

“INVITATION TO

YESTERDAY”

by REX Ma. GRUPO

Illustrated by DICK CABALLO

HE KICKED the door shut with an artless swing of his right foot, winching as the impact of the door, slamming violently, jarred the loose objects in the room. In habitual deference, he posed and waited for the raucous outburst of feminine temper which always accompanied those acts of slightly rude playfulness:

—Henrick, What do you want to do, bring the roofs down on our heads? You must think that door is made of marble. Some of these days. . .

It toned down to guttural mumbings when his spiked heels beat their accustomed tattoo of nonchalance and disregard as he shambled across the sparsely furnished room. By the time he tossed the books he carried with lazy abandon on the bed and sat down on its metal edge, it had stopped.

It was always like that everytime he came home. He would slam the door and she would flare up and unleash a stream of profane protest.

—I don't really like to slam that door, he soliloquized. I just like to tease her. She easily boils up a temper, and I say women are all and always, screaming creatures. Look at her, she's already falling apart at the seams with age and she still can manage to screech as if it was nobody's business. Heck! Who said they were frail creatures. . . ?

—Your supper's ready, you maniac. And just try slamming that door again. And you won't have anything left for you to eat in a month.—

He let that go. A few moments later, he had pulled back a chair and started to eat in mock silence. Out of the corner of his eyes, he saw her emerge from the kitchen with a steaming dish which she placed before him. He fumed inwardly, after a glance at it: Kalamunggay! Again? Kalam. . .

—What was in that letter?, she interrupted.

—What letter?

—It's there on your table. It was quite thick and on expensive



paper, too. I should say it was from a girl. It was perfumed.

—Thanks, he said, and thought on: geeze! somebody should hire her as a private eye. She certainly has eyes to notice those intimate details. But whose? not *her*, she's too feminine to write me. Frank? Lydia? No, not those people. They're too lazy to do that now. And who in heaven would be good enough to perfume. . . hey. . . perfume? not *her*! . . .

The chair fell to the floor with an ugly crash as he flung it in frenzied haste, bolting for the stairs and taking the steps three at a time:—Henrick! have you gone mad? how many times must I tell you that. . . She heard the door slam (again!), and she swore. But he did not, could not hear the rowdy chain of

profanity. He was too absorbed by the fine print of his name, the first faint threads of remembrance spreading a pale, whiten flush across his features. Half by instinct, half by will, he sat down slowly on the old arm-chair. He would know that penmanship anywhere, and his fingers trembled slightly as he tore off one edge, crushing the torn pieces with nerveless fingers. He spread the letter open before him gingerly, as if it would crumble and fall apart at his touch. Even without seeing the finely graven "Sol" at the last page, he had been certain it came from her. The perfume alone was enough to tell him that.

He gave himself to sudden day-dreams: it has been so long. How
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long. . . ? two months? three? a year? . . . , he wasn't sure. He thought: funny, how she still found traces of remembering to write. Why? . . . after the bonds that were lost between us? Sol, I wonder where she is. When was that I last saw her? Oh yes! she was laughing when she saw me off at the gate. I really wanted her for that. She was laughing and I was being torn inside by a thousand

mental things. But, oh well, let's get to that later.

How are you these days? I'm sure you're fine. I'm still the same little, insignificant girl you met one night with ROY. . .

Outside, the proud blaze of color had quietened into subtle shades of deep purple and weeping grey. A stray breeze ruffled the curtains. He sat there motionless, his

Starlight". And so it went. All the beautiful songs he knew, he played them. Each time he did, the casual acquaintance gradually, wordlessly blossomed into a warm and deep friendship.

Then there came that one night when he found himself quite all alone with her in the sala. After the last notes of the song he was playing died down, he turned around, and found her knitting. He stifled the impulse to call her. Instead, he studied her closely: the fine lines of the forehead and chin, the short hair, the smooth cheeks. Unknowing that she was the subject of his direct and deep scrutiny, she glanced up and found him thus, their eyes meeting for a swift moment. Perhaps she saw on his face that which he could not understand with him, that which shook him to his depths when her eyes met his fleetingly, for she hastily went back to her knitting, and he turned back to the piano.

And the fingers hence that wandered over the keys were the tools of the heart. Out of a hazy somewhere, a man's voice picked up the words of the song he was playing. . . "when you're near me. . . I'm in the mood for love. . ." Only then did he realize how deeply the seemingly momentary flash of her dark eyes had bored into his thoughts. He stopped playing at once, feeling the sudden rush of blood to his cheeks. He went out to the patio to hide his uncontrollable disconcertion.

Later that night, in bed, unable to sleep, he went over the happenings of the past few hours: I wonder if she noticed THAT! he mused. So what if she did. I don't think I care. But I do! heck! you'd think I. . . I must be. . . no, but. . . Lord! I'm in love with her! . . .

So, the next night, he told her, and the night after that, he told her, asked her again. That was a few days before Christmas.

She'd promised to give him her answer when the bells would toll the new year in. And, like Christmas, the night was drizzling. When it stopped for a while, they went out of the house to wait for Mar who would pick them up at the

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"It couldn't be any fighter, Sir!" Photo was taken during the last Tactical Inspection.

screaming, horned devils. And now. . .

Trembling hands raised the paper they held. He? He tried to understand the strange feeling of a new-born dread as he started to read. Incomprehending, he could only shake his head and go on:

Dear Icky,

It's been so long, Ike, so long since that March night. Too long maybe, isn't it? Yes, so long it has erased the scars of bitterness that was in me. I say bitter because I have to admit my blood would pound and I would seeth with rage and contempt at the mere thought of you. But time changes a lot of things Ike. Maybe people to. . . have you? If I have, it's all deep inside. You would say it's not being me at all to be saying all these senti-

thoughts drifting back, back to that. . .

Quite all at once the room wasn't the dingy closet, the unswept floor space that he had been living in for months. He was in a neat, classic salon, replete with all the modern home trimmings. A piano stood at the foot of the stairway, a radio-phonograph on the opposite wall. Her back to the window, a girl. . . she, was sitting on the maroon upholstered lounge. He caught her eyes when he stood up. Nodding toward the piano, he managed to ask:

—Okay if I tickle the keys some?
—Certainly, go ahead!

After the first faltering piece, his shyness disappeared. Now he was playing with genuine fervor. "Laura" was followed by "Tenderly"; there was "Loveletters", and "Body and Soul", and "Stella by the

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garden gate. They waited for half an hour. Impatient, she said:

—I don't think Mar's coming. It's taking her so long.

—Oh! She'll be along presently.

—But it's very late!

—Your mama knows it's New Year, and everybody's out. She'll understand. Say, what about that... thing I was asking you for?

—It's still 10:00.

—But... oh well, I'll wait.

In Mar's car, he had to sit with one of her many admirers. He knew the guy, and that knowledge made him squirm with uneasiness all the time. That, and the fact that he was still a stranger to the rest of her crowd, shrank him smaller into his seat as they wove through the growing traffic. After a leisurely drive around the city, they stopped at Mar's place (she wanted to change her shoes), where the beautiful phonograph records lured them to stay, dance and eat the remaining hours away.

At the first solemn chime of the clock, somebody shouted—Happy New Year! Like a pre-arranged signal, everybody started throwing everything into the air. Somebody changed the record to a be-bop number, and the soft, suave atmosphere became a happy riot of exuberant greetings and flashing, jubilant faces.

—Well, it's 12:00. What now?

—I can't answer you in front of all these people. Please...

—But you promised me... He glowered at her in unspoken protest. She stared back at him, half-cold, half-pleading. Afraid to hurt her, he shrugged his shoulders resignedly, and sat down. Three seemingly endless records went by, each one deepening his moodiness and disappointment. But anger didn't have a chance, for then he heard her ask M... to escort her home. All the way to her house, he heard his heart drum inside his breast. He even looked at her whether she noticed or heard the bass tremors inside his chest. Later, inside the same wooden gate where a few hours before they had stood waiting for M... she startled him—then she turned and said hastily:

—Thanks for bringing me home, huh?

Alumnotes

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cently connected with the Bisaya Shipping. USTING, as we finally called him, was for some time the feature editor of this mag. He created and sired the fearless "On da Level" column which brought him flowers and roll pins in his USC days. Now, wait a minnit!! You haven't known the bride yet!! The new Mrs. Jamiro is the former Miss DEMETRIA HOMECILLO and is a product of our teachers' course, class '51. Until recently she's marring the 3 R's in Alegria Central School, Alegria, Cebu.

Another "C" ex-staffer who joined the bridal parade is VICTORIA PARAS who got hitched to Atty. RICARDO PADILLA, a promising legal practitioner. With Fr. Bunzel officiating, the marriage vows were swapped at the Sto. Rosario Church. Members of the bridal party were Dr. Eduardo Bernardo & Mrs. Geneveva Alccseba, sponsors; Coring Paras & Eddy Gandiongco veil sponsors. A sumptuous breakfast followed after the ceremony which was held at the Physicians' Club.

Do you take Julian Parama as your husband? "Yes I do" was the answer of alumna VIRGINIA BORRAMEO, BSE '54 who treaded the aisle at Cebu Pro Cathedral last April 17, 1955. Sponsors were Dr. V. Borrromeo and Srta. Lourdes Cuenco. After the ceremony the couple entertained their visitors with a breakfast at the Cuenco Residence. The lucky benedict was until recently employed at the Manila Flood Control.

LAURA CASTILLO, CPA a faculty member of the Commerce department exchange marriage promises with Mr. Samuel Sagrado on June 26, 1955. An active member of the Legion of Mary the former Miss Castillo chose the Archbishop Palace as the memorable scene. The benedict is a deck officer of a certain inter-island vessel. To the happy couple goes our bouquet of roses.

—Hey! You aren't just going arway like that? What about that... thing? It's half past 12:00 already!

—Aw! I don't believe you.

—Did I ask you to? I only said if it were possible for you to care. For me, that is. Do you?

She started to go and he reached and held her arms. She flinched at his touch, but didn't struggle. Suddenly, outbalancing him, she shook off his grip and raced wildly across the lawn. He ran after her, just as the headlights of a car

illuminated the gate. He caught her as she started up the steps:

—My sister's coming. Please, she might find out!

—I'm not going to let you go unless...

—Promise you'll go after that?

—Well...

—And you won't tell a soul?

—Of course!

—All right...

With the words barely out of her mouth, she ran up the concrete steps, leaving the door ajar. He saw the lights go on inside, and reluctantly, turned up the drive lane, oblivious of the stones which usually made him swear. He didn't even notice the car that passed by him on his way out. His heart was bursting with unparalleled joy.

The shrill bleat of an air-horn was a rude, cold shock that exploded his dream bubble. Unknowing, he had dropped the letter. Now he stooped and picked it up, dusting off the prints of his feet. He had stepped on them. Sighing deeply, he settled deeper into the chair and started to read again:

... I'm not a kid anymore. Maybe that's the reason why I'm quite nostalgic, perhaps slightly whimsical. That's all part of growing up I suppose?

Understand; I don't want to think that the old flames are re-kindled. Not I only want to take off the dark spots in the steps that I have left behind. Even if I hardly regret, or have any regrets for the things that happened, I must say I was quite wild. Wasn't I? That's why I wrote you this... and if we ended that way... our ways are really different, now that I do think of it. I guess it always was. And if I was wrong in being stubborn... gosh! why talk about that? It's just tragic, to have met that way, and then to end up so...

He paused: how did it happen? where was the first breaking of the threads? Tragic? Yes, she's right. To think that such a beautiful friendship had to be severed, battered and left to rot on the rocks. And why? Because of that silly joke. Or was it? Yes, it was a joke... my pretending to break off with her. I wanted to see if she loved me enough... to stop me. But fate must be the vain, obstinate and

blind thing that she is. It made her mad. . . blinded her. Maybe she hated me for that. She couldn't trust me anymore after that. I guess that was where she began to lose her affections for me. She might've repeated a thousand times the words of forgiveness, but it would have been useless. What happened the last time we met, was proof enough. I even wonder if she ever loved me at all. . .

—It's all over I said, she retorted acidly.

—Why, because everything was just a game, and you were just waiting for a chance like this to throw me away? You lied then when you said you love me. What a fool. . .

—I'm phoning off. I have a lot of things to do.

—This is good-bye then? If it is, can't you even be half woman to do it decently? Must you have to sink behind. . .

He heard the phone click.

—oOo—

The letter ended like the haunting after-refrains of a song:

. . . Let's be friends, Ike. If not as good as we should be, at least enough of it to make us smile and greet each other. If not still, why, let's be good strangers then!

I'd better close now. I'm afraid I've said too much. But before I do, my warmest regards to your loved ones. And to you, a special wish for continued health, happiness and luck.

*As ever,
Sol.*

P.S.—To hope for a word from you is trampling on my pride. But anyhow, could I hope for it? From you? I wonder if you still remember where I live. I'm still here, Ike, in case you want to write.

ditto

He felt hollow inside as he folded the linen and placed it on the table. He stood there motionless for a long time. He thought of calling her. And his heart thumped wildly at the thought of hearing her voice again. He could not understand the

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ing fun at her feminine foibles. My! how he guffaws at the idea of women wearing slacks, jeans, or trubenized shirts, and sporting a mannish bob. The fact is, there are women who look equally becoming in a man's get-up as they do in their own. . . proving how versatile women are when it comes to clothes. But man's ego would not let him admit this. Besides, he can not stand the thought of being so unglamorously one-sided. Thus we hear him ridiculing woman right and left. . . the way she fixes her hair, her manner of dress, her seemingly illogical ways, her fickleness, and heaven knows what else!

Yet, woman is only trying to be what she is: a woman. She has foibles, certainly. But then, do not these foibles add more to her charms?

Somewhat it has never occurred to man to ask himself why woman behaves the way she does. We can easily understand that. Man, whether he likes to admit it or not, is an animal with an infinite capacity for jumping to conclusions. And yet he claims to be the more intelligent of the species!

It's about time he quits kidding himself. No matter what he may think or say to the contrary, he can not do without woman. Behind his every success, there's a woman. Behind his every failure there, too, is a woman. *Dux femina facti*, as the Latins put it. Or, as the French would say *cherchez, la femme*.

Suppose there was no such thing called woman? Just think of what would happen to textile industries, cosmetic manufacturers, modeling agencies, etc. Think of what would happen to poets, writers, novelists, sculptors, or even gossip columnists. And where would Christian Dior be, or Max Factor, Jacques Faith, or Hollywood? In fact, where would the world be? And where would man be?

There is no use arguing about woman; she must be taken as *de facto* a necessary part of man. So man may deride and disparage her all he wants to, he still can't get along without her. "For what is man, after all, without woman? Man would be half-man, half-

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FOR THE SPORTSMAN . . .

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to their second consecutive championship of the junior league last year.

These, are the first line of offense, and the sharpest, and trickiest barriers of defense. The rest, make up our second margin of victory or loss: *Natalio Reynes*, member of the '53 varsity, back at his old ball-handling job, *Robert Bondoc*, who headed and captained our own junior five, *Cenizo Modequillo*, star guard of the San Jose Jaguars, *Boy Barga*, from Iligan's St. Columban, *Edgardo Gaido*, of the Sta. Rita Academy team, *Balingasag*, Mis. Or., and two of the fightingest and best Baby Panthers to come out of the CCAA wars last year, *Patricio Palmares* and *Gerardo del Rosario*. That in parental words, is us, the 1955 Warriors.

Individually, it is a collection of gifted and talented young men. And they'll make, if not one, the best team that we ever had. Our offense is splendid. It is there where we excel. The guards shoot, the center dunks 'em proper, and the forwards are just plain super. But the defense is as weak and shabby, flabby is the word, as the offense is good. The coordination is as pin-pointed and welded together as the figures in a joggle-word puzzle, and you know what that means. The weave, perhaps, the most potent weapon in our many conquests of the diadem, is still an awkward process with these new basketball army that we have. In fact, there doesn't seem to be any weave at all. Everything's New I said. . . including the most important of all elements — experience and seasoning. True, some have gone thru the paces of a CCAA tussle. . . But what about the rest? Have they gone thru something half as gory, twisted with strange and queer decisions and ridden with fouls? . . . in the teamwork and the responsibilities of a Warrior?

But, they'll be there when the bell rings for the battle. . . and they'll be sporting the Carolinian colors. How they conduct themselves. . . let it be as grand and as magnificent as they did the last time. But they will be there, and they will fight, that is sure.

The Seven Ages of Woman

Infant, child, girl, young woman, young woman, young woman, poised social leader.

—*Apollo-Journal*

THE PEN AND I

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little beads of perspiration came trickling down my forehead. I was getting furious at myself for not being able to write a whole story yet. I had racked my brain for another new plot; but it seemed I was spent. I looked out to the spot where a while ago had moved my heart and hand hoping that its beauty might re-captivate me again. What I saw was the final straw. Nowhere was the bird that was chirping a soothing song a while ago. The flowers were now drooping under the stinging heat of the sun. A butterfly or two could now be seen flying lifelessly. The lilies had slowly and completely shied away from the sun. The fishes kept to the bottom of the pond. They too, were escaping the heat of the noon-day sun. The wonderful backdrop was no longer pale blue but a glaring blue which made me squint. Where was the music, the poetry and a hundred other little things which had fooled me into thinking that I could be a great authoress someday? Instead I felt warm; and in no time I lost my temper. I gathered the crumpled bits of paper strewn carelessly on my desk and burned them mercilessly. . . until the last flame flickered and died. With it, my visions of fame and fortune as an authoress died too. I hated myself for having been such a miserable failure and I hated my friend who said writing a story was just nothing at all. Maybe in a way he was right—it was nothing at all. Writers are made—not born. Indeed? Just wait till I meet her. I'll give her a piece of my mind.

—oOo—

"My husband talks in his sleep—does yours?"

"No. He's terribly annoying—he just chuckles."

—oOo—

"Of course I'm not married," said she. "I'm nobody's fool."

"Then," said he, hopefully, "will you be mine?"

—oOo—

Girl (arriving late at game)—

"What's the score, Larry?"

Escort—"Nothing to nothing."

Girl—"Oh, goody!! Then we haven't missed a thing!"



wits & jokes

Dancing the rumba is a way of waving goodbye without moving your hand.

—Galen Drake (CBS)

Each time Frank Murphy drove his car over 80 miles an hour, the motor set up a terrific knocking. He finally took it to a garage for a check-up.

The mechanic looked the car over carefully, but couldn't find a thing wrong with it. "At what speed did you say the car knocks?" he asked.

"Eighty."

"Nothing wrong with the car," the mechanic stated flatly. "It must be the good Lord warning you."

As we packed for a vacation trip through Canada, I recalled what a friend who had visited there recently had told me.

"We'll have to take different clothes than usual," I remarked. "They say nobody there wears jeans."

My junior high daughter, looking incredulous, asked: "Not even the girls?"

—Mrs. B. de Boer in PEN

Relax. Don't worry about the job you don't like. Someone else will soon have it.

—Herald-Advocate

A handful of patience is worth more than a bushel of brains.

Dutch Proverb

Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow ye diet.

William Gilmore Beymer

The empty vessel makes the greatest sound.

Shakespeare

Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she laid an asteroid.

Samuel L. Clemens

Everything comes if a man will only wait.

Israeli

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beast. . . a mere heap of shapeless, pulseless matter."

Just what have we accomplished by all these? We can't say we have done something monumental to make the world sit up. . . that's glaringly obvious. Neither can we say we didn't try our best. At any rate, this should make man look upon woman with a more tolerant eye and accept her as she is. Moreover, this proves beyond all doubt what we have said at the beginning: Woman is a most inexhaustibly fascinating subject, just as she shall always be for milleniums to come. Hargrave clearly sums up the whole argument in these words: "Women are the poetry of the world just as the stars are the poetry of heaven. Clear, harmonious, and light-giving, they are the terrestrial planets that govern the destinies of men."

Come to think of it, why do they call it a man's world?

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strange mixture of dread and longing. But did he, when he first spoke his first tender word to her? Did he understand the weakness that numbed his frame then? Did he understand the breathless thrill when her fingers first accidentally touched his?

The old woman saw him close the door, gently. Wondering and surprised at the sudden soft ease of the same slam-happy hands, she whispered to herself: Now, I wonder why he didn't! She leaned out from a window. She saw him cross the street, and shoving aside the swinging doors, entered the drug store.

She could not hear him say to the operator: 998-R please? Nor heard his hesitant, guarded query of the crooning, girlish voice that answered, nor hear his voice in hal-lowed conversation tremble, for if she had, she wouldn't have asked herself; she would have understood the sudden mildness in him; and would have known the poignant tale behind those three numbers and the letter "R" that adorned his bed-side wall.