

(An excerpt from a thesis, reprinted here on permission by the Graduate School.)

THE bachelor often finds himself involved with a woman—or women—in this stage of his life. He is attracted to the opposite sex, and, in turn, attracts them. Many of his problems, mental, moral, social, financial, etc., are therefore concerned with women. How he meets his problems affords a fascinating and sometimes intimate glimpse into the bachelor life of the nation. Since he, as a young man who has experienced or is experiencing the affairs of the heart, prominently figures in many of the adventures and misadventures in this study, he is presented first; a small minority—comprising only four representatives who are not thus involved—will be treated last.

The independent, working bachelors who are the chief protagonists and antagonists for a woman's hand are found in six plays—"Help Wanted," "A Ranger Takes a Wife," "The Hidden Symbol," "Christian Goes By with the Goats," "Juan and the Magic Fruit," and "Mir-i-nisa."

The young man in "Help Wanted" is named Mario. He is responsible, honest, and serious. The friendship between him and his pal Luis is pleasant to behold—they are true friends indeed. They advise each other, joke with each other from the inside out. With regard to matrimony, Mario is a cautious hand. He has no desire to rush headlong into marriage in spite of a rich uncle who constantly reminds him to take a wife. No, this young man has nothing against women. But he is a serious one and desires to avoid any regrets. So he has dutifully complied with his uncle's requests in everything save matrimony.

You know me — I've been honest with him (uncle), haven't I? I've followed his wishes to the letter. But as for getting married—that's out. I haven't got met the girl I'm going to marry. When that time comes—well, I'll know it. But I think that's going to be a mighty long time, my friend. I don't want to be married. I've seen strings yet. 69 *Domingo Nolasco, "A Ranger Takes a Wife," Short Plays of the Philippines*, p. 68.

Then a pretty woman comes to answer an advertisement for a maid. Mario's stern resistance to the beginning all too soon melts before the woman's logic—she is a college graduate—or is it her heart? Alas for Mario! He finds himself a willing captive to this woman's charms, and the play ends with him as good as wedded. His weighty opinions about the women vanish into thin air. Probably the enjoyment in the plot, innocent as it is, is just what he needs to give him a push. Is he really different from the rest?

The hero in the next play, "A Ranger Takes a Wife," does not entertain any objections against the fair sex. In fact he already has a sweetheart, Rosalia. But he has something against future father-in-laws. Valera is a hardworking and busy man, whose work is recognized and appreciated by his director. The years in the service have stripped him

of his impulsiveness and impatience. He is now a prudent man who knows what he wants and aims to get it, be it in business or love. In spite of the strong disapproval of his sweetheart's father, Valera is determined to marry the girl. Remember, he's going to be my father-in-law whether he likes it or not. (Ibid., p. 84) He does not give an elopement a second thought. He is too honorable for that; instead he intends to bide his time and "leave things as they are." When his friends, to help him, impersonate the bureau director before the girl's father and he is found out, Valera gracefully accepts the blame. As a reward, all's well that ends well.

The other young man in the same play is amusing Castillo, the funny impersonator of the director. New to the work, he shows it in his impetuosity and impatience. When he impersonates his employer, he is so convincing that he makes

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the old man appreciate his friend, Ranger Valera. And when the game is up, he sets upon himself all the blame and clears his friend. Such a resourceful and convincing young man deserves a reward and he gets it. The director makes his appointment permanent.

The bachelor in "The Hidden Symbol" is a manager of an hacienda. He is another hard-working young man like Ranger Valera. Like the ranger he too dares to love a girl of a social class higher than his. Since his ideal is the daughter of his employer, Don Emilio, he keeps silent about his love. To his employer he is courteous and fiercely loyal. When Don Emilio is made a victim to a frame-up, Maximo secretly gathers proofs to pin the guilt on the real culprits, Don Felipe and his son, Luis. This speaks well of his intelligence and astute judgment of character. He is also sharp and alert, for he immediately suspects the motive of Luis, when he visits Don Emilio's daughter at an unholy hour. Nor is he wanting in bravery and resourcefulness. In one instance he scares the two scoundrels by pretending to point a gun in his coat pocket. In another he braves the lion's den to accuse them of their crime. Stirred to indignation by injustice, he consents his master against passive resistance. He explains:

No, Don Emilio! I'm sorry to have to differ with you, but—why don't we fight while there is a chance? The people are being misled by an irresponsible labor leader. Let me open their eyes, show them. Carlos P. Rosales, "The Hidden Symbol," *Philippine Prose and Poetry*, p. 159.

Maximo does not get his wish but patiently he collects evidence enough to put the two villains behind bars.

Luis, lawyer and labor leader, is Maximo's rival. A chip off the old block, he is an unscrupulous man who would court a woman for a dubious motive. Perhaps he cannot be blamed en-

tirely, for his father has made him what he is, well instructed in the art of hypocrisy and deceit. He is the typical labor racketeer who convinces ignorant laborers to cry out for impossible demands, at the same time mulcting them of their hard-earned wages at the least excuse. Luis plants a letter in Don Emilio's house to strengthen the evidence against the helpless old man. Notwithstanding, he shows that there is a streak of good in him when he says, "I am beginning to feel the pangs of remorse." (Ibid., p. 170) Still his last words reveal an unrelenting and vengeful heart: "I'll get you! I'll get you!" (Ibid., page 184)

The shy lover is represented by Mario, the farmer's son in "Cristina Goes By with the Goats." Mario is a good son to his father and a steady worker. Of a practical turn of mind, no fancies plague him about love and life. Slow

and deliberate, still he always gets what he wants. He reminds his old man:

You could me because I am not lively, but I have always done the things I said I would do. I went away to San Carlos, there where there are so many big Spanish houses and a great park. I was to ask the priest to help me find work and he did, and I stayed there three years— all exactly as I said I would do. And now I am back. I said that I was going to save enough money to build a new house for us, and see, here is the house. Rachel Mack, "Cristina Goes By with the Goats," *Short Plays of the Philippines*, op. cit., p. 48.

Mario has his pride, a stubborn one. He asks no quarter from the world and gives none. Because the girl he loves has refused him once, he does not intend to ask her again, even if he still loves her. "Once is enough," he says. (Ibid., p. 49) His doting father, whose whole world is his son, is driven to near desperation when Mario remains indifferent to the news of the girl's engagement to another man—or to her obvious display of preference for Mario. No wonder his father sighs, "You are like a clod of earth; there is no understanding in you. (Ibid., p. 50) But Mario apparently is wise. In the end he gets his girl. Shamefacedly, the once proud Cristina confesses her love and Mario carries on from there. Shy and slow, Mario is very wise after all—he knows how to read a woman's heart.

Juan, the hero in the folk tale, "Juan and the Magic Fruit," is the country bumpkin who wins a princess! For a charcoal burner, who is supposed to be ignorant, he is surprisingly eloquent. He says to the princess, "You look just as I have always seen you in my dreams and in the sunrise and the rainbow. (Jean Edades and Charlotte Chorpensing, "Juan and the Magic Fruit,"

*Short Plays of the Philippines*, p. 152) His parents are proud as they relate Juan's many feats.

There's nothing that boy can't do. The lites he used to make! They hummed in the wind like cicadas. He built better fish-traps than anyone else. No one can cut down a bamboo tree as Juan is he can. (*Ibid.*, p. 153)

It seems that Juan is fond of playing a good joke too as his parents testify. When the guards are ordered to seize Juan, the young man runs and hides among the crowd. Quickly, he disguises himself as an old magician, and then approaches the ruler. His resourcefulness does not desert him as he thinks of a way to win, over the king and queen. With the aid of a magic fruit, he makes horns appear and disappear on the ruler's heads. And he wins the princess.

Tasmi and Achmed are the two ri-

trof of himself when he is jilted by a woman. Thrown into the depths of despair, at first he weeps and then he "flies into a rage." (Benjamin Wong, "The Best Way to Die," *Short Plays of the Philippines*, p. 98) blaming the whole world. Different persons successively offer a number of suggestions in the manner of dying—a fast, a *harakiri*, a gun and sleeping tablets. As he considers these methods, a Chinese fortunately comes upon the scene and this man convinces him to forget the past and to fight "to show the world that you really are." (*Ibid.*, p. 103) Exit Mr. Fool.

The minor protagonists and antagonists who are bachelors entangled in the affairs of the heart are met in "Wanted: A Chaperon," "Perhaps," "Basketball Fight," "Daughter of Destiny," "Remember the Fourth," and "Daughters for Sale."

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vals in "Mir-i-nisa." Achmed is bold and gay; Tasmi is reserved. Both are eloquent and brave. They have been good friends since childhood but now a woman has unleashed the fury in their hearts. Insults and wicked words fly thick and fast between them. And soon they come to blows. Indeed it is hard to choose between these two—one a fisherman, and the other, a pearl diver. But a test reveals the conflict. The two dive into the murky depths of the Pacific in search of a pearl dropped by Datu Ulka, the girl's father. The following passage reveals Tasmi's bravery.

Twice, I fought the sharks. Once, the devilfish, the mighty octopus. I killed them all with my dagger—I save my life, but I lost you forever, Mir-i-nisa! (*Gerónimo D. Sicam and Jesus Casiano, "Mir-i-nisa," Short Plays of the Philippines*, p. 149)

When Tasmi thinks he loses the girl because he has not the pearl, he accepts his fate gallantly and bids goodbye. Achmed arrives with the pearl and is quickly exposed by the datu as a liar. Datu Ulka dropped not a pearl, but a lump of salt into the ocean! His words ring true—"While one of you is clever, the other is honest." (*Ibid.*, p. 149)

Tasmi is an honorable man and he wins our admiration? But we should not be hard on Achmed, who is down in the dust in defeat. "The Best Way to Die" is his own undoing, but in his moment of agony he is still the gracious one:

Forgive me, O Beautiful Mir-i-nisa, but I loved you so much that I placed you above everything else, even above honor itself. I am lost...

There is one bachelor whose employment is not mentioned because it is not important—Mr. Fool in "The Best Way to Die." He is also the lone bachelor who is a dejected and rejected lover. He is a man who completely loses con-

trof of himself when he is jilted by a woman. Thrown into the depths of despair, at first he weeps and then he "flies into a rage." (Benjamin Wong, "The Best Way to Die," *Short Plays of the Philippines*, p. 98) blaming the whole world. Different persons successively offer a number of suggestions in the manner of dying—a fast, a *harakiri*, a gun and sleeping tablets. As he considers these methods, a Chinese fortunately comes upon the scene and this man convinces him to forget the past and to fight "to show the world that you really are." (*Ibid.*, p. 103) Exit Mr. Fool.

The young man is. Roberting in "Wanted: A Chaperon." He is neat and well-dressed and he has his work. The flippancy and carelessness and indifference of modern youth have not touched him. For his father still has a great respect, mixed perhaps with some fear, for Don Francisco makes it his business to know children's doings. While Roberting is a fine fellow, he has a dominant weakness—his extravagance. So he asks his father for his old allowance even when he has to stammer for it. His expenses include extravagant gifts to his girl friend and taxi fares. He is the typical young man of the city

who would rob their children of their independence and self-respect.

Nandi is the proud young man in "Perhaps" who refuses his sweetheart, his friendship if he cannot have her love. "Let me suggest, whenever you're alone think of me not as the man who loved you deeply and passionately but rather as the man who, on being refused love, also refused friendship," he says to her. (Wilfrido Maria Guerrero, "Perhaps," *13 Plays*, p. 197) This characteristic of his is gathered from his face—"His mouth is firm and determined." (*Ibid.*, p. 186.)

Nandi goes to a bar to drink when his engagement is broken. He is slightly the worse for it but, nevertheless, still in command of himself. When his girl realizes she cannot dominate him, she comes back to him.

Nandi's pride calls back to mind the pride of Mario, the farmer's son in "Cristina Goes By with the Goats." Both men are stubborn and strong-willed, too proud to plead for their love. Yet, oddly enough their sweethearts come back to them. Perhaps the women find themselves admiring such a character, one whom they could look up to with respect, not one to be scorned or dominated.

"Basketball Fight" Pepito is a fool, though he is not so called. He is about to be married to a girl who is just as scatter-brained as he is. "Sugar" and "Handsome," their names for each other, reveal their childish mentality. Pepito makes an effort to be accommodating to his sweetheart in trivial things—discarding his favorite color for his sweetheart's and promising to heat mass at six instead of the usual nine o'clock. But an unfortunate discussion of a basketball game reveals what he really is—and the girl. They take sides and shout at each other. Feelings are

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who still depends on his parents for many of his needs.

Fred, "date" of Roberting's sister, is a caricature of a dumbbell. This fact is stressed right at the start when he is presented as "so dumb and so dumb-looking nobody would believe it." Wilfrido Maria Guerrero, "Wanted: A Chaperon," *13 Plays*, op. cit. p. 104) Together with his pugnacious and arrogant mother, this funny looking bachelor supplies the slapstick in this farce. There is something pathetic about him as he plays the puppet to his mother—frowning when she frowns and screaming when she screams; when he fails to follow his mother, he is either pinched or sent sprawling across the stage by this offensive parent in the exaggeration of the weakness and stupidity of this character, the dramatist sounds out a warning to domineering parents

ruffled, gifts are returned, and to all appearances the wedding is cancelled.

The next three plays, "Daughter of Destiny," "Remember the Fourth," and "Daughters for Sale," present the bachelors at the turn of the century. The first two portray the ideal gentleman—noble, courteous, sincere, courageous; the last presents a few male character from the lower class of society.

There are two brothers in "A Daughter of Destiny" who are in love with the same girl. Both are well-bred: They are courteous, respectful, honest, sincere; both are new to love.

Manuel is the elder. The heroine says: Manuel, you always do act like a hero. You always remind me of the knights of old, riding on their fiery steeds to rescue maidens in distress.

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riking their lives and all. *Vital A. Tan, "A Daughter of Destiny," Philippine Prose and Poetry, op. cit., page 203.*

When the lottery gives him the chance to speak to the girl first, he asks Mang Berong boyishly to teach him the art of wooing. Awkwardly he practices on the mind. Then a misinterpretation makes Manuel think that the girl he loves has accepted him. The engagement is announced. But Fate is cruel. The God of War intervenes and spills his life-blood on the battlefield. He dies a hero and ironically fulfills the truth in the girl's words.

Rodi is the younger brother who is just as shy as Manuel. For does he not ask Mang Berong about love, too? A man of honor, he keeps his part of the bargain when his brother wins the lottery. At first he raises objections: "And how about Lourdes. Doesn't she have a say in this matter? Is she to be regarded as a prize to be disposed of by the toss of a coin?" (*Ibid.*, p. 215.) Nevertheless he goes way to his father's wish.

When his brother wins the girl, Rodi almost breaks down, but he hides his anguish. He congratulates his brother and wishes Lourdes "all the happiness in the world." (*Ibid.*, p. 223.) During the Revolution he visits the family farcively as he is now a soldier like his brother. *The guardia civiles* catch him and make him a prisoner, although his arms are bound he insults and threatens the corporal who makes a pass at Lourdes. As a result he is knocked unconscious. Fortunately Filipino insurgents arrive to rescue him and the rest.

In another historical play the bachelor is an army officer of the Revolution—Captain Sixto Arqueles. He is a type in his bravery and straightforwardness and courtesy. He is individual in his simple directness and pride. Captain Arqueles does not mince words in stating his intentions. "A soldier must be direct and straightforward in expression. In the first place, then, I pray, I ask for the hand of your daughter in marriage," the man announces. (Mariano Berbano, "Remember the Fourth," *Philippine Prose and Poetry*, p. 246.) He is very much a soldier indeed. When he is refused by the father, he accepts the decision then and there. Not once does he plead for himself. He answers, "Sir, I respect your wishes. We could never be a happy family your blessing." (*Ibid.*, p. 247.) Captain Sixto Arqueles goes to battle and bravely meets his death like Manuel in the preceding play, without marrying the girl he loves.

The bachelors play a minor part in "Daughters for Sale." There is Don Juan, a prosperous landowner who finds himself a suitor before he knows it. His credulity is the cause: He swallows hook, line, and sinker, the tale that one of Don Pelayo's daughters is sec-

retely in love with him. Surprised and flattered, he lays siege to the woman's heart in spite of her cold reception. But Don Juan will not accept "no" for an answer now that he has started. His patience wears out the lady's resistance and he gets her finally. Oh, yes, he is very proper and formal about it. He first informs his father of his honorable intentions in the traditional style.

Then there is Aurelio, the proud and ambitious young man and the lover of the youngest daughter. The rumor of the father's desire for rich husbands travels fast and reaches his ears. Stung to the quick, his indignation and contempt for this mercenary scheme rouse his determination to make good and prove his real worth. He gets a good paying job—and the girl too.

The last is Miguel, lover of the third daughter. Like Aurelio, this man is ready for a lover's quarrel. He angrily demands an explanation of his sweetheart's newspaper advertisement for a husband. Master of the situation he then coolly declares that he is leaving for his work in a distant place only and only when the girl goes with him.

There are three plays that have principal male characters not involved with women. "The Living Dead Man" introduces Pakito and Coloma, the chief protagonist and antagonist respectively; "Coward of Bataan" presents Cesar, prominent in a play dominated by women; and the third, "Sabina" reveals Antero as the chief antagonist.

Quick wit and a glib tongue save the day for Pakito when meets the famous bandit chieftain, Coloma. Pakito is out searching for his employer, a captive of the same bandit. In the same forest he runs into a panting constable pursued by Coloma. Eagerly Pakito convinces the hunted to lie down and pretend to be dead. When the bandit appears on the scene, Pakito slyly informs him that has just killed the lieutenant. By flattery and superstition he gains the bandit's confidence and entertains him with stories of his (Pakito's) "feats" in the past. So simple is he Coloma eating out of his hand. His cleverness, resourcefulness, and courage stand him in good stead. He saves the constable and later his master.

Coloma is well described by Pakito who dares to tell the bandit that the latter is "very brave and powerful, but being a savage, he is very ignorant, credulous, and superstitious." (Trinidad Rojo, "The Living Dead Man," *Short Plays of the Philippines*, p. 137.) This bandit would have captured the constable save for his weakness—vanity. The constable's uniform, which he carries, delays him in crossing the river. His reason? "I want to wear a uniform myself so I'll look like a king among my people." (*Ibid.*, p. 138)

"Coward from Bataan" portrays the growth of character, Cesar. Cesar is

the lazy good-for-nothing who fritters away his time in drinking and gambling, seldom coming home before midnight. When he learns that his father died a coward in the plains of Bataan, shame, a great shame, tortures him. But his own mother sadly tell him he is coward too. For does he not shirk his obligations to himself and to his family? And to his motherhood even as she is writhing under the iron heel of the conqueror? Bitterly the truth sinks in and Cesar makes a decision. He joins the *guerrillas*. The Japanese capture him and, with his glorious death, Cesar redeems his father.

The tragedy "Sabina" presents Antero, the typical young man of the barrio who makes himself the self-appointed guardian of his only sister's morals. He is a promise of the stoic and stolid and conservative farmer that he will be. He plays the foil to his high strung, passionate sister, Sabina, who constantly defies barrio conventions and morality.

For one thing, Antero is more respectful to his elder's than Sabina. When the resentful Sabina disobeys her elder's wishes to open a window, Antero warns her, "Don't you touch the windows! It's bad! Grandma will scold you!" (*One Act Plays*, p. 12.) And when Sabina again tries to light the lamp, Antero jumps to restrain her. He is checked only by his uncle, "Let me alone!" he shouts, "she makes my blood boil!" (*Ibid.*, page 15.)

He resents openly his sister's affair with Mr. Price. She informs him that she loves the American. Helplessly, he reminds her, "It's only three months since you've known him." (*Ibid.*, p. 22) He says further, "I don't care what your wild heart tells you! What I care about is your own good self, do you hear me?" (*Ibid.*, p. 23.)

Antero has nothing personal against the forerunner. But he is wise enough to realize too well Mr. Price and his kind. He warns Sabina that the American will leave her. So when the girl reassures him that Mr. Price will marry her, he retorts "Get married to him then, if you can! But if you don't, I'll show both of you where to enjoy your pleasures."

It is night of Mr. Price's return and Antero locks the gate. When the American calls out to Sabina and the girl responds, Antero forgets himself. "Blinded by his smoldering resentment, he slaps his sister fiercely and stalks away."

Sabina wakes up to the ugly truth when Mr. Price tells her he is married. Realizing her mistake she cries out pitifully to Antero to forgive her. But Antero pushes her away. He is a picture of sear— "My God, don't come home! Don't talk to me! Don't dare tell any of us anything!" (*Ibid.*, p. 40) Sabina's suicide closes the play. Antero, who really loves his sister, is too overcome to answer the curious questions. His wrath is all spent. g