris who won her. David knew much of law, but little of love, and, though he married her, it was another thing to keep her happy.

Absorbed in an important lawsuit, David worked day and night, completely forgetting their wedding anniversary, for which Jeanne had put on her wedding gown. As the dinner grew cold and he didn't come, Jeanne decided that there was truth in the words of Peter Carter in his book on marriage, "Love's Fulfillment."

"When the marriage tie becomes an unbearable yoke," wrote Peter, "man and wife have no moral right to remain as one."

David thought Jeanne should be satisfied because he was true to her and gave her everything she desired. She wanted fewer luxuries and more of his love-- and she referred to the men who would have died for her. "Yes, but would they run away with you?" he asked, and agreed to give her a divorce if any one of her ex-suitors would elope with her. The man, however, must prove to David that he was worthy of his wife.

So David moved to the club, and Jeanne began her campaign. Knowing Phil Burnham never missed his morning canter, she feigned an accident. Phil picked her up. She recalled old times, but when she said she was unhappy and asked him to elope with her, he stammeringly confessed he was engaged to the sweetest girl in the world.

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Then she phoned Ned Picard, who was dead broke. He quickly came to her bidding and, though somewhat staggered by the boldness of her proposition, he consented. David offered him ten thousand dollars to call it off. It looked like easy money to Ned, and he accepted. Jeanne agreed with David that Ned was unworthy.

That night Jeanne faced the bitter truth that she really loved her husband. She went to his office to say she was sorry, but changed her mind when she found David kissing his pretty ward, Marian. She did not know that it was because Marion had just told him of her sudden marriage, which he wanted kept a secret from Jeanne.

"I'm going to Peter Carter's office now, and this time I'm really going to elope," Jeanne raved. David followed and heard Peter declare that he would gladly die for her. David said he ought to die for the lying, piffling books he had written on marriage, and when he pulled a gun, Peter, to Jeanne's disgust, cried for mercy and promised to never write another book. As David was only proving Peter's unworthiness, he spared him.

Jeanne was ready to give in, but David did not respond to her friendly overtures, and she feared she had lost him forever, especially when he ordered her maid to pack her trunks. The next morning old MacCullough, the last of her ex-suitors, frightened her by almost bodily carrying her off. But the arrival of Marian and of David proved it only David's last effort to win back his wife. Mac was already Marian's happy husband. There was a double honeymoon to Europe.

Who knows how to manage women? David learned that you have to handle them with care!

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