



"An actor is too great a man to marry; too much adored."

# MEN

## *I Would Be Afraid to*

# MARRY

*The Confession of One Who Vamps Them in the Movies, but Isn't So Sure About Them in Real Life, as Told to*

**BRENDA UELAND**

*Pictures by GARRETT PRICE*



"Not a sailor, if you like to have a man around the house."

"NITA NALDI, can you give me some advice on marriage?"

"Yes, I can. In fact, I set up to be quite an authority."

"Good. What kind of a man would you be afraid to marry? Tell me."

"Well, let me think for a minute; then I will begin to catalogue them, although that is never fair, because some men are all-this-with-a-dash-of-that—cowards except in battle; generous to everybody except their wives. I know that. Still I can classify them as husbands pretty well."

"State your qualifications as an authority."

"Well, I have had a hard life. My parents were poor. My life has not been sheltered. I was a chorus girl. Lots of men have made love to me. Then, many women have confided in me. I am quite good-looking. Or don't you think so?"

"I think you are a beauty," I answered.

"That's nice, because I am never sure. . . . And I am very sociable; all in all, I have seen a great deal of the world. Well, shall I tell you the kind of man I would be afraid to marry?"

"Yes."

"All right. All ready, come in, as we say. An actor or a theatrical director, because they are always among a lot of vampish women. Too much temptation."

"But I should think that would be a satisfaction to you. You could always be proving your own superior fascination."

"Too hard work. Besides, when a man is vamped by some woman, he can't hit her over the head with a rolled newspaper. He's got to be chivalrous. Besides, I am not so sure of my own charms as I make out to be."

"But would you mind, Nita, if the man you married flirted with other women, though really, deep down (as he would certainly say), he cared only for you? I am sure that would be very narrow of you."

"Would I mind?" she asked, and then she made answer in pantomime by drawing an imaginary gun and shooting the philandering



*Nita Naldi, screen vamp extraordinary, who tells the world herewith what she has learned about MEN.*

"So, nix on the actor or director," she continued, "no matter how nice. As for the other professions, it is good sense not to marry a soldier, or a sailor, or an arctic explorer, or a traveling salesman—that is, if you marry because you like to have a man around the house. On the other hand, for Heaven's sake, don't marry one who is at home all the time, like a minister or a writer. That is the worst fate of all. But now to go into character."

"Avoid a bossy man; particularly if you are very easy-going yourself. But—listen to this carefully, because I am going to tell you the great underlying difficulty and sadness of marriage—to wit: it is impossible for two people to be equally unselfish. One is always at least a hair more willful than the other. Consequently, that one is always pulling the other around by the nose. The better-natured one (we'll say it is the woman this time, just for the devil of it) finds herself associating with the friends, eating the food that her husband likes; getting up, retiring, going home from dances when her husband wants to; refusing invitations that bore him, when all the time she would like to go herself very much. And so on and so on."

"This is hellish and gets to be insufferable. If the wife has any spirit at all, at last she elopes with the chauffeur or runs away and goes to work in a steam laundry and finds it a great relief. 'I feel, somehow, so free, so independent!' she says to herself as she staggers home at night to her windowless room over the delicatessen store. 'Glorious to have your own money to spend,' she says, laying out a quarter for some potato chips and a pickle."

"Now, for instance," Nita Naldi continued, "I consider myself the best-natured woman in the western hemisphere." (She winked.) "Always anxious to please. But even I, even dear little me, if the man I marry, turns out to be even better-natured than I am

(which I hope he does), I will probably have him on the jump every second—for glasses of water, shawls, cigarettes, fans, aspirin tablets. I'll keep him waiting at every turn at least

### NITA NALDI'S MATRIMONIAL DON'TS

*DON'T marry a man whose occupation is such that he is surrounded by women who think he's "just adorable"—in other words, an actor or producer.*

*DON'T marry a soldier or a sailor or a traveling salesman—that is, if you marry, in the first place, because you want to have a man around.*

*DON'T marry a minister or a novelist, one who is at home all day. This is the worst torment of all, and will age you prematurely.*

*DON'T marry to be entertained. The very fact you are marrying at all means you want to give up an interesting life for one that is agreeable in the opposite manner—peaceful.*

*DON'T marry one who has too high ideals of womanhood, as he will always be telling you what to wear.*

*DON'T marry a man who has risen from the working class, because he will never help with the dishes.*

*DON'T marry a bossy man, unless you are a good boss yourself.*

*DON'T marry a male flirt. This is not only a distressful life but it indicates the man is selfish and vain and has other insufficiencies.*

*DON'T marry a man like John Barrymore, or a great financier, or a statesman, even if you get a chance. But a Henry Ford might be all right. And why?*

husband of her mind. The famous actress evidences energy continually while she talks. She kicks, stamps, laughs, tells jokes, does a dance step, curvets, imitates persons, swears unctuously, and jangles her bracelets.

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]



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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE THIRTY-FIVE] three-quarters of an hour. But if he is ever five minutes late, what will I do? The minute I see that apologetic, considerate look on his face I'll throw myself around the room screaming.

"But, contrariwise, if the man I marry turns out to be just a hair more selfish and temperamental than myself, I'll spend my life being tactful and mousy, putting pillows behind his head. So, don't marry a bossy man."

"Is there any way you can tell whether or not they are bossy before you marry?"

"Oh, yes," she replied, with a toss of her head. "When you have said that you would like to have dinner at noon, because you are very hungry, he works it around so that you eat a sandwich at a drug store, because he has, as yet, no appetite himself. Or when, after you have indicated that you are wild to go to a musical comedy, you find yourself at a chamber concert that he is very much interested in.

"Of course, in your romantic imagination," she explained, "an amiable man seems to you to be despicable and a worm. But not necessarily. Garibaldi, for instance, was always disappointed in a fight unless he was outnumbered. One evening he saw a girl he liked in a ranch house in South America. An hour later he swung her on his horse and galloped off with her. They were married. And ever afterward he was a docile, even an abject, husband—so they say.

"BUT to return to the subject," Miss Naldi said. "Sometimes you can tell a bossy man by his looks. Bossiness comes from knowing so well what you want and being uninterested in what other people want. These are good talkers, smart, entertaining, usually handsome and big, and knowing so definitely what they want and being so little deterred by what other people want, they are very aggressive, particularly in this love business. They make love quickly, well, and energetically, but they have no romantic feeling. They never like a woman unless she is youngish and beautiful. But enough of that kind. All right, take my advice and don't marry one of them.

"Next, don't marry a man who has too high ideals of womanhood. These can't think straight at all. Before marriage, such a man is attracted to you because you use a lipstick, swear, smoke cigarettes; but after he marries you he never rests until he has reduced you to a solid matron in an armor of stays and brassieres and health shoes. This is the kind of a man who bites himself in the arm like a rattlesnake every time you suggest that you think it would be kind of nice to have bobbed hair. And

then, usually, when you are fifty-five or so and have at last become everything he approves of and the chairman of the refreshment committee of the local woman's club, he ditches you for a girl who uses a lipstick, swears, and smokes.

"Then I think I have to warn you about self-made men, those who have risen from the working class. The working class is all right, you understand, and I can't conceal the fact that I sprung from there myself. But look out for its traditions—to wit: that women should rustle the grub and do all the menial work. Most workingmen, you will find, feel it is beneath their dignity to give their wives a hand with the dishes.

"On the other hand, a man who has been brought up in a gentle and aristocratic family makes no such scrupulous distinction between man's work and woman's work. If you marry such a one, and happen to be hard up, he is not in the least ashamed to push the baby carriage or to do a washing.

"DON'T marry a philanderer. They are no good as husbands. In the first place, if you are narrow minded, like me, it is a very restless life. And in the second place, if you have liberal views and try to be big about it, as they so pitifully say, why then the wear and tear on the nervous system is even harder.

"But there are other things to be said against philanderers. They are almost always self-centered and vain. That is why they flirt so much. Psychoanalysts say philandering is usually a sign that a man is really not so terribly virile after all. Subconsciously he is worried about this, and that is why he has to keep on proving to himself that women fall in love with him. I have seen several of these male flirts—very rich ones—who, at great trouble and expense to themselves, sought to establish reputations as *roués*. But I am told that at the back of it was a subconscious knowledge of some insufficiency.

"Don't marry a man who is sentimental about his mother. And so, you must look out for handsome Irishmen. It is a pity, because Irishmen seem to be the most attractive and promising of husbands—handsome, brave, witty, big, manly, likable, generous, and often with lots of money. But if the man's voice turns into a tenor tremolo when he speaks of his mother, think twice. As soon as such a one marries some poor girl he puts her in the same category with his mother. His eyes moisten when he speaks of her. 'Dearest little woman in the world.' But when you make inquiries, you find that she lives in Kansas, has nine children, and he hasn't seen her for

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]



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[CONTINUED FROM PAGE THIRTY-SIX]

six months. This almost religious sentiment about yourself as a wife is all very nice. But take it out to the corner and see what you can get for it!

"Don't marry a man who needs a lot of nursing and cheering up. This may be fun at first, but later it is exhausting—like living with a blotter. This sort of man is infantile. He is always wanting his wife to be a mother to him. Although he may be manly and imposing in appearance, you can always spot him because he has petulant moods. He pouts and sulks. If the conversation does not amuse him, or if it is not of his planning, he has a sort of manly tantrum; becomes morose; wags a foot impatiently, his eyes glazed. And if you marry him you will find yourself at every dinner party watching him uneasily all evening, leaning forward and calling out anxiously to him every now and then (because you see that he is about to have a mood), 'Dear, tell that story of Pat and Mike.'

"These infantile ones, understand me, are often very entertaining. But they are always sinking back into some funk or depression and then expecting their poor wives to extricate them from it—to work on them for hours at a time. 'Oh, Ed, you are a wonder!'

"ANOTHER thing, whenever you are ill you will find to your surprise that these infantile ones are disgusted with you. And they always dislike children, don't want to have any, and, if they do have children, are not nice and kind to them. The psychology of it is that, being infantile themselves, they are jealous of the attention that must be given to the children. See, I know all about it!

"And wait. I can think of other kinds not to marry. Avoid what is known as the 'interesting man.' I mean artists, radicals, writers, and especially poets. There is often something pretentious and egotistical about these—the kind who describe all untalkative business men as Babbitts, Rotarians, Elks. As far as that goes, a business man who is a Rotarian is usually a wise thing to tie up to, as he is apt to be cheerful and patient and to devote his life to making a living for his family. You see, these creative artists feel themselves superior to most people, and, so, especially licensed to have moods and to be snarky to their wives' relatives.

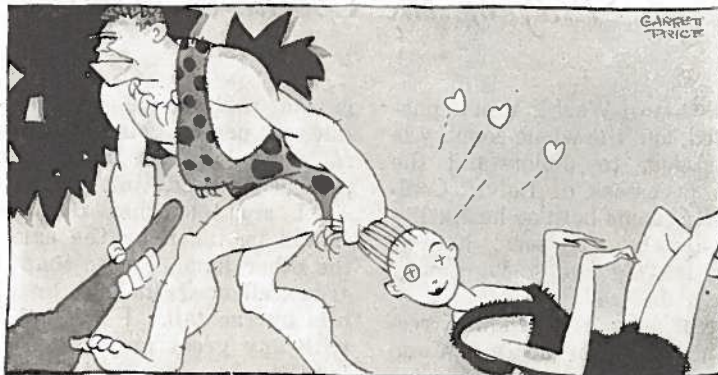
"I often hear girls say they would not marry such and such a man because, although a perfect peach and all that, he is not interesting. Well, that is no argument. The last thing for which to marry is to be entertained. And the very fact that you are marrying at all means that you want to give up an interesting life for one that is agreeable in just the opposite fashion—peaceful.

"But now, after all I have said about men, you will think I am down on them. But gosh! don't think that. You know me. Women are

just about the same. For every man I have described there are plenty of women just like him. And even if I have said certain men are to be avoided as husbands, they are all right as friends, or brothers, or dinner partners, or ice-men."

"Well, Nita Naldi, suppose I should suggest some men—John Barrymore?"

"I know him very well. But he's an actor,



"I adore cave men!"

you see, and is too great a man to marry; too much adored. No, I would never dare marry a man who was so pale or such a genius, no matter how much I loved him."

"Well, how about Rockefeller, or Morgan, or somebody like that?"

"The trouble with those iron-jawed financiers is that they are apt to be proud of the fact that they never had a vacation. No! They had better be avoided. I'll bet they teach their children to swim by throwing them into the water."

"How about a statesman or some other person prominent in public life?"

"Pretty good . . . except when you marry a prominent statesman you are condemned to be so much of a lady—so refined and repressed. That might be hard."

"Henry Ford?"

"Pretty good. He has a thoughtful, benevolent face. He could support you in a style to which you are not accustomed. An unpretentious, hard-working man who gives to charity. Yes, I think he'd be all right. Quite a catch.

"Oh," she went on, "there are thousands of men who would be delightful to marry if you could only get hold of the right one."

"Well, what kind?"

"Here it is. One who talks very little, and even then doesn't talk very well. Then his wife can do the talking, and that will be nice for her. But, although untalkative, he must not be morose; rather, kind and attentive to all who do talk; glad to listen.

"As for looks and build, I think he should be fairly athletic and well built, and skillful enough in a manly way; that is, not throw a ball like a woman. He should have large hands and feet, and although he need not be good looking he should have agreeable enough features.

"One very important thing, he should like work. Marry a good doctor or a good lawyer. These have had to have intelligence to get their degrees and, if successful, you can be sure they have a real taste for work. I mention this in order to warn you against the man who is always thinking up get-rich-quick schemes. Such a one, although he has all the earmarks of a live wire, is really lazy and is trying to avoid work. And he does not object to getting rich at the expense of others.

"As for architects, I think you must be a little careful about architects. Their get-up is against them and indicates vanity and temperament—I mean their Van Dyke beards;

the black ribbon hanging from the eyeglasses."

"But it seems to me, Nita Naldi, as though you believe you should not marry anyone unless you can soak him in every way."

"Well, it sounds so, doesn't it? But my argument simply is that, as it is probably less fun to be a wife than to be single, you might as well be on the safe side.

"Also," she added, "in fairness to you, I must tell you that such men are hard to find. They usually marry at twenty-three the first girl who is nice to them, and, being so patient and so convinced by their wives that they are selfish brutes, they stay married to the same woman forever. So (I have worked it all out) your chances of finding a perfect husband are much better after sixty because by that time one or two of them have been widowed."

"Have you been describing, Miss Naldi, the man you would like to marry?" I asked.

"Yes, I have. With this exception, that I like a man somewhat more

dashing. My personal idiosyncrasies come in here. I must explain, for instance, that I like very dark handsome men with slick hair who wear evening clothes like ambassadors. That is, I don't like fresh faced blondes in tweeds. Because I hate golf and that stuff. I am an indoor sport. One of those. I like men who look like Rudolph Valentino. Also I like them to be fierce and quarrelsome. Soldiers I adore! Mussolini! Cave men!"

"BUT is there such a thing? Have you ever seen one?"

"A cave man?" she repeated, as she reflected for several seconds.

"Let me think," she said. "I know that when I was a chorus girl I came upon a lot of ruffians. But I learned to swear. And it is true I could scare the worst of them; even those who never lit their cigars and had such thick red necks they could take their collars off over their heads without unbuttoning them." A comical, surprised look came into her face. "Come to think of it, there wasn't a bona fide cave man among them. Dear me!"

"There is," I suggested, "a cave man line."

"I know. I know. The kind which starts that hard breathing in taxicabs. Let me think." She scowled and seemed to examine her memory.

"No," she said, "you are right. Sooner or later in the fiercest cave man something turns up to disillusion you; maybe he's afraid of bees, or fears to open his eyes under water. And so it goes. Ah, well! Perhaps it is all for the best. So you have left me with a thought for the day, as they say in the Sunday schools."

"Well, Nita Naldi, now I must go. And thank you for all your views."

"Oh, don't thank me! Just profit by them."

"Good-by, Miss Naldi."

"Good-by, dear."

THE END



"Most workmen feel it is beneath their dignity to give a hand with the dishes."



"You must be a little careful about architects. Their get-up is against them."