



**HADLEY'S**

**ROMANCE  
BOOK.**

EDITED BY  
MRS. JANE HADLEY.

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# HADLEY'S Romance Book

A JOURNAL TO STIR THE MIGHTY PASSIONS

VOL. II, No. 2

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 2025.

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA.

## A RIGHT HONORABLE SOLDIER

BY JANE HADLEY.

### II.

*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

*Friday, October 18, 1861*

THE dancing was lovely. Cate knew this intellectually as she watched from the benches lining the walls. All the boys cut a smart figure in their uniforms while the loyal ladies of Pittsburgh were resplendent in their best wool and silk, their hoops flouncing about like puffs of dandelion fluff in a late spring breeze. There were many lovely young girls, and Henry was an eager partner, doing his best to engage a young lady for every single dance despite a considerable amount of competition. He led his partner with as much grace as possible given that they were dancing a polka, and it was basically just turning and hopping.

Cate spent the duration of the dance watching him while she flipped self-pityingly through memories in her mind; of him squatting during drill to pick up a charge he'd dropped; of his thighs bare while shuffling into his uniform; of his lips ghosting against her skin; of him straining against her as she pulled him off. She should have taken him up on his "dance lesson." Surely there must be a private place somewhere in this enormous market house. She missed his touch. And she hated that he was passing it out so liberally to every adorable little chit who batted her eyelashes at him.

When the polka concluded, Cate sighed and tried to look as unapproachable as possible. Her strategy thus far had been inexcusable rudeness, but her capacity for it was wearing thin. She had no idea what it was—she was doing everything she could to look sullen and surly, but it seemed the younger girls of the group didn't find that very off-putting, because she kept

getting giggling teenage girls trying to get her to strike up a conversation with them.

This break in the music was no different, it appeared. Miss Loy, escorted by Hower off the dance floor, attached herself to another girl with fine, white-blond hair in a blue print wool, and walked straight toward Cate.

"Good evening, Private Smith was it?" Miss Loy said. Cate nodded churlishly as she begrudgingly stood. She wasn't a complete boor to remain seated when approached by a lady. "I'd like to introduce you to my friend and neighbor, Miss Kincaid."

"How do you do," Cate said, taking the girl's hand and receiving a charming giggle. Miss Kincaid was short, a full half foot shorter than Cate, and she wouldn't put her any older than sixteen. Behind her, Cate caught a glimpse of Henry returning from the dance floor with his partner, a round-featured brunette whose silhouette bore some impressive proportions. Cate decided much of it was hip and bust padding in spite of the lively bouncing polka having previously suggested otherwise.

"Miss Loy," Henry greeted with a smile after leaving his previous partner with her companions. "I believe I have you for the next dance?"

"Oh, yes, La Tempête!" Miss Loy replied with a grin.<sup>1</sup> She had lovely teeth. She and Henry would make a whole family of children with perfectly straight, clean teeth. Cate took a perverse pleasure in the proportion of misery that thought delivered.

"I love La Tempête!" Miss Kincaid pouted, her eyes darting sidelong at Cate. "But I sadly am not engaged for this one."

Miss Loy, Miss Kincaid, and Henry all looked at Cate. Cate blinked. "I, uh, I don't think I've ever danced La Tempête before. What is it?"

Miss Loy's eyes narrowed slightly, but her smile stayed strong. "It's a wonderful set dance! It couldn't be simpler, it's really only two figures repeated with different couples. It's such a delight. Oh, Adaline, we must find you a partner so we can be in a set together."

Cate's ears perked at that. Set dances were social dances, where partners danced in sets of usually four or even eight people. Partners were exchanged and returned in simple steps, the idea being to get folks interacting with as many others as possible. It was an excellent way to get all the gossip efficiently. If this were a multi-couple set dance, Cate would dance largely with Miss Kincaid, but she would also dance with Miss Loy and, depending on the set dance, the other gentleman too.

As the two girls made a show of looking around the room for a partner for Miss Kincaid, Cate caught Henry's eye and held it.

"Say, Miss Kincaid," she said, only tearing her eyes away from Henry to look at the girl after she'd turned. "Would you be so kind as to allow me to have this dance?"

Miss Kincaid grinned, and Miss Loy smiled with great satisfaction.

"Why, yes, Private Smith, I would be delighted," Miss Kincaid said, setting her gloved hand in Cate's. Cate gave Miss Kincaid a small half-smile, then glanced up at Henry again. He was watching her carefully, his eyes slightly narrowed, but she couldn't tell quite what he was thinking. It thrilled her.

On the dance floor, they arranged themselves across from one another, one couple facing the other. Two other couples joined them—one was an officer and a matron, the other pair led by Robinson, grinning and looking flushed enough that Cate suspected some spirits were being passed around under the table.

"Sidle down, Schaefer," Robinson insisted, taking up the place across from Miss Kincaid and shoving Henry and Miss Loy down such that Cate was now kitty-corner from him. Apparently Robinson had little interest in being across from the matron, which really shouldn't have gotten under Cate's skin, but it did. As she glared at him, Miss Loy took the liberty of explaining the dance to the group.

"Each figure will start with greeting your opposite," she said, gesturing between the couples facing each other. "Then we'll chassez and exchange places with the couple to our right or left."

Just then, the quartet of instrumentalists struck up the beginning bars of the dance. Miss Loy opened her mouth wordlessly for a moment and then flapped her left hand. "Don't worry, you'll pick it up easily."

Cate grimaced and took Miss Kincaid's gloved hand in hers.

"Leave everything to me, Private Smith," her dance partner said assuringly. "I'll guide you."

Miss Kincaid's eyelashes fluttered, doing nothing for the state of Cate's grimace. Henry snorted back a laugh and did his best to smooth it over with a gentlemanly nod to Miss Loy as they stepped forward and back with the rhythm of the music, honoring the person opposite them with a nod. The matron to Cate's left was older, her braided and looped hair streaked with gray, but her smile was demure and her silk plaid dress fine. It took Cate a moment to realize that her partner was none other than Captain Noah. Cate blinked and tried to focus on what was to be done.

"We pass in front," Miss Kincaid murmured, and she and Cate chasseyed to the left in front of Captain Noah and his partner. "Then return behind."

Cate did so. Then they greeted their opposite again. Cate's opposite was Robinson's partner, a young woman with a mouth that curled either in pleasure or disdain (she wasn't quite sure which).

"Right-hand star," Henry directed then, and the music moved so fast, Cate would have missed it if Henry hadn't reached out and snatched her hand in his. The ladies grasped hands over top of Henry and Cate's, and they circled.

She wished it was just that she'd been surprised, but the feel of his hand in hers after the better part of the last week spent unable to touch one another, even in the most trivial of ways, sent a tingle of sensation up her arm. Neither of them had gloves, and the sensation of his calluses were warm and smooth and dry. Cate couldn't help but lock eyes with him.

"Now left," he said and turned abruptly, offering her his left hand this time. Cate scrambled to turn and offer him her left hand, quite off beat by this point. She glanced over at Miss Kincaid, who was turning demure circles with Robinson. Apparently this dance was one that ensured one danced scarcely at all with one's partner.

"Circle four," Henry instructed, and the four in the center grasped hands and spun like a wheel. Cate held his gaze opposite her—she was dependent on his instructions was all—and a small smile quirked at the corners of his mouth. When they returned to their places, Miss Kincaid's hand was







waiting for Cate's, and she said, "Now greet your opposite and pass through. There, see, couldn't be easier!"

Cate's feet were already carrying her through the steps as she acknowledged an annoying desire to stay in this set, so that she might grasp hands with Henry once again. She looked at him over her shoulder as she fell into the figure from the top, greeting her opposite rather poorly, looking as she was away from her. Henry was looking back at her too. When he caught her eye, he grinned. Cate swallowed hard. What the hell was she doing? She wrestled her mind to focus on the dance.

The sets proceeded down the line, the couples who made it to the end of their line waiting when needed, then retreating back up to the head of the line to continue the form. It was such a simple dance that after a few rounds, it scarcely took any concentration to repeat the movements.

Cate made a point to grip the hands of the other soldiers in each set firmly, setting her opposite hand at her back in a most gentlemanly fashion. Several of the girls she greeted as her opposite delivered her coy smiles, which was utterly flummoxing. While largely passing unnoticed or willfully ignored as a woman, she seemed to make not only a passable young man, but an appealing one. It was baffling.

Once the initial discomfiture of that realization had settled, Cate began to wonder what would happen if she engaged with this female notice. In the next set, she caught the eye of her opposite, a girl scarcely twenty, with chestnut brown curls rolled and pinned behind her ears. She held the girl's gaze from under her brows, and the girl responded with a slow smile. This was outrageous. Surely, Cate did not make an attractive boy. How could feminine plainness translate to male allure?

The song went on, repeating through the figure set after set, until she and Miss Kincaid ended up at one end of the line and began to proceed back down it in the opposite direction. Cate grew increasingly bold with her newfound boyish charm, adding a sly grin to her arsenal and even taking the liberty of glancing one girl up and down, which earned her a soft oh of parted lips. While not precisely her taste, she did find herself enjoying the attention.

Such was her line of thought when she reached out kitty-corner for the right-hand star and looked up to find she grasped Henry's hand again. His head was tilted to the side, and he looked at her with incredulous amusement. Cate regarded him with wide eyes and lips pressed together, trying hard not to laugh. His hand was warm and solid in hers and this time, she was right on beat with the music as they turned and grasped left hands, spinning opposite. She'd been so

caught up playing with flirtatious glances that she found herself applying the expression on Henry without thinking. She could see his Adam's apple bob in his throat as he swallowed, and she smiled impishly.

The figure went all too fast, and before she knew it, they had passed through again, on to the next set of couples. It wasn't long after that—perhaps a figure or two more—before the quartet concluded the song with a tag ending, and Cate was bowing to Miss Kincaid.

Her dance partner regarded Cate with a self-satisfied grin. "See, didn't I tell you? So easy, and so much fun!"

Cate looked at the floor sheepishly. "I suppose."

"Now, there's still at least three dances left before we must see you off. Please don't disappoint the ladies of Pittsburgh by sitting the rest of the night out." Miss Kincaid's blue eyes lingered on Cate's for a moment longer than seemed polite. Cate blushed—not because she resented the attention but because she realized she had absolutely no idea what to do with it now that the dance music had ended, and she was forced to make polite conversation. Luckily, Henry approached just then with Miss Loy.

"Private Smith, I had no idea you were such an accomplished dancer," Miss Loy gushed.

"Indeed, Smith," Henry added, his scarcely contained amusement a little too thick to be entirely sincere. "Why haven't you told me you're a first rate stepper?"

Cate shook her head and rolled her eyes, hiding behind her usual mask of disdain. "Don't be absurd—Miss Loy said it herself, *La Tempête* couldn't be easier."

"And yet I just had my friend Lottie asking me to make an introduction to you," Miss Loy replied with a significant expression. "She's looking for a partner for the Scot's Reel, and you apparently caught her eye."

Cate blanched. The Scot's Reel was markedly more difficult, and she hadn't been at a dance where it had been done since the last time she'd been in Pennsylvania nearly a decade ago. As a girl.

"I'm terribly sorry to your friend, Miss Loy, but I'm afraid I don't know that one either," Cate demurred, glancing reproachfully at Henry, who was being entirely useless and chortling away under his breath.

"Well, I'm quite sure Lottie—or Miss Price, as you will soon know her—would be more than happy to teach you the steps," Miss Loy replied, then exchanged glances with Miss Kincaid. They both giggled, and Cate was forcibly reminded how simultaneously endearing and terrifying a group of girls giggling could be. The two of them tugged Cate's hand off

toward the center of the ballroom. Cate looked imploring over her shoulder at Henry, but he just doubled over laughing.

Miss Price, as it turned out, was the young lady Cate had delivered an appraising and (she hoped) appreciative once-over during *La Tempête*. This would teach her to play games with the hearts of girls. If she could have got away with it, she would have hid her face in her hands, but as it were, she was forced to face Miss Price, deliver a gracious introduction with flaming cheeks, and accept that to all appearances, she seemed nothing more than a bashful boy with great interest in this particular girl. It didn't help that Henry had seemingly rounded up Robinson and Hower to observe and snicker as Cate led Miss Price onto the dance floor, trying desperately to remember the steps well enough to execute them to speed.

She joined a circle of four couples and put her hand out to Miss Price absently. Miss Price laughed, smiling through puzzled brows as she sweetly turned Cate's hand over, setting her fingertips on Cate's palm. Cate flushed again, mortified that she'd offered her hand in the lady's position as a matter of habit. Just then, the fiddle struck up a lively tune and the group of them were all bouncing on tiptoe, their feet shuffling sevens-and-threes in a circle. Cate could scarcely keep her feet under her as they moved back and forth and then turned straight into a ladies' right-hand star, the gents on the outside in open position. Cate knew only enough about this dance to make it mortifyingly confusing to dance the male position. The couples turned as one, bringing the gents in to circle a left-hand star. Cate scarcely had taken her opposite's hand before the group broke into a grand chain. She felt a rather visceral understanding of why it was called a reel.

Cate was winded at the end of the dance, escorting Miss Price back to where they had met, handing her to her next partner and glaring daggers at Henry, Robinson, and Hower, who stood a little ways off snickering like they had scarcely made it out of primary school.

"I didn't see any of you attempting the Scot's Reel so don't even start," Cate snapped at them as she approached. That only caused them all to bust out in full guffaws. She held herself back from flashing a rude gesture at them.

"Smith—that was—" Hower gasped, unable to form two words together for laughing.

"Masterful, truly!" Robinson exclaimed, his full grin displaying all of his teeth. "Did you see him, Elias? Two left feet the whole way through, but Miss Price was still batting her eyelashes at him all the way off the dance floor."

Henry snorted loudly. Cate tipped her head back, imploring the ceiling to grant her patience.

"What's so funny?" Williamson. Of course. The other fellows ignored him.

"Well, this was truly first rate," Hower said, wiping tears from his eyes, "but I have a lady to lead in our final song of the evening."

"Oh, which is it again?" Williamson asked, and Henry snatched his dance card from his pocket to check.

"Soldier's Joy," he confirmed.<sup>2</sup>

"A fitting tribute, and I haven't even got a partner for it!" Robinson exclaimed woefully.

Couples made their way to the dance floor as the opening melody rang out from the fiddle. There were at least twice as many gents as ladies and given that the dance was titled *Soldier's Joy*, it was evident that Robinson wasn't the only one who felt left out. From the opposite side of the dance floor, some of the Hastings boys leapt out and partnered with one another, to the great amusement of the dancers on the floor. They joined the line, over-gesticulating to honor their opposite and their partner, kicking up their heels in exaggerated steps.

Williamson laughed aloud, and Robinson grinned.

"I'm not missing my *Soldier's Joy* just because there aren't any ladies left to dance with!" he exclaimed and snatched Williamson's hand, dragging him out to the dance floor laughing and protesting.

Cate's eyes flicked over to Henry, and his mischievous grin provoked her head to follow warily.

"Don't even—" she began, but he'd already snatched her hand, hauling her to the dance floor and assuming the other side of Williamson and Robinson's set.

The music was quick and lively, reminiscent of "The Sailor's Hornpipe" or other such tunes celebrating the jolly life of a man in service to his country. Henry kicked his heels high and let out a shout, leaping about as he dashed headlong into the ladies' chain as Cate tried her damndest not to fall over laughing. Their hands fell naturally together and despite being in the man's position in the set, Cate's fingers rested upon his palm like they belonged there.

When they passed through, he made a show of swinging his elbows in a dreadful imitation of a jig, and they weren't even through the figure twice before Cate fell into the steps with him, grinning in spite of herself and stomping her feet in time.

## III.

*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**Friday, October 18, 1861*

"We must stop meeting like this." Charley's voice floated playfully out of the darkness.

Henry huffed a laugh that was permeated with nervous anticipation. "What, in a shed?"

"That too." Her hand clutched his collar and yanked him into the ramshackle shed they'd found around the corner from the market house they quartered in. It had been surprisingly simple to slip out of one of the many doors as the regiment settled into the large hall to sleep. From there, it was a quick stride down an alley until they found the solitary shed behind a hotel.<sup>3</sup>

The shed was small, housing all matter of sundry tools needed to maintain the small courtyard and stables where guests of the neighboring hotel could put up their horses during their stay. The clapboards were so old and withered that the full moon shone brightly between them, illuminating the cobwebby interior in shades of blue-gray. It smelled like compost, an earthy combination of decaying weeds and horse manure. God, what Henry would give for a room in that hotel. Preferably one with a bed.

Charley kicked the door shut and pushed him up against it, her hands running down from his collar over his chest, pushing into his unbuttoned sack coat and making his voice hum with pleasure.

"You like my chest," he murmured redundantly. "Quite possibly more than I like yours, which is no small feat." His hands roamed in emphasis.

"Every man should learn gymnasticks," she replied with fervor, her teeth nipping at his jaw. "The loyal ladies of Pittsburgh agree. In a room where the ladies were outnumbered four to one, you still managed to have a full dance card."

Henry pulled her chest flush against his and exhaled a sigh of relief he hadn't realized he'd been holding in. He thrilled in the trap her body made of him against the door. "You could have too if you tried."

Charley snorted, and he realized the derisive response delivered self-deprecatingly annoyed him more than when it was aimed at him. He seized her head on either side of her face and pulled her in for a searing kiss.

*Hell*, how he'd missed this. The heat, the wet, the play of soft lips and intrusive tongues and nipping teeth. The way she sucked his lower lip between her teeth, hard enough for him to

feel her ardor but not enough to hurt. The heat of her, the firm weight of her pressing into him, the scent of her crowding out any of the more unpleasant aromas of the shed. It felt like a homecoming. It hadn't been more than a week since they'd kissed like this, but it felt like an eternity to live without something so simple and so necessary.

"That was curious, wasn't it?" she said as he whined at the loss of her mouth against his.

"What?"

"The ladies wanting to dance with me. I thought to myself, how does womanly plainness translate to appealing maleness?"

Henry blinked at her. "Are you joking?"

She jerked her chin down in a way he knew to be defensive. Oh boy.

"I know there were only a few ladies who seemed like they wanted to dance with me," she said in a Smithier tone than he'd have liked, "and I know a dance doesn't mean much in the grand scheme of things, but I can assure you I know what it feels like to be a wallflower and—"

"You were *magnificent*," Henry breathed more vehemently than he intended. "I'm confused by the assumption that you would be anything less than."

Charley shook her head and rolled her eyes. "Ugh, not this again."

"Yes, this again," he replied combatively. "I'll keep saying it until you get it into your head. You're not plain. You're ... enigmatic, and this evening was just proof that I'm not the only one who sees it. Those ladies saw someone who is striking and elegant—" Charley snorted. Henry lifted her chin with his fingertips and looked hard into her eyes. "—and dark and broody. You're beguiling. If I could have, I would have been right there with them vying for a place on your card."

Charley regarded him suspiciously from under her brows. "Would you, though? There were so many lovely girls—"

"Yes," Henry seized her shoulders in emphasis. "It made me *crazy* to see them receive your singular attention. My dance card was full because I like to dance, and I'm not afraid to ask. But if I could have my way, I would have rather spent the whole night with you."

Charley huffed a weak little laugh. "Thus, the shed."

Henry's hands skimmed down her arms and held her at the waist. "I'd have you in that hotel if I didn't think it would get us court martialled."

Charley hummed with pleasure, and it made Henry remember her whispering desperately how she wished he



could fuck her when he'd last made her come. "What I would give for a real bed..."

She kissed him again, a coaxing kiss full of desire and need and no small measure of mischief. She was distracting him from continuing to expound upon the full measure of his devotion. If he hadn't been so hard, he might have more stubbornly declared himself. It was appalling how committed she was to this belief that she was forgettable when it was so plain to him that she was goddamned *everything* worth wanting.

He let himself fall into sensation—her mouth on his, his hands pulling her in by the rear, her fingers yanking his shirttails out of his waistband to snake her hands underneath. Breath lingering warm on his cheek. The slip of her waist and the breadth of her shoulders under his palms. Her dark curls a tangle under his fingertips. The relentless press of her yielding cunt against his cock, made vague under layers of fabric, making her whispered words about fucking replay like some sort of siren song in his head. He wanted it so bad it made his balls ache, but he had no idea how to bring it up, so he settled for a breathless murmur, "How do you want me?"

Charley swore, her voice rough and raw. Her fingers clutched into the sides of his trousers as she ducked her head down and buried it in his neck with a frustrated groan. "I don't know how you expect me to answer that question," she whined.

"Very directly, I hope," he replied. "You had an easy enough time saying what you didn't want that time in the tent."

"That's different."

"How?"

"It was a precaution. To keep myself safe. This question, it's—"

"—What you told Robinson and all the other fellows to ask when they want to please a lady?"

"No—Well, yes, but—I didn't tell them to say *that*."

"What?"

"*How*'—Listen, Schaefer, for Chrissakes, asking 'what do you like' is a lot different than 'how do you want me,' you wanton little bastard." If there had been anything more than scant moonlight seeping through the cracks in the clapboards, Henry was certain he'd see her cheeks brightly flushed.

"Noted," he conceded and let a moment of silence stretch before he added, "So ... how *do* you want me?"

She looked up at him with a puzzling combination of grim mouth and wide, dark eyes that yearned. Her nostrils

flared with her elevated breaths, and the silence stretched again like the endless scream of a braking train.

"Charley," he murmured, touching her cheek softly with his fingertips, "what's wrong? I want to please you. Just tell me."

Her lips parted, softening her expression nearer to the side of want and farther from the grip of control she usually tried to seize it with.

"I ..." she said stiltedly. "God, Henry, you're killing me."

"Why?" he breathed.

"You damn well know why," she swore, seizing his collar in her hands. "Because I want you to fuck me more than I've ever wanted anything, and it's the only thing I can't have."

Henry licked his lips as his cock preened at her words. If only he could have found the goddamn French letter his father had given him. "There are ways—"

"No," she shook her head, her voice more a whimper than anything. "I can't risk it, I know I can't, but God, I want to and I need—" She took a shaking breath. "I want you to sit me up on that barrel over there, and fuck me with your fingers so hard I forget how much I want your cock inside me."

He was distantly grateful that the moonlight hid their flush because his flamed all the way down his neck and chest. Christ. If he'd known what kind of answer his question would bring ... well, he would definitely still have asked it. But *Christ*.

He seized her by her thighs, wrapping them around his waist, and carried her the few steps to the barrel in question. He pulled her trousers roughly to her knees and settled between them as he slicked his fingers in between her folds, sinking the tip of one finger into silky softness.

He kissed her neck, behind her ear, along her jaw, as he added another finger, then a third. She was so wet for him that three stretched smoothly inside her. She squeezed tight around him, and his cock screamed for attention, but he'd asked her how *she'd* wanted *him*. This was her desire. And when he'd fucked her well enough with his fingers to slake her lust, then he'd reap his reward. He was going to damn well earn this.

---

Goddamn Henry Schaefer and his fucking hands. Cate was draped boneless over the barrel, her head tossed back against the clapboard wall. Henry braced over her on one hand, the other lingering between her legs. His expression was singularly focused.

"Can you feel that?" she whispered breathlessly.

Henry looked up at her, brow furrowed.

"Here," she squeezed her thighs around his hand. "Can you feel my heartbeat?"

His exhale shook. He nodded, then leaned in and captured her lips with his. She'd yanked his trousers open at one point to feel his stiff piece in her hands as he made her fall apart, and now his cock jutted into her thigh, smearing moisture toward the place she most wanted him to sink it into. She bit his lip, harder than she meant to.

She was playing with fire. Even sated, she still was desperate for him to fuck her. She could have come fifteen times, and she'd still want it. She'd so enjoyed the feeling of being stretched, of being filled, in her former life. She had clutched her eyes shut and imagined it was enough to hold a marriage together. She'd been wrong, but it didn't make her miss the sensation any less.

She wanted to feel what it would be like, to be stretched and filled by this man for whom she harbored actual affection and mutual respect. It would be different to ride the cock of a man whose companionship she actually enjoyed, rather than squeezing her eyes shut and pretending she was with whichever man had caught the fancy of her escapist imagination that week. A bearded lumberman, the barber at the Winslow hotel, Mr. Plemer—anyone but Richard.

"Henry," she murmured. "How do you want me?"

His soft-focused eyes fixed on her. He blinked. "You're right. That is an unfair question."

"Quid pro quo, Schaefer."

"Oh God, I don't know. Your hands would do nicely."

Her fingers skittered over his velvety shaft. His hand shifted out of her way, sliding out from between her legs and gripping the crease where her thigh met her hip. "I don't want to just do nicely. I want to turn you inside out."

His voice hummed in his throat. "Well, obviously, I'd love to, um, have you as you said, but that's not an option, at least not right now."

"You're adorable." She snorted and gave his prick a firm pull. She loved how it made his face crumple with desire. "'Have.' I'm not convinced you can use that expression when you finger-fucked me on a barrel in an abandoned shed."

He shuddered. As much as it startled him to hear her speak so lewdly, she could feel how hard it made him. Which made her want to say more filthy things.

"What would 'have' entail, pray tell?" she cooed, fisting his cock and spreading the moisture at the tip over the head with her thumb.

"I don't understand what's confusing," he replied absently, his breath hot and shallow in her ear.

"I'm not confused. I just want to hear you say it," she growled. When he didn't reply, her hand stilled. She loosened

her grip, so that she just barely skimmed his skin, and he whimpered at the loss of contact. "I said, I want to hear you say it."

"I..." he murmured. He pulled back and looked at her. His face was wrecked, twisted with desire. "I want to..."

Her eyes were fixed on him.

"I want to have you under me. I want to fuck you and spend inside you, and I want to do it in a goddamn bed."

Her breath hitched in her chest. *Yes*. Her hand gripped him again, and she guided him closer. She wasn't thinking clearly. She curled her hips up, used her hand to sweep his cock firmly down between her folds, letting the swollen, blunt head slide over the nub of nerves that made her tremble, pressed it at her entrance. Felt her toes curl.

"Charley..." Henry's voice was thick and uncertain.

"I just finished my monthly," she gasped. "Nothing will happen."

"You—you said we can't..."

"Yes, but..." she whimpered. She squeezed her eyes shut, sparks of white dancing behind her lids. It wasn't right, how her fear and the knowledge that this was reckless sharpened her pleasure to a point. He'd made her come already, but she could feel the intensity building again, boiling up from where his cock pressed lightly at her slick and yielding entrance. She whined in helpless frustration, in wanting, in fear and shame too, in her lack of conviction.

The fact was ... this momentary pleasure could so easily lead to disaster if it resulted in a baby. She'd had resources in St. Anthony—alum and water, a private place to wash in or to insert a sponge soaked in the solution ahead of time. She had none of that here. All she had was the knowledge of when her monthlies were coming, enough trust that Henry would listen to her, and luck. And she'd just finished her monthly, not a day ago. There was no way she could conceive a child if he fucked her now.

"Henry, I am cautious," she said, trying to steady her breath, sound rational and controlled. "But trust me when I tell you that if we were to do it now, there'd be no consequence."

He looked into her eyes, searched for a moment. The pressure on her cunt made it hard to train her expression—she was so wet, it would take only the lightest of pressure from him to breach her—but she did her damndest. His eyes were desire itself.

"Okay," he breathed, "I trust you."

Cate pulled Henry into a kiss. At the same time, she tilted her hips and used her hand to guide his cock in. God, he

stretched her so well, sliding ever more smoothly as she worked him in inch by inch, slicking him as she went.

"Henry," she gasped as she let go and his hips took charge. "Oh God, Henry." She pushed her nose into his neck, breathed in his grassy scent, that smell of comfort and desire and *Henry*. Closed her eyes and let herself unravel.

Her legs were around his waist and her thighs already trembled. It was happening fast. She clung to his shoulders for leverage as her hips pushed to meet his with each stroke. The pressure of his groin against hers each time he drove all the way in, spearing her, made incoherent noises erupt from her lips. She had a passing worry that he'd dislike her making too much noise, but then he let out a gravelly moan too, and she abandoned any proprietary restraint she'd been holding on to.

His mouth was against her ear now, forming her chosen name in a desperate hush just for her. His hands gripped her hips, pulled her onto him with each thrust. Her thighs trembled, all her muscles seized and swelled, and she gasped in his ear as she began to come.

"Oh dear god," Henry gasped and he spasmed in her arms. He was coming too. Inside her. The heat of it, the intimacy and the taboo, all pushed her anew and her crisis kept swelling, her voice cracking on the intensity of it. Oh, this was bliss. This was perfect. Everything she wanted and everything she'd dreamed it could be. God, she could do nothing but ride this cock for the rest of her days and die happy.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. La Tempête was taught to me through the [Beadle's Dime Ballroom companion manual](#), digitized by the Library of Congress.
2. Watch the [Soldier's Joy dance](#) in action. Several of these other dances are also likely filmed and uploaded for maximum visualization.
3. Unclear if Black Bear Hotel was there in the 1860s, but it was in 1884 and that's as close as I could get in [digitized Sanborn Maps](#).

## NOVELTIES FOR JUNE

#### RIDDLE

2. By me extended commerce reigns,  
And rolls from shore to shore;  
I mark the poles in azure plains,  
Nor dread the tempest's roar.

Relying on my friendly aid,  
The sailor smiles serene;  
Where the clouds the blue expanse o'erspread,  
And suns arise in vain.

Yet mean my form and low my birth,  
No gaudy tints I show,  
Drawn from my fertile mother earth,  
Through purging fires I go,

Till fashioned by the artist's skill,  
He ties the marriage chains,  
When I my destined ends filfill,  
And long my love remains.

Answer to previous: Teeth

#### RECEIPTS &c.

TO PRESERVE RHUBARB.—To one and a quarter pound of rhubarb add one pound of sugar, half an ounce of bitter almonds blanched and chopped very fine, half the peel of a lemon also chopped very fine; boil all together rather longer than other fruit, or till it will set firm. If the fruit is not quite young, the sticks should be peeled, being first wiped quite dry.

RHUBARB JAM.—To seven pounds of rhubarb add four sweet oranges and five pounds of sugar. Peel and cut up the rhubarb. Put in the thin peel of the oranges and the pulp, after taking out the seeds and all the whites. Boil all together for one hour and a half.

#### NAMES FOR MARKING

For the incorrigible in your life, one who is breaking your heart and shaking your confidence daily.



For the sweet one, for whom good times have never been so good. (So good. So good. So good.)



## HADLEY'S ARMCHAIR

This article comes to us from Godey's Ladies Book (June, 1861), giving a glimpse of verisimilitude to our gendered experiences past and present. While our dialogue has indeed changed along the interim years, one must puzzle at the degree to which it echoes similar sentiments across time:

**WOMAN IN ADVERSITY.**—Women should be more trusted and confided in as wives, mothers, and sisters. They have a quick perception of right and wrong, and without always knowing why, read the present and future, read characters and acts, designs and probabilities, where man sees no letter or sign. What else do we mean by the adage "mother wit," save that woman has a quicker perception and readier invention than man? How often, when man abandons the helm in despair, woman seizes it, and carries the homeship through the storm! Man often flies from home and family to avoid impending poverty or ruin. Woman seldom, if ever, forsook home thus...

Woman should be counselled and confided in. It is the beauty and glory of her nature that it instinctively grasps at and clings to the truth and right. Reason, man's greatest faculty, takes time to hesitate before it decides; but woman's instinct never hesitates in its decision, and is scarcely ever wrong where it has even chances with reason. Woman feels where man thinks, acts where he deliberates, hopes where he despairs, and triumphs where he falls. *Philadelphia, PA.*

## LITERARY NOTICES

~Two delectable tales set against midsummer festivals.~

**LUST AT FIRST SIGHT! GRUMPY/SUNSHINE!**  
**ANIMAL ANTICS!**

**THE DEED WITH THE DUKE**  
**BY SRI SAVITA.**

**SHE HAS THE DEED.**

Camelia Parikh is a fallen woman trying to start over. When she wins the deed to a cottage in a card game, she believes her luck has finally changed. A charming coastal village seems like the perfect place to begin again, far from London and her romantic regrets. That is, until the stern Duke of Wednesbury arrives to claim the deed and cottage as his.

**HE HAS THE TITLE.**

Raaz Panchal, the new Duke of Wednesbury, is searching for the missing deed to his late father's beloved cottage, and he

travels to the countryside to investigate. But once there, he learns the home is not vacant, and a beguiling woman claims it's her property now. When her deed proves genuine, Raaz prepares to leave, but then fate collapses the stable roof. Duty to his father's memory—and certainly not a pair of alluring amber eyes—compels him to help.

**TOGETHER, CAN THEY HAVE IT ALL?**

Camelia cautiously accepts the duke's assistance, but between a bold badger, a moonlit waltz, and dangerous late-night wagers, it's impossible to keep her distance from the devastatingly handsome duke. When they surrender to temptation, she can no longer ignore their differences in station or the mistakes of her past, but her traitorous heart already wishes for a future that's surely out of reach.

**A DUCAL UNSTARCHING! VIRGIN HERO!**  
**ONE-NIGHT-STAND MEETS AGAIN!**

**A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DUKE**  
**BY COLLEEN KELLY.**

WHEN Bitty Langham ran away from home at sixteen with a company of traveling players, plenty of other people predicted a future of disgrace and despair for her, but she never believed in it—until now. Jobless, loveless, she's en route to a staid future as a teacher in a girls' school, just the sort of proper existence she's always dreaded. So when she meets a handsome stranger outside a coaching inn, she can't resist the temptation to enjoy one last midsummer taste of her old wild and reckless life.

Rex—just Rex, for now—never succumbs to temptation. He plans. He practices. He tries so hard to meet the world's expectations. But the beautiful, flirtatious, remarkably sweet woman who approaches him at a village festival sparks an attraction impossible to resist. And a long, sultry night together unlocks feelings he's never allowed himself before.

Impossible to part as strangers in the morning. And yet that's what they both promised to do... until fate brings them together again in the most unlikely, unlucky of circumstances. Now they will have to see if a midsummer night's magic can withstand the harsh light of social convention.

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