

Kahamiga

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Kahaniya



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2-55

	PAGE
Is Love At First Sight A Myth ? [By Miss J. N. Cooper, B.A. (Hons.) B.T.]	— 4
The Reformed Thief [By Mrs. Rama Srinivasan]	— 7
Duff House Murder Case (By S. Rajagopalan)	— 12
The Prince & The Brahmarakshasa [By Captain S. S. Sarma]	— 16
Devil In Woman's Garb [By E. C. Maclean]	— 19
More About Flying Saucers [By G. K. Arya, B. A., B. L.]	— 23
A Vengeful Spirit	— 25
The Dancer [By G. R. Jayalakshmi, B.Sc.]	— 27
The Magic Seat (By Swami Sivananda)	— 30
The Student World (By G. A. Dharmarajan, M A., (Oxon.)]	— 31
Know Your Luck (By Leo)	... 41

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Kahaniya

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Vol. I |

MARCH, 1955

| No. 11

NEW SERIAL STORY

In this issue we begin a new serial story by Captain C. S. S. Sarma who is already familiar to our readers.

His earlier serial story titled "The Four Wise Men" was much appreciated. This story ran for four issues and the beauty of it was that the main story led to other stories, each of them containing a moral lesson. Indian folk lore is rich in such gems which elevate both the teller and the hearer.

Captain Sarma's new serial is culled from Dandin's tales, and will run for five issues. We hope the readers will find this new serial equally interesting as his previous one. This will be followed by another about fairies and magic.

We are sorry that our regular readers in some centres had to go without their copies of "Kahaniya" last month because of the cancellation of the agencies there. We request these readers to get their copies in future from the railway book stalls in their respective places or if they want their copies to be delivered at their doors to enlist themselves as regular subscribers by sending rupees three to us.

In response to the wishes of several readers we have opened a film section this month. We hope in the coming months to review as many of the new releases as possible.

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Is Love

At First Sight A Myth?

It was at sixteen that I fell in love at first sight with Eric. Indeed, I was head over heels in love with him the very moment he was pointed out to me as the unbeaten champion of the college. I remember how my head reeled on the day I did not see his refreshing smile. How warm were his kisses, and how tight were his embraces! Yet, I cannot tell whether I fell headlong in love with his smile, his kisses or his sinewy arms that enveloped me repeatedly at our rendezvous at Harkness Beach. Or was it his championship and fleetness of feet that attracted me to him? And he too vowed that he loved me the moment he saw me first, but he could not say whether it was my innocent face that enticed him, or my favourite red skirt that bewitched him.

Anyhow, our love developed into what seemed to challenge eternity in its duration. And yet, what an irony of fate! The very moment I was introduced to Rob it vanished into thin air. Rob's sparkling eyes held me in thrall within the twinkling of an eye. Perhaps it was Eric's long absence due to the Olympic Meet at Calcutta, that did the trick! I persuaded myself into thinking that my first experience had not been true love, but just a girlish infatuation, and that my love for Rob would be genuinely flowing forever like Tennyson's Brook.

At least, that is what we promised to each other on our weddingnight, because at

that time we were both disciples of the mighty Shakespeare who made countless numbers of his heroes and heroines fall in love at first sight and remain true to their love-idols till the end of existence. Of course, we did not exert ourselves to speak more as we remembered Rosalind's lines,

*"Very good orators, when they are out will spit,
And for lovers lacking matter,
the cleanest shift is to kiss."*

Yet, perhaps, it is after the kisses have lost their novelty, and the lips have lost their alluring glow that tragedy begins!

Soon after the honeymoon, our love dwindled into irksome criticism of each other. When he taunted me that my beauty was comparable to that of a golliwag's, I retorted: "You forget saying a few months back that I was the embodiment of your heart's sweetest desire! Your love is just skin-deep, and your gallantry is all meant for your new steno who is the painted doll of Maxfactor Studio."

This constant bickering ended in a divorce. Then I realised that it had not been true love

Is Love At First Sight A Myth?

but just physical attraction for each other, as he was as tall, dark and handsome as I had ever hoped that my husband should be, and I had the lovely dimples and glowing lips which he adored in any woman.

In the breathing time I had at my disposal now, I argued to myself that dramatists like Sheridan and novelists like Marie Corelli who make their characters fall in love at first sight perhaps do not write about their life after marriage, as they do not want so reveal how such lovers have numberless misunderstandings which they hide from the gaze of prying eyes, just as the presence of the skeleton in the cupboard is never revealed to the visitors. Besides, when authors aspiring to distinction take up their pen, they describe events which are out of the ordinary rut of existence. "They lived happily ever after," is more an expression of an ideal than the true portrayal of facts in real life!

Yet, in spite of all my musing over the rare chances of falling in love at first sight and retaining that passion through life, I fell for Mac the moment I saw him at the May Ball at the Taj. He seemed to reach the pinnacle of perfection (in my imagination) as he danced with me gracefully in Victor Silvester style. From the hall we glided to the balcony, and as he fingered my diamond necklace, I longed for him to let his fingers travel a little further!

I forgot that once again familiarity would breed contempt,

and started dating with him, each time adorning myself with as much gold as possible for he was wont to move in high society. I vowed to be true to him ever and anon when he made a similar declaration to me. We seemed to take to each other as flowers take to bees, and as he rained loving kisses and heart-warming hugs, the lesser did I care for the rest of mankind that branded him a gold digger.

The wedding bells chimed. The twins began to cry the nights through, till at last Mac shouted one night, "To hell with you and your twins!"

I retorted, "Yes, but a year ago weren't you the one who said, 'I'll follow you to heaven or hell and never part from you sweetheart.' Now I understand that it was my gold that attracted you then."

"Yes, yes, I didn't have any true love for you. I repeat—to hell with you and your twins!"

I took up the challenge as I had ceased loving him. But I went not to hell, as a kindly neighbour offered me her roof. Getting a divorce was easy as Mac's flirtations with Lady Pembroke's daughter became the talk of the town. He was reported to have said repeatedly, "She'll make a dream wife," as Lady Pembroke had trained her in the old style of looking after the comforts of her husband in every way, and never to argue with him.

I mused, "Perhaps that old type of training accounted for greater wedded felicity in days gone by." But I was not at all

sure whether it would bring true happiness in Mac's home. However, that was not my affair.

In my friend's library was a copy of *Citadelle*. As I read it, I identified myself with the heroine, and became a believer in the saying that the first quarrel ends in a more lasting love than before. Then I remembered that Jane Austin's masterpiece of character, Elizabeth Bennet, started her relationship with Darcy with a determination to oppose him tooth and nail. Anna Karenina impressed me in a similar manner. On the other hand was the true story of Eisenhower falling in love at first sight and remaining true to his first love right till the present. Besides, at that time, I saw two lovely pictures—*A Bird of Paradise* and *The Prince Who Was A Thief*—which once again made me a believer in Cupid's arrow striking hardest at the first stroke. Nor was *A Place in the Sun* less impressive in showing me that love kindled at first sight does not fly through the window when poverty knocks at the door or prison bars hold the beloved in their grasp.

Right enough, my heart was tickled soon by poverty-stricken Victor. Nay not only was it tickled, but it actually leapt up to his, as spontaneously as Wordsworth's heart leapt up when he beheld the rainbow in

the sky. That was true romance—love at first sight when there was no wealth nor special physical charm on either side, as I had grown flabby since the birth of the twins. Indeed, we were whole-heartedly in love. This, I believed, was a heavenly union, ordained by the Almighty and envied by the angels.

However, a few months after our marriage, the evil eyes cast by the angels resulted in my being disgusted with the drudgery at home as Victor could not afford a single servant. I had not realised before that I was neither a home-maker, nor was I prepared to sacrifice my comforts for his convenience. On the other hand his love ended in smoke, drinks and their accompanying evils. I was on the horns of a dilemma. A slap and a kick finally made me decide to resort to the Matrimonial Court for the third time.

It was with difficulty that I obtained the divorce, and that gave me food for thought. At last I have learnt to put my full trust in R. C. Hutchinson's dictum that true lasting love is a plant of slow growth, as it involves not only mutual tolerance and perfect understanding of each other, but also readiness to oblige the other and willingness to sacrifice for the partner we accept "for better and for worse."

He took his best girl to tea in a restaurant. Half-way through he looked at her and smiled "You're gorgeous," he said. She seemed peeved. "I may possess a hearty appetite," she said, "but no one could truthfully call me gorgeous, dear."



The Reformed Thief

(By Mrs. Rama Srinivasan)

"Govindan, Govindan," called out Mr. Rao, as he returned home from his walk. But there was no reply to his call. No pattering sound of approaching footsteps reached his ears nor did the smiling face of Govindan greet his sight. The house was dark and silent and seemed to confirm his absence.

"Hey, Govindan!" shouted Mr. Rao once again from the verandah, but only his voice disturbed the silence reigning in the house. Doubt assailed him and he pushed open the closed door and entered the house. He switched on the hall light every thing was quiet, too quiet and undisturbed. He hurried up to his bedroom, dreading at the same time, to see the sight he was afraid might greet him there. He put on the light, and as he surveyed the room, he felt a dull pang in him which grew sharper each moment.

The boxes lay open and some clothes were strewn about in a disorderly manner. When he inspected the almirah he found that all his valuables were missing. The bedside table seemed strangely bare without the clock which had occupied it for so many years. His bunch of keys was lying on the floor and with another pang of fear he opened his iron cash box, and of course the five hundred rupees he had

withdrawn from the bank was missing also.

Extremely distressed, Mr. Rao staggered to a chair and sat down. Oh, what had Govindan done! How could he betray the trust placed in him in such a flagrant manner! Mr. Rao felt miserable at what had happened. And after all, who but he himself was to be blamed for this? His wife had repeatedly warned him that some such thing was bound to occur, but he had laughed at her fears. Knowing Govindan's past career and record as he did, he should have known that this was inevitable. What a failure, what a miserable failure, his experiment had turned out to be!

Govindan's father had been a professional pickpocket who had successfully eluded the police all through his career. When he was past his prime and his faculties were no longer what they used to be, he decided to quit the profession while the going was good. He had had a few hair-breadth escapes from the grasp of the servants of law, and he had no desire to spend the last days of his life behind iron bars. He had put by enough for this rainy day, and now retreated to some remote village, posing as a retired Government servant. Here he was looked upon as a