

# **THE TYPE YOU DON'T MARRY**

Pailleron



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## Pailleron

Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock

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Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2001

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### CHARACTERS:

EUGENE SAVIGNAC

GEORGE MAUREL

ADRIENNE, George's Mistress

BERTHE, an old friend of Adrienne's

CONSTANCE, a chamber maid

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A small dining room

**EUGENE:** (entering) Is Mr. Maurel here yet?

**CONSTANCE:** (locking a drawer in a desk at the right) Mr. George is with Madame. I think he's finishing a letter. (arranging flowers in vases on the table)

**EUGENE:** Don't disturb yourself; I'm in no hurry. (sitting by the fire) I'm going to get warm. What are all those flowers for?

**CONSTANCE:** (mysteriously) Why, sir, I cannot tell you, it's a secret. Ask the cat. (talking to the kitten) The cat replies "It's a great big secret." Isn't that what you say, darling? (taking both vases with an air of triumph) I have to run to the market. So. Isn't it like Spring? Who would say it's the 20th of November?

**EUGENE:** One more anniversary! You're always exposed to some celebration here.

**CONSTANCE:** (coming closer and closer to Eugene) Everyone loves each other here, Mr. Eugene. Even the cat who loves us all and brings us luck. You should love us a little. Make an effort. Then they won't tremble when you come. And when there's a secret— Hush! They're coming.

**GEORGE:** (letter in hand, entering) You came just as I was writing you. You should have come ten minutes earlier.

**EUGENE:** (rising) Lazy boy! Do you have a cigar?

(Constance goes out. Eugene looks around to see if they are alone.)

**EUGENE:** While we're alone. You haven't forgotten about tonight? At six—thirty.

**GEORGE:** Well, sort of. I was going to explain to you. (handing him the letter) Or write you.

**EUGENE:** (after reading it, tears it up) There!

**GEORGE:** But my friend—

**EUGENE:** Do you know why they want to keep you here? (looking at the desk drawer) It's in there for sure. I

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saw Constance locking it with a key. You cannot back out now. How will it look?

**GEORGE:** I am counting on you to excuse me. Make up something.

**EUGENE:** I'm not going to mix in this any further. Yes or no? Are you determined to marry this girl?

**GEORGE:** Absolutely. (low) What I lack is courage.

**EUGENE:** (laughing) Courage.

**GEORGE:** We're constructed differently. — Do you think I can forget six happy years?

**EUGENE:** (shrugging his shoulders) Come on. I'm listening to you.

**GEORGE:** I can still see myself in the rue Picard one winter. Every day, I killed time until they went out.

**EUGENE:** And you followed them through deserted streets until Adrienne was all alone. And when all her friends had gone you accosted her. And she let you kiss her hand. (rising) And you've done nothing more ever since.

**GEORGE:** (rising too) You have a different way of being in love. That friend of Adrienne's, that Bertha.

**EUGENE:** (unable to remember, but trying) Bertha.

**GEORGE:** The little brunette.

**EUGENE:** Oh! She's ancient history. It's been five years,—yes, I saw her yesterday all dressed up, but for the life of me, I couldn't put a name to that pretty face.

**GEORGE:** You've never been in love. If you had, you'd know why I lack courage. Do you understand why I lack courage?

**EUGENE:** Put it in a book or in verse. Don't become serious at your age.

**GEORGE:** But I am very serious, I assure you.

**EUGENE:** Let it go! Do you intend to live socially? You are not taking into account the falsity of your position. Your father, and not only your father; your aunt, your grandmother, all your family. Whenever I mention your name to them, they don't smile, they don't raise an eyebrow. Your father changes the subject whenever your name is mentioned. You've broken with your family. Separated from society. As for morality.

**GEORGE:** (laughing) You don't know how funny some words sound in your mouth. (sitting) Morality!

**EUGENE:** Yes, morality. And why, if you please, does it sound funny coming from me? I've lived and I've learned. It won't financially ruin you. But you are breaking all the rules. You are a living scandal. Marry your mistress: whoever heard of it!

**GEORGE:** I should never have taken a mistress; but having taken one, as I took Adrienne, I will marry her.

**EUGENE:** I'll end by worrying about you. But I will save you in spite of yourself. It's four now. I'm going to go home and change. Yes, or no? Are you coming?

**GEORGE:** I'll see. I'd have to have an excuse.

**EUGENE:** I bet Adrienne won't suspect anything. She's a woman and if she has the least opportunity to please herself— If a friend were to visit her.

**GEORGE:** She has no friends. She broke with everyone for me.

**EUGENE:** I'll be looking for you. (leaving)

**ADRIENNE:** (runs in very happy) Look. (bending to show him her hair do) Isn't it me? You were right. It becomes me very much.

**GEORGE:** It looks good on you. You have great taste.

**ADRIENNE:** Tonight we're going to have a candle light dinner together.

**GEORGE:** (stammering) I—f'forgot to mention to you—

**ADRIENNE:** What?

**GEORGE:** (lowering his eyes) I promised—you know, to dine with my uncle.

**ADRIENNE:** (indignant) No. Absolutely not. Tonight you are mine. I am keeping you.

**GEORGE:** Don't get angry. Gene came, you heard him. I don't want to go. I know I promised you. But Gene says this dinner's very important—a lot of important people will be there. (trying to kiss Adrienne who pushes him away angrily; he turns toward the door at the right)

**ADRIENNE:** (following him) Where are you going?

**GEORGE:** To put on my coat. Be reasonable. I've just got time. I'll come back to say goodbye. (trying to leave)

**ADRIENNE:** (putting herself resolutely in front of the door) No, I'm keeping you.

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**GEORGE:** Heavens, you are going to get me into a fight with my uncle.

**ADRIENNE:** Your uncle! Your cousin! as far as I'm concerned these people do not exist.

**GEORGE:** If I don't go, my future might—

**ADRIENNE:** Your future? And me! And me! (bursting into tears, then sweetly) Don't you see how I'm suffering?

**GEORGE:** (pulling her into his arms) My Adrienne.

**ADRIENNE:** I don't know what you told me or what I said. I was only thinking of one thing. Can't you guess? You haven't suddenly forgotten?

**GEORGE:** (trying to remember) Forgotten?

**ADRIENNE:** (with a sad smile) Sir, what day is it today? Isn't it our—

**GEORGE:** (remembering suddenly) Oh, pardon.

**ADRIENNE:** (in a tone of self reproach) You did forget! But, you wouldn't have. (going to the desk where the flowers are) Constance, who is only our servant, didn't forget.

**GEORGE:** Forgive me.

**ADRIENNE:** (softening) The 20th of November. (counting on her fingers) Six years. Time passes so fast.

**GEORGE:** It seems like yesterday to me. It was snowing. You recall the snow that day? (they sit, George is on the footstool)

**ADRIENNE:** Yes. I was cold.

**GEORGE:** I lit a big fire.

**ADRIENNE:** (dreamily) And if I hadn't—where would I be?

**GEORGE:** (very choked up) Don't worry. I love you.

**ADRIENNE:** Truly? A little still as before?

**GEORGE:** (hugging her) A hundred times more. I've never loved you more. (shivering) Brr! It's cold. Let's light a big fire. I'll stay.

**ADRIENNE:** (delighted, rising) You'll stay. (she rings)

**CONSTANCE:** (entering) Yes, Madame!

**ADRIENNE:** Bring his coat.

**GEORGE:** (surprised) What?

**ADRIENNE:** (smiling) I'm not a child. You remember, you love me. That's enough. We'll celebrate tomorrow.

**GEORGE:** (very touched) How good you are!

(Constance returns with George's coat)

**ADRIENNE:** (simply) Let me retie your tie. I want you to shine at your uncle's.

**GEORGE:** No, I'd rather stay.

**CONSTANCE:** Yes, sir. To the devil with everyone else. A day like today doesn't come often.

**ADRIENNE:** Don't tempt me, George. Go quickly or I won't let you go. (a pause)

**GEORGE:** You're worth more than I am. (Kisses her and leaves. Constance is furious and shows it as she removes the table cloth and hurls it on the table.)

**ADRIENNE:** (laughing) Well, I still intend to eat even though I'll be alone. (kindly) I know you planned something. Thanks. And tomorrow.

**CONSTANCE:** (through her teeth) Tomorrow! Who knows about tomorrow!

(Adrienne goes to her room)

**ADRIENNE:** (off) Tell me when dinner is ready.

**CONSTANCE:** Nice anniversary! Oh, my poor flowers. (A bell rings. Constance, hoping that George has returned rushes to the door and opens it. Then, disappointed.) Oh, Miss Bertha.

**BERTHA:** Yes, it's me. Tell Adrienne, will you.

(Constance goes out. Bertha paces nervously. Then goes to Adrienne as she enters and kisses her.)

**ADRIENNE:** (a bit coldly) Sit down.

**BERTHA:** It's been a long time. A lot of water under the dam since we last met. You've become an honest woman. Very cozy here. (smelling the air) Very domestic. Positively. But, why are you looking at me so carefully? Is there something strange about me?

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**ADRIENNE:** It seems to me you used to be a brunette.

**BERTHA:** (rising and laughing) Blondes have more fun. (looking in the mirror) Don't you think it goes well with me? Since I last saw you I've travelled a lot. Been to Monaco, Italy.

**ADRIENNE:** (whose coldness has worn off) Still the same.

**BERTHA:** I wrote you. Are you still happy?

**ADRIENNE:** Still.

**BERTHA:** George still loves you?

**ADRIENNE:** Why, yes. Still.

**BERTHA:** (in an odd tone) Oh!

**ADRIENNE:** Does that surprise you?

**BERTHA:** No. It's funny. Men are all the same. Come on.

**ADRIENNE:** (starting to become nervous) Why do you say that?

**BERTHA:** Oh, for no reason. Do you still see Eugene? I met him just now. I went with him to his home.

**ADRIENNE:** (more and more uneasy) Why do you tell me all this? Of course we still see Mr. Savignac.

**BERTHA:** (compassionately) Poor friend.

**ADRIENNE:** Look! Out with it!

**BERTHA:** Listen. I know what you want from me. But it's a service that one only does for a friend. I came right away. I'll tell you now. (they sit down)

**ADRIENNE:** (very unnerved) What is it all about?

**BERTHA:** My God. You know I'm very curious. I saw a letter at Eugene's and I read it.

**ADRIENNE:** (anxiously) Well?

**BERTHA:** Eugene gave me the details. George is marrying a young woman; very rich of course.

**ADRIENNE:** (protesting) No!

**BERTHA:** Don't take it so hard. It happens to everybody. It's life.

**ADRIENNE:** I cannot cry.

**BERTHA:** Why should you cry? It's a hard moment to get through, but afterwards one is stronger for it. I've just rendered you a famous service.

**ADRIENNE:** (hiding her face in her hands) Oh! I didn't know how to keep him.

**CONSTANCE:** Shall I set the table?

**ADRIENNE:** (to Bertha) What are you doing tonight? Nothing, right? (to Constance) Set two places.

**BERTHA:** Oh, I cannot, darling. They must be waiting for me already. I'm dining at Maxim's. The place I wanted to take you that day George got so angry with me. Come soon. I invite you.

**ADRIENNE:** Oh, no thanks.

**BERTHA:** (laughing) Bah! You're afraid. They won't eat you. Come on. When you're in pain, you've got to drown it. I assure you, the dinners are very good and the company very gay.

**ADRIENNE:** (with a shiver) Thanks. I don't want to go. (sitting down)

**BERTHA:** What a baby! But darling you have to be strong. If I leave you, you're going to cry yourself to sleep. Put on your hat.

**ADRIENNE:** No.

**BERTHA:** As you wish. (going to the door) Bye now. I regret having told you. (returning) It seems she's a blonde. Eugene told me she's not as pretty as you. Not very tall; but nice to look at.

**ADRIENNE:** Goodbye. Leave me alone, I beg you.

**BERTHA:** It's just that it infuriates me to see you cry. Come on. I promise you George isn't crying. By now he's sitting beside her.

**ADRIENNE:** (faintly echoing) Yes—beside her.

**BERTHA:** Like two lovebirds. The way you once were.

**ADRIENNE:** (weakly) Yes, yes. As we once were.

**BERTHA:** Still, perhaps you are right to take this so quietly. Goodbye.

**ADRIENNE:** (running after her) Come back. Let's go to my room. I'm going to get my hat.

**CONSTANCE:** (alone, stupefied, troubled) Madame! Madame! It's impossible.

(After a pause Eugene enters with George.)



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**GEORGE:** (shrugging his shoulders) With Bertha, especially. I tell you, you didn't see what you think you did. (To Constance) Where's Adrienne?

**CONSTANCE:** (embarrassed) Sir!

**EUGENE:** You see!

**GEORGE:** Where is she?

**CONSTANCE:** She left with a lady.

**GEORGE:** Will she be back for dinner? (silence) Did she say when she would be back? (silence) All right. Leave us. (Constance leaves) (agitated) Well? What do you say?

**EUGENE:** (getting warm by the fire) Me? Nothing.

**GEORGE:** What do you advise me to do?

**EUGENE:** Me? Nothing. Why ask my advice? You wouldn't listen to me.

**GEORGE:** (who hasn't listened to him) Could she possibly be with Bertha?

**EUGENE:** After all, it's human enough. If you knew women, you wouldn't be angry with Adrienne. After six years, one night you dine in town, and the dear child goes out to distract herself with a gay girlfriend. You see, it's good for our sisters and mothers to wait for us at home, playing the piano.

**GEORGE:** (still preoccupied) When I wanted to start, she pushed me out the door. What's bad is not knowing. Yes, she's cheating on me.

**EUGENE:** To cheat, to be cheated, that's life. Still, I confess it's less pleasant to be cheated on.

**GEORGE:** Then, right away. I don't want to be a coward any longer.

**EUGENE:** Spoken like a man. (shaking his hand)

**GEORGE:** I never want to see her again. I'll write her and tell her everything is over.

**CONSTANCE:** (entering) Madame has just returned.

**GEORGE:** Alone?

**CONSTANCE:** Alone.

**GEORGE:** Where is she?

**CONSTANCE:** In her room.

**GEORGE:** What's she doing?

**CONSTANCE:** She's locked herself in. I think she's crying.

**EUGENE:** (seeing George heading for Adrienne's room) Where are you going?

**GEORGE:** I want to see her.

**EUGENE:** And your resolutions?

**GEORGE:** Leave me alone.

**EUGENE:** If you see her, you're ruined. She'll convince you of whatever she wants to. (George goes out) Whew! That was close (ringing, Constance returns) I want to speak to Madame.

(Constance leaves. Eugene twirls his hat in his hand. Adrienne appears.)

**EUGENE:** Miss.

**ADRIENNE:** Sir.

**EUGENE:** I've been asked to tell you something.

**ADRIENNE:** (hiding her emotions) I am listening to you, sir.

**EUGENE:** You know how much I love George. He's like a younger brother to me.

**ADRIENNE:** (falling into a chair) I beg your pardon. I need to sit down.

**EUGENE:** Of course, of course. No ceremony with me. You must have been expecting this for a long time. Everything comes to an end. Youth passes. The serious age in life arrives. You have to conform to the demands of the world.

**ADRIENNE:** (almost to herself) Is that what George had to tell me?

**EUGENE:** George has been thinking about your future.

**ADRIENNE:** (wounded) Oh!

**EUGENE:** His dearest wish is that you should lack nothing. That you should be in an independent position.

**ADRIENNE:** I thank him.

**EUGENE:** And to make things easier he asked me to give you this. (putting a billfold on the table)

**ADRIENNE:** (disgusted) That's all, isn't it?

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**EUGENE:** All! It goes without saying that whatever is here, furniture, jewels belongs to you. And if ever you are unhappy, George counts on your applying to him.

**ADRIENNE:** (holding back her tears) Well. You've forgotten nothing. You do your work admirably. In my turn, I will ask you to do something for me. Wait for me. Watch my fortune. (she goes to her room)

**EUGENE:** (alone) Going nicely. Very well done on all sides. Civilized.

**BERTHA:** (entering) Where is she? Heavens, you here! Everything was going fine at first, but it all started to unravel. Anyway, I earned that bracelet you promised me. (calling) Adrienne! Adrienne! (to Eugene) You know George is downstairs.

**EUGENE:** Shut up! She's coming.

(Adrienne enters, dressed for leaving, as George appears in the doorway at the left.)

**ADRIENNE:** (not seeing George) You will tell George.

**GEORGE:** (coming in rapidly) You are leaving?

**ADRIENNE:** (noticing him) Ah, you're back. I prefer explaining this to you. Perhaps I would have said things to him—

**GEORGE:** (softened to jelly) Yes, tell me. Tell me everything.

(They come forward)

**ADRIENNE:** I no longer know what has happened to me. We were still so happy just a few hours ago. Well, perhaps it is for the best. Everything has to end.

**GEORGE:** Listen—

**ADRIENNE:** I don't want your money. I prefer to leave. I won't take anything. I'm leaving as I came—with nothing. Goodbye. (going to the door)

**GEORGE:** (following her) Adrienne!

**ADRIENNE:** No, let me go. That will be better. I understand I am in your way. Don't worry about me. I will go back to work. Goodbye.

**GEORGE:** (grabbing her, holding her in his arms) Adrienne! My wife! (to Eugene) My wife! (low to Adrienne) I love you.

(Constance enters and joyously resets the table, placing a huge cake on the table.)

**GEORGE:** That's it, Constance, Hurry up. I'm hungry as can be!

**CONSTANCE:** (giving Eugene his billfold) This is yours, sir.

**EUGENE:** (sighing, putting his billfold in his pocket) Well! Morality is defeated! (looking at his watch) Come on, Bertha, I'll take you to dinner.

CURTAIN