

# and be my Love

By PEGGY DERN W.N.U. RELEASE

**THE STORY THUS FAR:** She could believe that her father had killed Alicia, and he assured Meg that he knew she was incapable of such a deed. And yet what might be brought out at the inquest? Distressed, Meg thought of Tom, and remembered that he had called her "darling." She felt she was falling in love with him. Laurence had come over from the county seat in connection with the inquiry concerning Alicia's death, and he called to talk to Annie and Meg. No trace of a weapon had been found, Larry reported. "Her husband is coming to claim the body." Yes, Alicia was married and it had been her husband who sent money each month for her to live.

And without waiting for her to recover from the shock of his quiet words and their implication, he went quietly out and the door closed behind him. She sat there for a long time after he had gone. So Amos had seen her with Tom! And Amos had told Laurence.

She bent forward and put her face in her hands and was still—until a soft movement behind her startled her, and she straightened with a little jerk to find Annie in the doorway watching her with compassionate eyes.

"You didn't want to tell Miss Laurence, Miss Meggie—but us had to," said the gentle old voice. "Of course, Annie," she managed unsteadily.

"Ain't nobody else gwine know, Miss Meggie—"

"There was nothing wrong, Annie—it was an accident—"

"Course, Miss Meggie—us all knows dat." Annie's voice was comfortable, assured. "Now yo' run up—"



"So you are investigating our tragedy, Mr. Reynolds?"

stains an' fix yo'self up all purty—'fo' Mist' Larry gets back an' us has suppeh," urged Annie, and vaguely comforted by Annie's matter-of-factness, Megan heaved herself to her feet and went upstairs.

She grimaced a little as she looked at herself in the mirror. She was white to the lips, there were shadows beneath her dark eyes, and her hair was untidy.

She showered and donned fresh things, a soft green jersey dress the shade of the first new green in spring that has almost a tinge of yellow in it. She brushed her hair until it gleamed and crackled beneath the vigorous onslaught of the brush.

Laurence came back a little later, but he was not alone. With him was a stocky young man whose face looked like that of a man in his early thirties, but whose hair was thickly streaked with gray. He had a pleasant, friendly manner, yet one felt instinctively that he could be tough should occasion require it.

Laurence performed the introductions, saying casually, "Meggie, this is Bob Reynolds. He's a detective from the county police who's looking into this business."

"Hello," said Bob Reynolds, with a friendly smile and a firm, pleasant handclasp. "This is quite a yarn your handymen's been spinning, Miss MacTavish. I'd like to talk to him if I may."

"Of course," said Megan, looking uncertainly at Laurence. "Shall I call him in here—"

"I think Amos would be more at ease if we talked to him in his own cabin, Bob. I know where it is, Meggie—suppose I show Bob the way?" suggested Laurence, and Mr. Reynolds agreed that that would be best.

They went out and a little later Annie came to the door and asked unasily, "Yo' speck dat policeman gwine stay fo' supper, Miss Meggie? Hit's mo' ready."

"Oh, yes, he was waiting for us," answered Laurence, "just as I had asked him to do."

Bob Reynolds eyed Megan straightly and asked, "How long has Amos been working for you, Miss MacTavish?"

"All my life," answered Megan quickly. "Annie came to work for my mother when she was fifteen. She and Amos were married a year or so later, and moved into that little cabin, and were there when I was born. This is as much their home, almost, as mine."

Bob nodded. "Then what would you say about Amos' truthfulness? I mean is he reasonably truthful in his statements—or is he given to telling tall tales?" he asked.

Megan managed a little laugh she hoped did not sound too artificial or forced.

"Well, I'd say that all depended, Mr. Reynolds," she confessed gaily. "If you mean when he is explaining to Annie how it happened he's lost all his money in a crap game, I think he shows amazing imagination and inventiveness. But ordinarily, I'd say Amos is quite truthful."

"In other words, if he says he saw a ghost eight feet high hovering around in an old burying ground, then he saw something looking at least remotely like that?" suggested Bob pleasantly.

"I feel quite sure that he did—or thought he did," answered Megan promptly and honestly.

Bob nodded. "That's the impression I got from the old fellow," he admitted. He stood in thought for a moment before he looked straight at her and asked quietly, "What would be your explanation for his story, Miss MacTavish? How could you account for it?"

Megan set her teeth hard for a moment and there was pure panic in her eyes, but before she could say anything, Bob went on quickly, "I mean, of course, that you are quite familiar with the surrounding territory—it is all strange to me. Do you know of anything that could have alarmed Amos so that he would have mistaken it for an eight-foot ghost?"

"I've been trying to think," Megan said thoughtfully. "There are some old fruit trees around that place. Pear trees in full bloom look ghostly in the dark—only it's too early for them to be blooming. I can't remember whether the trunks of any of the trees have been whitewashed lately. They are not on my land, you see, and I haven't noticed them recently."

Bob nodded, his eyes intent. "A tree trunk whitewashed half way up is a rather spooky looking thing in the dark. And I suppose there would be Spanish moss on the trees? In the moonlight, with a slight wind stirring that—" He was obviously thinking aloud, and his brows drew together in a puzzled frown. "Still, Amos is so sure that the 'spook' went inside the gate and bent above one of the old mounds—" He broke off, grinned and said briskly, "Oh, well, we'll have to wait for daylight to make an intensive search of the place, I suppose. From the description Amos and Larry both have given me, I don't imagine we could accomplish much by searching tonight. I'll be over first thing in the morning, and we'll give the place a going over."

He was obviously on the verge of leaving, and Megan said quickly, "Won't you stay for supper, Mr. Reynolds? We'd like having you!"

"Better take her up on that, Bob. Annie's the best cook in seven states—at a conservative estimate!" said Laurence lightly.

Bob beamed happily. "Well, now, if you're sure it won't be an imposition, there's nothing I'd like better!" he assured Megan gratefully. "And I'll give you a lift back to Meadersville later, Larry."

"Swell!" Laurence agreed happily.

Just as Annie came to the door to announce that supper was ready, the front door opened and Jim came in. Megan caught a glimpse of him before Laurence or Bob saw him; he looked desperately tired and forlorn, his shoulders drooping. But the next moment he became aware of the stranger in the living room. His shoulders went back and his head went up, and he came in, bracing himself, friendly, polite, hospitable, as Laurence performed the introductions.

Annie made her delayed announcement of supper, and they went in and were seated, before Jim spoke to Bob. "So you are investigating our — tragedy, Mr. Reynolds?"

"Yes," answered Bob, eyeing hungrily the crisply browned stuffed chicken that Annie had placed before Jim, who was about to wield an expert carving knife. "And I don't mind telling you that I consider it an open-and-shut case."

For the barest moment Megan thought the carving knife shook in her father's hand; but the next instant he went on carving delicately thin slices of chicken and laying them carefully on the plate before him.

"An open-and-shut case? You mean you have—an idea as to the guilty person?" Jim asked, with a beautifully balanced interest and curiosity in his voice.

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### Lesson for September 29

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### JESUS AND THE LAW OF LOVE

LESSON TEXT—Psalm 119:33-36; Matthew 5:43-48.

MEMORY SELECTION—Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.—Romans 13:10.

Love fulfilled the law—in Christ. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16). The law of love is therefore appropriate as the subject of our closing lesson on the general theme, "Jesus Interprets Old Testament Laws."

Love is the heavenly gift of God, who is love, to man who so much needs its grace and power for his own life and for his living with others.

**I. The Mind of Love (Ps. 119:33-35).**

Eight times in this psalm there is found the cry of verse 33 for instruction in the laws of God. Man not only must know them, but he must know how they operate. The picture here is that of a man who wants to get in step with God, marching out to spiritual warfare and being prepared to respond in prompt obedience to the commands of his divine leader.

Here we have the true mind of love. The one rightly instructed in the principles of God's rule in the world sees that love is the basic requirement, but that it expresses itself in a life that is in accord with the will of God.

The thought of this passage is well expressed by Dr. W. R. White: "The psalmist had the highest possible conception of love before the revelation in Christ. He saw it as the basic order of things. He conceived it as identical with the will of God. He viewed it as the safe, happy path for man. He considered it as the way of wisdom. He passionately desired to embrace it and order his life by it. He saw it imparting to the naive and simple the benefits of extraordinary judgment. To measure up he knew that he had to be quickened or made alive to it by the power of God."

**II. The Manner of Love (Ps. 119:36-38).**

Love operates not from necessity, but because of an inner urge which will not be denied. The psalmist prays that his heart may be so inclined toward the Lord and so quickened within that he may be eager to do the will of God.

Love has a technique, if you will, a manner of operation. It avoids certain things which would hinder or prevent its full function and seeks out those attitudes and experiences which will encourage and enlarge.

Covetousness must be avoided, for that is idolatry (Col. 3:5). We noted in our lesson of two weeks ago that covetousness makes a man stingy, envious, selfish, proud and foolish. That means that love must rule out this destructive element. Love cannot live in such an atmosphere.

Love turns away from vanity. The vain things of this world are usually presented in such attractive dress that to look at them is to be tempted. The answer is to turn your eyes away, or better still, ask God to give you special grace not only to turn away, but to stay turned away. The vain passions of this world destroy real love, even while using the word to describe their base counterfeit.

The positive side of the matter is also clear. The manner in which love best expresses itself is in the fear of God, in the established order of a life according to the law of God (v. 38). By being inclined to his testimonies it finds the right way—God's way (v. 37).

**III. The Measure of Love (Matt. 5:43-48).**

How far does love go? Does it have a limit? Does it choose those toward whom it will express itself, loving the lovely and ignoring or hating the rest? In answer to these questions let us first ask, What is the general attitude of the world? The answer is evident. The world has established its own principle of conduct based on selfish advantage. It pays to be polite to those who can favor you, so cultivate their good will by acts of courtesy and kindness. Your neighbor may be able to help you in an hour of need, so do good to him as you have opportunity.

But an enemy—what can you gain from kindness to him? Hate him, and treat him like an enemy.

Christianity knows nothing of such a spirit. Even though it be necessary to oppose wicked men in order to hinder their evil plans, we need not lose our love for them. Even those who despitely use us may be loved for Christ's sake.

"Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself (and went right on loving them) lest ye be wearied" in your own love for those who bear the sad name of enemies (see Heb. 12:3). This is admittedly a high standard, but it is not too high for those who know the love of Christ.

## The Home Town Reporter

in WASHINGTON

By Walter Shead WNU Correspondent

### Indiana Town Lifts Itself By Its Bootstraps

MILFORD, IND. — An experiment, called by the experts a lecture-seminar in rural sociology, has been conducted at Milford, Ind., a small rural town of 1,000 population in northern Indiana. The experiment is a success. It has transformed a sick, withering community. A decadent town, which for a dozen years has been slipping down the economic ladder into business failure, social lethargy and complete lack of community interest, has been brought back by a reawakening and revival of community spirit. This upsurge of unselfish co-operative effort has attracted national attention among farm and civic leaders and students of sociology and psychology throughout the nation.

The answer to this lecture-seminar which brought to this small community the big names, a veritable "who's who" in education, church work, sociology, business, industry and agriculture, is quite simple in the mind of this reporter. The answer is the same in any community, in any nation or in any community of nations. It is the elimination of selfishness and intolerance. It is that simple.

Symptoms which corroded and ate away the civic consciousness and social life of Milford are evident today in many American communities, in many nations, in the peace conference and the meetings of the United Nations. These symptoms include business failures and empty storerooms . . . lack of collective leadership, bickering and narrow provincial attitudes in some churches . . . selfishness, greed and intolerance . . . deterioration of the public schools . . . striking loss of population in high school age groups and older . . . government by a small clique of selfish ultra conservatives . . . loss of trade to nearby cities and towns, and a clash of interests between townsmen and those living on farms.

**Minister and Editor**

Sparked by the interest of a young minister of the gospel, the Rev. Harry Graham, who also is a lecturer for the local Farm Grange, aided and abetted by the members of the Lions club and the publisher of the local weekly newspaper, Arthur Baumgartner, a returned G.I. and publisher of the Milford Mail . . . these symptoms have been analyzed, their causes determined. As a result, the town of Milford today is convalescent and well on the way to recovery.

Space here is not sufficient to tell the detailed story of how Milford went about ridding itself of the barnacles of social obsolescence. Suffice it to say that today leaders in Milford believe they have stemmed the loss in population of young folks who have been leaving the town and the farms . . . age 15 to 19 years about 9.4 per cent of the population annually; 20 to 24 years, 7.4 per cent; 25 to 29 years, 6.4 per cent and 30 to 34 years, 5.2 per cent.

Today they believe that this tremendous loss in manpower in the most productive years has been stopped: (1) because they have brought new small industries there which will take up the slack in employment; (2) because they have given these young folks new lease on life in recreational facilities—a bathing beach, tennis courts, softball courts, a community center, a youth center, supervised recreation for youth from elementary school age through high school; a town band. Churches have opened their halls and other facilities to the young people; business men have joined hands co-operatively to work for the best interest of the many, not the selfish few; the high school has been re-generated and new agricultural courses have been instituted for the farm youth; larger and better domestic science facilities have been installed; an adult education class has been instituted in the town library; a program of land use and soil conservation has been instituted intended to increase the number of owner-operated family sized farms; efforts are being made to develop more favorable landlord-tenant agreements; to improve credit arrangements and to encourage ownership and conservation; to hold down land values below inflation prices so that returned veterans and younger farmers can buy at a price which permits a living on their investment.

**Co-Operative Leadership**

Elimination of the imaginary line between the town limits and the surrounding country was one of the first steps in the rejuvenation of Milford, in an effort to develop a co-operative town and farm leadership and an invitation to this leadership to participate as co-equals in the problems of the community.

Working quietly behind the scenes is the Foundation for American Agriculture, a non-profit, non-political organization which is working for the best interests of agriculture.

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### Omar, Darling!

The honeymoon couple sat out the sands together.

"Graceful birds, gulls, aren't they?" the bridegroom said.

"Looking for food, I expect," answered the bride.

"Isn't the sun gorgeous?" the bridegroom said, after a pause.

"Reminds me of a poached egg," answered the bride.

"It's grand to take in deep breaths of ozone-laden air," he said, breathing deeply.

"Don't find it very filling myself," answered the bride; and then there was a short silence.

"And what is my romantic little wife thinking about?" the bridegroom asked fondly.

"Food!" she answered.

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