

**OVER THE TEACUPS**  
Boudoir Gossip for Lady Readers

**The Sensitive Lover.**

A ROMANTIC STORY IN SEVENTEEN CHAPTERS.

TOLD IN THE LAW COURTS.

AMUSING LETTERS.

**CHAPTER I.**

Mr. Harold Lanyon, Civil Assistant in the Admiralty, Survey Department, to Miss Grace Prickett, daughter of a former Chief Constable of Portsmouth.

My Darling Grace,—I hope you will accept this as a token of my affection and esteem, and of good wishes for Christmas and the coming year. I sincerely trust that we shall always stand in the same relationship to one another. That our affection for one another may grow stronger and deeper is the sincere desire of your ever loving Harold. x x x

**CHAPTER II.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
My Darling Grace,—If our engagement is not resumed I feel truly sorry, for you have behaved like a brick. I wonder if I was the cause of your father's coolness?—Your own Harold.

**CHAPTER III.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
Mr. Darling Grace,—I propose, if you are willing, that we should be married at the end of next season. I think we might make a comfortable home at Queen's road.—Fondest love and best wishes from your own Harold. x x x

**CHAPTER IV.**

Miss Prickett to Mr. Lanyon.  
My Darling Harold,—I am quite willing to agree to your proposal.—Your own Grace.

**CHAPTER V.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
My Darling Grace,—I think it would be better to leave the Queen's road house alone for the present, and look out for a more convenient one. When I have paid off the mortgage at the end of the year, I could sell it and buy another. We will not spend money too extravagantly, will we, darling? We do not want to find ourselves in the Bankruptcy Court.—Your own Harold.

**CHAPTER VI.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
My Darling Grace,—I am anxious to see your eight-and-ninpenney dress. I call that very cheap indeed, and shall certainly not mind buying you some at that price, provided you don't want too many in the course of 12 months. You won't forget, dearest, that five guineas a week won't accomplish everything.—Your own Harold.

**CHAPTER VII.**

Miss Prickett to Mr. Lanyon.  
My Darling Harold,—How do you know the girls at Gorleston are nice? It seems to me I shall have to put a detective on your track.  
Did you raise your cap to the girls who waved their handkerchiefs to you? Is this the reason you go to open-air service? Am I finding you out? Are you going to forsake me after all?—Your own Grace.

**CHAPTER VIII.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
My Darling Grace,—I like the little verse you sent me except the one word at the end, "command," which, in my humble opinion, reduces mere man to a mere machine. I do not agree with it. I do not intend to place myself under petticoat government, and there will be some severe fighting before I capitulate.—Your own Harold.

**CHAPTER IX.**

Miss Prickett to Mr. Lanyon.  
My Darling Harold,—I interpreted the word "command" in relation to the house and family. If a woman cannot command there, where is happiness? You are a silly boy to talk about severe fighting.—Your own Grace.

**CHAPTER X.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
My Darling Grace,—Please accept this present with my best love and all good wishes.—Your loving Harold.

**CHAPTER XI.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
Dear Grace,—For some time past I have had serious doubts as to the wisdom of our engagement, and after careful consideration I have come to the conclusion that it is not the best thing for either of us.

There are several aspects which I think make us unsuitable for each other, but I think I need only mention one, and that a very important one. I refer to sensitiveness. We both possess a great amount of that trait in our characters, and I regret to say (and I am sure you will agree with me) that it has been the cause of a great amount of friction between us.

Whether that has been the cause I cannot say, but I am very sorry to have to tell you that my affections for you are not what they once were. This being the case you will agree with me I am sure that marriage under such conditions would be a very serious mistake; it might probably mean a life of martyrdom for both of us.

Therefore I must ask you if you will please consent to the ending of our engagement. I am sorry indeed that our friendship should end in this way, but honestly believe that it will be for our mutual good.—Believe me, yours truly, Harold J. Lanyon.

**CHAPTER XII.**

Miss Prickett to Mr. Lanyon.  
Dear Harold,—I cannot express the pain and astonishment your letter has caused me. I shall write again in a few days.—Yours sincerely, G. Prickett.

**CHAPTER XIII.**

Miss Prickett to Mr. Lanyon.  
Dear Mr. Lanyon,—I have carefully considered the matter, and can only say I am astonished at your conduct.

You say that "your affections for me are not what they once were." Why, I cannot tell, as I have always endeavoured to do as you wished.

You say, too, that marriage with me might probably mean a life of martyrdom for both of us—how could you conceive such an awful suggestion.

Had I been told that you would have treated me in this way I should have scorned the idea. That you have deceived and fooled me is evident, and I have been cruelly wronged by you. Therefore I have absolutely no faith in you whatever.

I must remind you of all your promises to me, and you are aware that since we have been engaged I have spent almost the whole of my time at my disposal in making articles, besides spending pounds on the house linen for what I thought my future home with you. Having regard to these facts, I shall expect you to settle the matter satisfactorily to myself.—Yours truly, Grace Prickett.

**CHAPTER XIV.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
Dear Miss Prickett,—In acknowledging your letter may I remind you that on a well-remembered Friday evening after we had been engaged about four months I promised you, at your request, that if in the future I came to the conclusion that we were unsuitable to each other, or if I liked someone better than you, I would tell you so, because you said that it would be very unhappy for both of us if, after we were married, we found that we were not suited to each other.  
So where my awful suggestion comes in I fail to see. I am glad that the sec-

ond condition of that promise is in no way responsible for my letter to you.

I can assure you that breaking our engagement affords me no pleasure, but as I have realised of late that we are not suitable to each other, I think it far wiser under such conditions if we agree to part.

Your manner to me of late has been anything but cordial, especially on the last Saturday afternoon we went for a walk together. I had great difficulty to get you to converse, and many yards of the walk were covered in mutual silence. Your remark to me when we parted in the evening that you could not come down on the Sunday because you would have to walk home alone I thought was very unjust and cruel, especially in view of the fact that on the previous evening you walked from St. John Ambulance to Commercial-road as far as the top of Charlotte-street unaccompanied, and very likely did all the way home. Since we have been engaged you have never had to go home alone when I have been in Portsmouth, except on the occasion of the last philharmonic concert or when I have had a very bad cold and you have agreed that it would not be wise for me to be out in the night air.

In such cases my brother has either gone home with you or seen you into a car at the town hall.—Yours truly, Harold J. Lanyon.

P.S.—Old Mr. Fryer, of Queen-street, died yesterday afternoon.  
(Enclosing a newspaper cutting relating to a broken engagement.)

**CHAPTER XV.**

Mr. Prickett to Mr. Lanyon.  
Dear Mr. Lanyon,—I made no suggestion regarding your being unsuitable. You know I was suffering from a severe cough, and you suggested I should see a doctor. Now you are mean enough to complain that I did not converse with you.

The part you are playing is cowardly and despicable. To endeavour to place upon me the responsibility for your own actions is inconsistent with your Christian profession. You evaded answering the greater part of my letter.—Yours truly, G. Prickett.

**CHAPTER XVI.**

Mr. Lanyon to Miss Prickett.  
Dear Miss Prickett,—I am prepared to take the house linen from you at the price it cost you, and also to pay for that material used in making the articles. I do not think I could offer anything fairer.—Yours truly, Harold J. Lanyon.

**CHAPTER XVII.**

Miss Prickett, a tall, pretty girl in a white hat, white furs, and a fawn-coloured costume, sued Mr Lanyon in the Law Courts yesterday for breach of promise.

She stated that her baptismal name was Julia, not Grace, and her counsel, Mr. Waddy, suggested that it might be necessary to amend the pleadings.

"It would be impossible to amend the lady," gallantly declared Mr. Hugo Young, K.C., who represented Mr. Lanyon.

Miss Prickett said she had never observed that Mr. Lanyon was a sensitive creature, although he always asserted that he was. "I am not more than ordinarily sensitive," she added.

Mr. Young read the cutting which was enclosed in one of Mr. Lanyon's letters. It related to a prominent politician who wrote to the newspapers saying he and the lady he had been engaged to had parted the best of friends, as they thought it better to be unhappy for a little while than to be bound together and be unhappy for a long time.

"Do you agree with that sentiment?" he asked.

"No," Miss Prickett replied; "I do not think I should be unhappy; but if I were I should agree with it."

"I did not suggest that we should have a motor-car," she said; "but Mr. Lanyon suggested a yacht." I said I would not go on it with him."

"Were not you and your father cold to him?" inquired Mr. Young.

"Yes," she admitted.

"About five degrees of frost," counsel remarked.

Miss Prickett said Mr. Lanyon declared he hoped to settle £1000 on her.

"A young man with commercial instincts so developed as Mr. Lanyon would be a success in life," remarked Mr. Waddy. "He would be a prudent and careful husband."

**Calling.**

It will be a sad day when the art of calling dies out. It will mean we shall either have no friends at all, or only those friends we can count on by bribery or payment—namely, the offer of a meal.

An afternoon call is a compliment to the hostess. The acceptance of an invitation where food is offered is quite the other way round; the compliment then comes from the hostess, and not from the guest, as in the case of an afternoon visit.

"Life is too short to call!" someone exclaims. Life is nothing of the kind. In London it is certainly difficult to make calls at long distances on particular days, but even that can be accomplished, and should be, at least once a year.

Life is rather short to toil about paying visits and finding no one at home, or to find some selfish hostess has gone out on her own particular day because she thought she could amuse herself better at a wedding or a matinee. A woman who tells her friends she has a day, and then uses that day for some other amusement, deserves to be cut off a visiting list. She shows herself unworthy of consideration and undesirable for friendship. That woman is a selfish woman.

Absence from home or illness should be the only causes to keep a lady from her drawing-room on the day she specifies she is at home.

Everyone has not a large enough circle of friends to be at home every week, or even every fortnight. Then let her be at home one day in every month, and, if she chooses her day by the date, and not the day of the week, she will give all her friends who have days of their own a chance of calling on her.

Suppose she says "the 9th." Well one month the 9th will fall on a Tuesday, the next on a Friday, the next on a Monday, and so on, so that in time all her friends will find her in. Besides notifying the date on her cards, she can ask a few special friends in to tea each month on that particular date, and gradually gather quite a little coterie about her on her at-home days.

No, the art of calling must not go out. Young men must be encouraged to call on Sundays, and nice girls asked to meet them.

Calling is a necessity. It is a social convention that must be kept up, because, even if inconvenient at times, it is a requirement in the wheel of life. If we never see people we become shy, egotistical, overbearing, and sour. It is only by contact with others we are dragged from a little groove, which, left alone, narrows every year.

Friends are the most precious assets of life, and friends are largely made and fostered by the art of calling. How cold and dreary, how sad and cruel our lives would be if we took no interest in anyone, and no one took any interest in us! Visiting is the fuel which keeps the flame of friendship kindled, and it will be a sad day for everyone, men, women, and children, if selfishness and laziness do away with the art of calling.—From "The Queen."



**Men Who Make Good Husbands**

After so much has been written about women and the kind who make the best wives, it is of interest to know what kind of men make the best husbands. An alleged authority on the matter has given his views as to the sort of men who may be looked on as safe ventures in the matrimonial lottery, and among the really nice ones he classes the angler, the lawyer, and the good all-round journalist, not the one who specialises on any certain subject. The popular doctor does not rouse his enthusiasm, whilst the author or musical genius gives him the shudders. The first-named has so many calls on his time that he is not always satisfactory, whilst the second is so fond of his fine sentences that he is disagreeable when the baby cries, and often makes himself odious about food and domestic worries, and the musician thinks so much of his art that his wife is often scornful to the prima donna. The journalist claims his first sympathies, as being a bit of a philosopher, likely to be practical, willing to make the best of things, and is full of alternatives and expedients. He forgets, however, to mention that his hours are likely to be erratic and very trying. The lawyer comes a good second, as he is likely to be alert, a good judge of human nature, a good talker, and quite as fond of listening as of hearing his own voice.