

Masquerade

By Martin Setter

The great hotel ballroom resembled a Mardi Gras. It was the scene of the last dance of the graduating class of State University. The masked dancers in their bizarre costumes were a riot of color and pageantry. An internationally famous orchestra was playing sweet, soft music.

On the darkened terrace leading from the ballroom, a tall lone figure stood smoking, looking out over the parapet at the conglomeration of lights that was New York's skyline after dark.

Jack Coburn was unhappy. Apparently he had everything that a man graduating from college should have. Over six feet, his body in its height and breadth and width denoted many seasons of pursuing tables in that elusive pursuit of glory termed football. He'd been a great football player at State. His grades had been excellent and he had a swell future in a law office in California. But he was far from happy.

Now, he was dressed in a strange costume. He looked a throwback to the days of the Spanish Inquisition. From his plumed hat to his Cordovan boots with the huge spurs, he was the picture of a Spanish Grandee. His rugged, yet sensitive face for some reason was not marred by the black mustache and goatee he had taken some pains to have just right. From his white silk shirt showing under the velvet jacket to the long sword at his left side, he seemed a true gentleman of old Spain.

He threw his fifth or sixth cigarette down and, after adjusting his mask, turned and looked through the French doors into the dance. His eyes flicked back and forth and finally settled on one girl—a girl whom he had been following with his eyes most of the evening, a girl with whom he had never danced, a girl who was to him, the girl, Mary Williams, who had been crowned that evening as "Miss State College." She was the only girl he would ever want to marry.

He saw her laughing up into her partner's eyes as she floated in his arms to the dreamy waltz. He saw that exquisite figure and that face from Heaven—and Jack Coburn's memory drifted backwards—!

His family had just moved to New York, and it was their first day at home after the tiring journey from Los Angeles, California. He was fourteen, and he, along with his brother and mother and father missed L. A. He remembered sitting in the living room, thinking about the next door neighbors in L. A. Their name had been Mendoza. The Mendoza boys had taught him many things. Their father, a Mexican-American lawyer, hadn't seemed like most Mexican men he had seen or read about. He had been a patrician. Jack remembered Jose and Chuck Mendoza teaching him Spanish. They'd all had a lot of fun introducing him down on Olvera Street, as their brother, and after a few years, they all

could get away with it. His skin was naturally dark, and he took to the language like a duck to water. He remembered that his father had interrupted his reverie by saying:

"Folks, it looks like the next-door neighbors are paying us a social visit." He'd stood just behind his father as the door-bell rang. He'd seen Mary's father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, been introduced, and then Mary Williams walked up to him with her hand out, and her father had said:

"Young man, I want you to get acquainted with our daughter, Mary. She's been wanting to meet you all day."

He remembered starting to shake her hand, and also remembered just standing there like a big raw-boned ape and staring at her. He had seen many pretty girls, but this thirteen-year-old literally took his breath away.

Even then, Mary had that silvery-blond hair, that face that only an angel should claim. His heart went out to her even though his hand never did. He made a quick excuse and ran upstairs.

He'd made many excuses since that day. She always took his breath away. Everytime they were alone he'd become tongue-tied. And every time that he'd stammer something in his confusion to her when she talked to him, he would berate himself later.

Well, the years had passed. Yes, the Williams family became about the best friends the Coburn family had. But he, Jack, never did get over his acute self-consciousness whenever he was close to Mary Williams. He certainly had tried.

The State College had such a large student body he had rarely even a glimpse of her during school hours—much to his sorrow.

"Tonight," Jack thought, "I'll make up for many things. She won't know me because even my teachers didn't recognize me in this outfit, and none of them know that I speak Spanish. I just wish with all my heart that things had been different years ago. I would give my interest in Heaven to have ever been able to talk to her as easily as I talk to all the other girls who've wanted me to date them, or go steady with them. I guess I just never had a chance." With that thought he stepped forward from the terrace door and intercepted a tiny girl who seemed to be walking toward the buffet. She was Miss Mary Williams. Her beauty was not only evident in her 'Madame Pompadour' costume, but she carried it with the grace of a true queen.

Her roguish eyes seemed huge in her small, oval-shaped face. He looked at her and for the first time in eight years noticed that there was no hesitancy or nervousness, as he said in perfect Castilian Spanish:

"May I have the pleasure of this dance?" The tiny beauty smiled dazzlingly:

"I don't understand you, Sir." Without saying more he gathered her in his arms and they glided

off to the music of the waltz. After a moment he leaned over and began speaking softly in her ear, still in Spanish:

"Mary, my dear, this is the first and last time I will ever have you in my arms, and I have longed for this so many years." She looked up at him, questioning, but he continued:

"I know you cannot understand, my sweet, but I have loved you so much and so hopelessly since our high school days and never had heart to ask you for a date, my loveliest of the fair, my jewel among women. You don't know me now, and I can't tell you all those things I have kept within me so long.

"Your lips are nectar, and when you smile you shed a radiance beyond compare. My dear, to kiss your lips would be an ecstasy only the gods could understand. No rose exists to equal the beauty of your fair cheeks and those veils, termed lashes, that cover your eyes, hide two pools of enchantment I could spend a lifetime, gazing into."

Mary, cut in with: "Whatever you are saying, it sounds nice."

"I have worshipped you, my Mary, since I moved next door to you long ago. When you were blocks away I have stood at my window watching, and I have said, 'There is that dear form hurrying toward you, coward Jack. Why don't you talk to her?'—But no, never did I have the courage."

The soft music changed abruptly, then, into "Goodnight, Sweetheart", and the tall Spaniard began talking faster:

"Goodnight, sweetheart, I will probably never see you again. I am going to live in Los Angeles after graduation, but remember that this heart is yours, carry it always with you—so, goodnight sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart and goodbye."

The music stopped and the lights came on.

Mary reached up and removed his mask and her own. She looked at him tenderly and with the tears spilling down her cheeks and sobbing as tho' her heart would break, murmured:

"Jack, Oh why didn't you let me know? I have loved you since I first saw you move in next door, from my window. I have prayed for this moment so long. My eyes followed just you when you played football. Do you remember when you were injured playing, that time, and I went next door and handed you some flowers—when all the time I ached to put my arms around you and kiss away the pain? Oh, my darling, my heart knew you at sight to-night and, my sweet, if you had ever asked me out, you would probably have learned that I majored in Spanish just because I once heard that you learned it as a child and could speak it fluently."

Jack Coburn stood there for a moment, looking at her unbelievably. Then he leaned down and kissed her, and hand in hand, they walked out of the ballroom.

+ Under The Basket +

Down in the Central gym, where fifteen or twenty young men gather every night to practice this new-fangled game of basketball, only one cry is distinguishable above the many moans and groans coming from the throats of the ten men gathered on the floor, and that is the one that is yelled repeatedly, yet seemingly without any apparent effect, by Coach Gene Shumate, "WORK THAT PLAY!" From time to time, one of the players gasps to a teammate, "Work that play!" and glares at him as if the sole reason for the failure to work the play rests squarely upon him. To which the other player replies, "O.K.!" and returns the glare.

No, it isn't the battle-cry of Charlotte College or anything like that, but merely the new system of play which Coach Shumate is introducing into the basketball of the college. The system consists of several plays, all of which are optional to the pivot-man. The system isn't particularly complex; yet both the coach and the team believe that it will prove very effective once the correct timing has been established. At any rate, the basketball team places its hopes for a successful season in this system. Let's wish them luck.

Of course, there are other reasons why we of the Charlotte College are hoping for a successful season, and chief among these is the tall, lanky form of last year's ace center, Bill Proctor. At the present, Proctor is sidelined with a stomach illness which may keep him out of action until after the Christmas holidays, but the entire student body is waiting anxiously for his return to the court. Besides Proctor, there are two other aces back from last year's team, John Gamble and Lawrence (two-point) Wilson. Gamble is at present running as a guard. John Gamble is a member of last season's famous duo, "the Gamble brothers." The other member, Morris, is now at Carolina. Other faces familiar to the majority of the CC students who are trying out for the team are Paul "Put-Put" Putnam, David "Cotton" Cash, and Ray Kishiah. Cash is originally from Berryhill Hi, Kishiah from Tech. Other members of the squad from Tech are Steve and Gus Economus, another brother act from which much is expected. Both are experienced ball players and will bolster the team's chances considerably. Harding sends its only experienced ball player in the form of James Auten, a tall boy who is equally adept at either center or guard. Auten will probably see a lot of action this winter. Benny Douglas, from Sharon, is another lad who could see action this winter. Standing close to six feet tall, Benny isn't exactly a "shorty" himself. Another of the County schools, Oakhurst, has a contribution in the person of Howard Huntley, a

blond six-footer, who is improving with every practice session. Both he and Bill "Hooks" Hayes, the boy with the peculiar hook shot, have excellent chances with the team. Central, instead of sending one representative as some of the other schools did, must have decided to send a delegation of their best. Outstanding among these are Jack Harkey, Walter Ross, and Bill Braswell. Jack Harkey and Walter Ross have been showing up very well in practice thus far, so well that it is going to be hard to deny them a position on the starting five, even among such a group as has turned out for the practices so far. CC students will see a lot of these boys before the season's end. Bill Braswell, the other member of the squad from Central, has proven himself to be quite an outstanding ball player, but as yet has been unable to practice regularly. Here's hoping that he can get that difficulty smoothed out, for he can really be a help to the team.

There are a great many other good players out for the team, so many that it hardly seems fair to concede any position on the team to anyone as yet, even in discussions around the halls. The starting team has definitely not been picked as yet and it is still a merry chase as to see just who will land the starting berths. To the curious and to the second-guessers then, we would like merely to say, "Come to our games and find out for yourselves!"

Activities

(Continued from Page 1)

ker is chairman; David Simpson and Martin Setter are members.

David Cash is chairman of the Athletic Committee of which Aaron Brown has been appointed a member. This Committee promotes publicity and attendance at basketball games. Mr. Shumate and Mr. McCachren are coaches.

Martin Setter has accepted the position of editor of the college newspaper, and John Jamison is advertising manager. There are still jobs to be filled on the newspaper staff. Students interested in working on the newspaper staff should sign the notice on the bulletin board.

Plans are now being made for a college annual. Paul Howell is editor-in-chief, and Earl Yandle is business manager. There is a great deal of work to be done on the annual and, consequently, there is a need for many students to aid in the publication and business departments of the staff. The complete staff has not yet been appointed. If you desire to work on the annual staff attend their next meeting, the time of which will be posted on the bulletin board.

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