

ANIMAL KINGDOM

By Philip Barry

TOM Hello, Daisy
DAISY Hello. How have you been?
TOM In rude health, thanks.--And you?
DAISY Never better.
TOM Oh, it's fine to see you! I've been starving for you--all of you.
DAISY Thanks.
TOM How's the job?
DAISY The magazine job?
TOM Yes.
DAISY I gave it up last winter--a trifle--shall we say "quixotic"--of me?
TOM Shall we? ****
 I saw your exhibition today.
DAISY Oh really?--Funny I missed you. What did you think of it?
TOM Well--
DAISY Tell me!
TOM I don't think you were ready to show yet. How did it happen?
DAISY Saunders and Munn arranged it.
TOM Your old editors? The fashion boys?
DAISY What about it?
TOM Daisy, Daisy--How were the notices?
DAISY Appalling.
TOM I suppose their reasons were all wrong.
DAISY Of course--What are yours?
TOM Well, you've been painting less than a year--
DAISY Yes.
TOM --And yet you had about thirty canvases to show.
DAISY Thirty two.
TOM It's a lot, Daisy.
DAISY So you didn't care for any of them.
TOM Oh yes!--One I loved particularly: the one of the doorstep, with the milk bottles. I'd like to own that one.
DAISY --Number seven.--Sorry, it's not for sale.
TOM Two hundred?
DAISY Nope?
TOM Two fifty!
DAISY Nope.
TOM Seventy-five--
DAISY Nope.
TOM Four hundred and one--
DAISY Nope.
TOM I wouldn't take it as a gift.
DAISY That's all right, then.
TOM Of course your drawing's a marvel. Lord, how that's come along!
DAISY --Only what?
TOM Good draftsmanship's not to be sneezed at, is it?
DAISY Certainly not. Look at Belcher.
TOM No--at Goya
DAISY Thanks so much.
TOM Of course it depends on what you want to be. I thought it was a painter.
DAISY So did I--Goya painted pretty well, too, I thought.
TOM In the first year? I doubt it.
DAISY I wasn't aware it took a definite length of time.
TOM --And living in cities all your life, you know.
DAISY Perhaps I'd better hie me some sylvan dell.
TOM I don't think it would hurt a bit.
DAISY --Listen, you: if you can show me a purer cobalt than the winter sky over the East River any afternoon at four--
TOM That's not the point.
DAISY What is?
TOM Fever--rush--hysteria--all day, every day.
DAISY Oh, go to hell, will you?
TOM Sure. When do we start?
DAISY --So I'm to sit under a parasol and paint tight little cows in streams, am I?
TOM That's not what I said.
DAISY --Something suitable as an over-mantel for the Home of Her Dreams, I suppose.
TOM Now you're being bull-headed.
DAISY Bull-headed!--He calls me bull--Oh, you snakes--
TOM Well--
DAISY Well? What more, Teacher?
TOM All I said and all I'm saying is, you can't expect, the first crack out of the box to--you've got to work Daisy.
DAISY Sweet heaven! What else have I been doing? What have I done but?
TOM --But differently--with such pains. You're turning out too much, you know it.
DAISY Maybe, maybe.--Anything's too much.
TOM Ah, darling--
DAISY No! Don't soften up on me. Stay tough!
TOM I do believe that's it, though. I believe it's the whole story; still hung over from the old job. Pressure, pressure all the time. Still rushing countless sketches through against a magazine's deadline.
DAISY --Anyway, against some deadline--
TOM Daisy--darling--
DAISY You're cruel, inhuman. You're a brute.
TOM Oh, Daisy--
DAISY Thanks for being.
TOM If you mean it--
DAISY From my heart--Oh, you skunk--
TOM Worse. Much worse.

DAISY Who but you, Tom? Look only you and strangers honest with me ever.

TOM --The country's the place to work Daisy. Listen: There's a grand little house about six miles from us. Woods, hills, meadows--you can get it for almost nothing.

DAISY That's about my price.

TOM It could easily be painted up. What about a white roof for it?

DAISY Oh, lovely idea!

TOM C discovered it. She can find out all about it. I'll tell her who it's for.

DAISY Don't dream of it.

TOM Why not?

DAISY I've got other places in mind.

TOM Anyhow, go somewhere.

DAISY Sure--somewhere.

TOM You're going to be good, Daisy, don't think I don't think you're good.

DAISY I won't. I won't think anything.

TOM This is a big day for me, you know it?

DAISY How?

TOM Well, I've been seeing the folly of my ways here lately. Poor C--I must have been sweet to live with this past week. She's been grand about it, though.

DAISY I'm sure she has.

TOM I--suddenly, for some reason, I saw I'd got off the track--my track. It was pretty painful--But I'm getting back on, I think.

DAISY I'm glad, Tom. You must, you know.

TOM Did you ever hear of a fellow named Hal Foster?

DAISY No. What does he do?

TOM Writes. My God, how he writes!--And nobody knows it--not yet--

DAISY Have you got him?

TOM I'm getting him. He's done a fine, poisonous short novel that makes Candide look sick. I'm going to make a grand type-job of it, advertise it all over the place, and sell it at two bucks. I don't care if I lose my shirt on it.--I'm to meet him at six this afternoon, to make arrangements.

DAISY It must be nearly that now. You'd better go.

TOM --Daisy.--Have you missed me Daisy?

DAISY You? Well, I'll tell you, it's this way: I--

TOM Much?

DAISY --Skunk, skunk.

TOM Oh, and I you!--It's a lot of nonsense, this. It's ridiculous.

DAISY It is six.

TOM Hell.

DAISY You'd better run.

TOM We need each other, we two do.

DAISY You think?

TOM Most terribly. I'm convinced of it. There never were such friends as you and me. It's wicked to give that up, to lose anything so fine for no good reason.--Why you, of all people, for a shabby, lowdown question of convention, fit only to be considered by shabby, lowdown--

DAISY Wait a minute!

TOM A hundred times I'd given my eyes to see you, to talk to you--

DAISY Well--here I am--

TOM Daisy--may I come again?--Just now and then, you know?

DAISY If you like--just now and then.

TOM Oh my sweet dear--thanks!

DAISY But don't say "sweet dear". That belongs to another life, years ago.

TOM Oh--there are to be rules, are there?

DAISY One or two. One strict one--

TOM What?

DAISY Never secret. Never hidden.

TOM No, no!

DAISY Always open as before.

TOM But of course, of course!

DAISY I couldn't go otherwise.

TOM Why should a friendship be hidden? What's there to hide?

DAISY It gets misunderstood.

TOM It won't, it can't, or the whole world's rotten.

DAISY It's been pretty ripe for a long time. Tommy.

TOM "Tommy"! Oh my darling, how grand this is!

DAISY No--you've got to go.

TOM Why? Would it take so long?

DAISY There.

TOM Ask me am I happy--

DAISY It's all right, isn't it?

TOM Magnificent.--All as before.

DAISY Yes.--But for one thing.

TOM What?

DAISY We aren't in love any more.--Now run. You might miss what's-his-name.

TOM How about lunch tomorrow?

DAISY It's fine with me.

TOM The old place?

DAISY I'd love it.

TOM One o'clock?

DAISY One o'clock.

TOM --And we'll dine at John Donovan's. He's opened a new place on Forty-eighth Street.

DAISY Dine?

TOM Why not?

DAISY All right.

TOM The next day's Wednesday, isn't it? I said I'd drive out in the morning to see Pat Atkins. He's been sick again.

DAISY Poor dear. I'm sorry.

TOM He's better now.--Come along with me, Daisy.

DAISY Wednesday?--No--Wednesday, I--

TOM If it's a good day we'll take a picnic. What do you say?

DAISY Wait a minute, Tom.--You said only now and--

TOM I'll bring Hal Foster in about four on Friday. Will you be here?

DAISY I think so.

TOM Good-bye then, darling. Till tomorrow!

DAISY Good-bye Tom.

TOM Sweet dear, sweet dear--. One o'clock?

DAISY One o'clock.

TOM Ten minutes to one!