



The temptation to lift pad and pencil and bring them down sharply on the top of his head was almost irresistible.

by Kalman Phillips

THE resort manager had warned Jeanie that her new employer might be eccentric. "He wants you full time," he had told her. "Said he wanted someone around to keep him honest as well as to type scripts. I think he may be slightly addled."

Jeanie's level gray eyes had been emphatic in their belief in her ability to handle any situation. "People don't worry me." But now, as she raised her hand to knock on the door of cabin No. 10, set deep in the shade of the big trees, she had to confess to a twinge of hesitancy. Cabin No. 10 was slightly off the beaten track, quite a distance from the hotel, and she hadn't had the opportunity of testing out the carrying power of a scream from that vicinity.

She shrugged the uneasiness out of her slim, well-turned shoulders, tossed her head back to get a vagrant lock of sun-streaked-hair out of her eyes, and knocked.

"Go away!"

Jeanie's eyelids bounced. The voice from behind the closed door had been positive. She retreated a step. Then she frowned. It had been a long walk from the hotel. It would be quite a jaunt back. After all, he'd sent for her. "Isn't this the cabin of Mr. Alexander Wade?"

"What are they doing -- taking a census up here?" The door opened suddenly, disclosing a lean young man in a checkered shirt and rumpled blue jeans. Dark eyes scowled at her from under irritated eyebrows. "Well?"

Jeanie swallowed. "I -- I'm

Jeanie Rawlinson."

His gaze was sombre. "Thank you. I'll remember the name. I keep a list of people for when things get too much for me and I run amuck. Do you realize that you interrupted me in the middle of the first bit of work I've been able to force myself to do for two days?"

"I'm sorry."

"It doesn't matter." He ran restless fingers through his hair. "The program director is unreasonable anyhow. He wants his scripts in time to be rehearsed before the broadcasts, not afterwards. What do you want?"

"Mr. Hawkins said you needed a secretary. The hotel secretary is busy, but I can type and take shorthand and I live in a cottage right next to the hotel. Mr. Hawkins thought I might do very well."

"Oh." He observed her without enthusiasm. "You look too young."

"I'm twenty."

"That's what I mean. I wanted someone with a little less spring -- someone who can sit and be quiet when I think."

Jeanie smiled. This harried young man with the ridged forehead and tousled hair aroused a motherly instinct in her. "If you don't mind my breathing occasionally, I qualify."

"That's only part of it. What I really need is somebody to keep me working. My self-discipline is shot. If I don't apply myself more, I might lose my job."

"I'm wonderful at discipline. The children all hated me when I used to teach Sunday School. Shall I start now?"

HE smiled suddenly. It was quite a nice smile. It seemed to slip his features into place and made him look very

agreeable. "I think you'll do fine. Suppose we make some coffee and talk a bit first."

Jeanie lifted her eyebrows. She took her responsibilities seriously. "Discipline, Mr. Wade. The coffee can wait. Just what was the work I interrupted?"

"Oh -- oh, that?" He looked wistfully at the percolator. "I'm trying to figure out the story line for the next broadcast before starting on the script. I do Jonathan Jones -- Friday nights. Ever listen to it?"

"Faithfully," Jeanie asserted. Which wasn't exactly untruthful. She believed she had heard it a couple of times.

"Then you know where we left them. Jonathan's boss is coming over for dinner, and his girl friend, Jennifer, is making it. Well, Jennifer loves pets -- her favorite is Pete, the garter snake. I thought it would make a wonderful situation if I could in some way get Pete into the boss's green salad. If Jennifer could knock over his box" He stopped as the telephone rang.

Jeanie beat him to it. "Hello."

"Who are you?" It was a girl's voice. It sounded surprised.

"Mr. Wade's secretary. Mr. Wade is very busy now. Is there anything you wanted?"

"I want him to take me canoeing on the lake."

"You don't seem to understand." Jeanie's voice was severe. "Mr. Wade is working now. He can't be disturbed."

"You obviously don't understand, my dear. Tell him it's Eloise. He'll come."

Jeanie's shoulders wriggled at the insolence in the other girl's voice. "I'm afraid that's impossible." She hung up and picked up her pad. "Go on, Mr. Wade."

"Go on where?"

"Getting the garter snake into the salad."

"Who was on the

phone?"

"Some trivial creature named Eloise. She wanted to go canoeing."

"Trivial!" His eyes were observing her with undisguised horror. "Eloise is the reason I'm up here! With her gone, I couldn't keep my mind on my work in the city. And you told her ... Give me that telephone!"

Her room didn't answer. He looked baffled for a moment, then rose. Jeanie watched him anxiously. "Where are you going?"

"To the lake, of course."

Jeanie picked up her pad and pencil and followed. She felt unreasonably irritated. She hated to see a man chase after a girl -- particularly a man in whom she had a motherly interest. And she had taken a sudden dislike to this Eloise of his.

She arrived at the lake just in time to take in a rather interesting tableau on the float. There were three participants: a dazzling green-eyed vision with sleek blonde hair, wearing a green, contour-accentuating sheath which, by some stretch of the imagination to which it left nothing, might be called a bathing suit; a muscular red-headed young giant in brief swimming trunks; and the blue-jeaned Alexander Wade. The muscular young man was sitting at the side of the float, one foot hooked over the gunwale of a canoe tied to it.

Wade's voice was audible as Jeanie approached. It had a false note of heartiness in it. "You just got it confused, Eloise. What she meant was I'd make it as soon as possible." He laughed. "As possible, impossible -- sound a lot alike, don't they?" The green-eyed girl shrugged.

"You needn't bother to explain, Alex. Rodney, here, was only too glad to substitute for you."

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