

The WISDOM OF EVE

Orr, Mary

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ABSTRACT

Sooner or later Eve Harrington's sins will catch up with her. Not today, perhaps, or tomorrow but eventually...

FULL TEXT

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a part. But I don't fall into the same trap twice," said Margola determinedly. "So far as I am concerned she can stand at the stage entrance until she turns into a statue. I shan't lift a finger to help her."

"It's rather a pity," I said, "since you say she really is so talented."

"So what?" Margola stubbed out her cigarette in the limousine's ash tray. "Lots of girls are talented and never get a chance to show it. She had a chance, and she muffed it by her own conceit. She'll never get another opportunity."

"Probably not." I sighed and stared through the car window at the reflected stars, twinkling like footlights in Little Neck Bay. "No," I thought to myself, "the little girl with the red coat will probably spend the rest of her life in obscurity."

But I was wrong. So was Margola. Eve Harrington had that rare second chance. I curse the day that she got it. For Margola was right. Eve was a bitch. I know, for it was through me that opportunity knocked twice on her door.

Several weeks after Margola told me this story, Lloyd finished his new play and a prominent manager made immediate plans to produce it. It was a strange play, different from anything Lloyd had written before and very hard to cast. There was one part which presented insurmountable difficulties. It required a young emotional actress of great strength and power. At the same time, it was not large enough for a star, having only three scenes. Lloyd and the manager tried actress after actress, and no one was right. He wanted a certain timid quality that was apparently unobtainable from the synthetic blondes of Broadway. I knew where he could find it. I knew the perfect girl was standing at Margola's stage door. I had never forgotten the shy expression in Eve Harrington's wide eyes. Finally, when in desperation the manager was about to call the production off, I suggested her to Lloyd.

"Go around there," I suggested. "She always wears a red coat. You can't miss her. If you wash the make-up off her face, you'll have exactly the right type. Furthermore, I hear she can really act."

Lloyd thought I was kidding, but finally he did as I told him. She read the part the next day, and they gave it to her. The search was over. All through rehearsals, Lloyd and the director carefully coached Eve to hide her awkwardness. Lloyd began taking her out to lunch to talk about the part. On the opening night, Eve walked off with the show. It was a hit, and I had to admit it was partly her performance.

Her notices were amazing. The movies got excited about her all over again. This time, with her success behind her, her tests were a different story. What had once struck Hollywood as "no sex appeal," now was called "a rare quality . . ." So Eve is on the train with her contract in her pocket.

I am going on a trip also. I am heading for Reno to get a divorce. For in spite of her success, Eve had found the time to get engaged to a famous playwright. She is going to marry my husband, Lloyd Richards.

A beautiful wife can be a handicap to an important politician, especially when she has her own ideas about government. Mignon McLaughlin's two-part story, "The Governor's Lady" begins in next month's Cosmopolitan



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Image 7:

Caption: She just stood there, odd-looking and aloof, staring at the stage door.

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Image 8:

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Image 9:

Caption: "The first thing I did when I got home was to read the letter."

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