

**JUST SWEETHEARTS:
A CHRISTMAS LOVE
STORY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649426737

Just Sweethearts: A Christmas Love Story by Harry Stillwell Edwards

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

HARRY STILLWELL EDWARDS

**JUST SWEETHEARTS:
A CHRISTMAS LOVE
STORY**

**JUST
SWEETHEARTS**

A Christmas Love Story

By

HARRY STILLWELL EDWARDS

AUTHOR OF

"TWO RUNAWAYS," "HIS DEFENSE"

"ENEAS AFRICANUS," ETC.

1855



L. C.

PUBLISHED BY
THE J. W. BURKE COMPANY
MACON, GEORGIA

7

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
513114A
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1931 L

COPYRIGHT, 1920
THE J. W. BURKE COMPANY

NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



JUST SWEETHEARTS



CHAPTER I

BATHED in the sunshine of one of those perfect days which so often come with Christmas in the South, he stood at the street corner, a light cane across his shoulders supporting his gloved hands, his eyes shifting with ever-changing interest, and a half smile on his swarthy face. It was written all over him that he had no appointments to meet, no duties to discharge; that he was by chance, only, in the moving picture and not of the cast, and that the whole thing, so far as he was concerned, was but a transient show to be enjoyed for its brilliancy of colors and its endless succession of fine Southern faces.

But here was idleness without inertia.

Heartman 15 May 1931

❧ JUST SWEETHEARTS ❧

Clearly he was one of those rare beings who can radiate energy standing still and convey the impression of impetuous force without motion, a trick of the eyes, a refusal to sag.

Name? Ladies and gentlemen, meet King Dubignon.

King saw her first as she started across Cherry Street from the far corner, a slender figure moving with grace and assurance through the dangerous procession of motor cars, still handled in the South as new toys, and once or twice his lips parted for a warning cry, but she gained the opposite corner with ease and turned straight toward him across Third. Now, of all the throng his alert eyes clung to this approaching figure and began to take note of details—white spats, plain tailor suit, loose blousy waist and flat hat with its little veil of black lace. Soon she was directly in front but her demure gaze was not for him. She was mentally preoccupied. She had thoughts of her own and not having seen the Dubignon eyes and smile she failed to look back after she passed.

☞ JUST SWEETHEARTS ☞

The young man released a suspended breath like unto the fervid sigh of a cow settling down to rest, lowered his cane and stood gazing after the receding figure. And not he only, as he noticed with quick jealousy. Every man and woman who met her turned for a second glance. The gentian eyes, radiant face, curved lips parted in a half smile, belonged in an artist's dream; the slender, supple figure borne along on dainty feet, the subtle grace of her moving, line vanishing into line, curve melting into curve, the free, elastic, boyish stride, were combinations notable even in *The City of Beautiful Women*, as the aborigines call their Macon.

King was an artist and had dreamed. He had lost something out of his dreams and now he had found something to place in one. He followed and saw her vanish into the crowd of a cheap store, an emporium of ten-cent things; and presently his broad shoulders opened up a path there for himself. Down one aisle and up another; and then he found her. She was critically examining lace at ten

§§ JUST SWEETHEARTS §§

cents the yard and did not look up as he passed. The purchase of lace of any kind is a tax on all the faculties if one is faithful.

Checkmate? No. Inspiration! He went forward to the turn of the aisle at the show window near the door. It had occurred to him that sooner or later she would pass out. He took his stand in a little bay of space nearby and waited. Time was no object to him at such a crisis.

When he saw her coming again, threading her way through the crowd and almost without contact, he so maneuvered that she drifted naturally into the little bay promptly vacated for her accommodation. Instantly he was standing directly in front, hat in hand, arresting her departure:

"Beautiful, just a moment, please," he said, smiling down, "I saw you crossing the street and followed you here. When you leave I shall not follow again. Listen; what I am asking is that you will take my card and have your father, or somebody, inquire about me of one of the bank cashiers on the corner, and

❧ JUST SWEETHEARTS ❧

then write me your address, won't you? This isn't regular, I know," he continued with increase of vocal momentum, "but it is necessary—absolutely necessary. I have searched and waited for you all my life, and if I lose you now it may be forever." The girl had drawn back a little and was looking into his face with wonder but without alarm. The Dubignon eyes and smile were irresistible. Nevertheless, now that he had spoken—words altogether different from the formal ones planned—King became self-conscious and troubled. Something jarred. Perhaps it was the twentieth century or the ten-cent store. Besides, he was pointing a piece of cardboard at her in, what must have seemed, a very absurd way. She felt instantly his embarrassment, and women of all ages gain composure when men in their presence lose it. The instinctive response of eyes and lips, vibrant life to impetuous youth, was checked and a tiny, perpendicular line divided her brows:

"Are you quite sane?" she began, her voice reduced almost to a whisper—he thanked