The heavy door was softly closed behind him, and David stepped into a darkness, pricked by the glint of streetlamps. He walked quickly down the sidewalk for about three blocks and paused before a drugstore where he intended to buy a package of cigarettes. As he was about to enter, a small man, ancient and disheveled, limped toward him.

“Oh Mr. Greer, wait a minute, will you?” The tone was plaintive.

“I beg your pardon,” replied David.

“Don’t you remember? I took care of Run And Carry for you. I’m the one he kicked, here —” The man pointed to his leg. “I’m out of a job, and say.” The man was painfully embarrassed. “Would you lend me five dollars?”

“Yes,” said David, hurriedly producing the money from his wallet.

“Gee, thanks, Mr. Greer. I’ll pay it back, honest. It’s just that I’ve gotten a couple of bad breaks. You know how it is.”

“Of course,” the other man answered sympathetically. “I understand.”

And as he limped away, David turned toward the drugstore and smiled, a particularly disarming smile, with only the barest trace of a sneer in it.

**Saturday Night Date**

MARY CHAPPELL

She adjusted her hat and stuck in the pin which held it securely to the back of her head. He would arrive any minute now, and, she thought philosophically, whatever else she was, she was punctual. She admired herself in the mirror — a nicely proportioned figure in her little suit, good legs, and dark red hair that hung loosely beneath her black hat. Under her short veil her face was peach-colored and smiling. She whirled about playfully in front of the mirror. No wonder he was proud of her! It amused her to see him try not to smile pridefully at his friends when they saw him with her. He was such a simple person! Then she began to be amused with her own vanity. It was strange that a boy like Ed could please her with his flattery; it was strange that she should go out with him. He was such a simple person! Then she began to be amused with her own vanity. It was strange that a boy like Ed could please her with his flattery; it was strange that she should go out with him. She knew well that if he wore civilian clothes she would never have noticed him. Oh well, it was war, and you went out with almost anyone who would take you out. At any rate Ed was a sweet boy, even if his English sometimes made her wince.

As her thoughts took a more serious turn her smile disappeared. Momentarily the corners of her mouth drooped, and in her eyes there was a pained expression. No, she just couldn’t go out with him again. In that moment she couldn’t bear the thought of being with him—big and sloppy and almost stupid, with that silly adoring puppy-dog look in his eyes. He was so far below her! But no time for this because here he was, and she could overhear her mother talking to him in the living room. Poor boy, she thought such hard things about him, and he was so good to her! She must be kind to him.

As they walked through the downtown streets she wondered to herself how it was that he never looked as nice in khaki as other men. Maybe it was because he was big and sloppy and looked that way in.
It annoyed her that she took such care in dressing and he apparently took none. But she must listen attentively to his tale about the sergeant and what the fellows in the barracks had said. She mustn’t appear embarrassed by him; she mustn’t appear ashamed of him.

Seated across from her at a table in the restaurant, he watched her worshipfully. She smiled back kindly and with a little embarrassment. The food was good, and she ate steadily without talking much. At the next table a young ensign was eating alone. She noticed that he was a clean, strong man who yet had a delicacy about him. She wondered idly if he had a sweetheart and, if she existed, where she was. If Ed were only more like this ensign!

Outside it had become dark. She liked gay colored electric signs, the honking of automobile horns, the clanging trolleys, the hum of motors, and the lighted store windows. Men in uniform and girls were everywhere. She smiled back kindly and with a little embarrassment. The food was good, and she ate steadily without talking much. At the next table a young ensign was eating alone. She noticed that he was a clean, strong man who yet had a delicacy about him. She wondered idly if he had a sweetheart and, if she existed, where she was. If Ed were only more like this ensign!

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He was soon holding her hand when they were seated in the theater. The films dragged their way endlessly through the second feature, a news reel, the previews, and finally the main feature. When the picture became unbearably dull, she looked about the audience to amuse herself. It was like a dream . . . . How had she ever got in the midst of this sea of backs of people’s heads? How had she ever got into this dark cavern where all the couples she could see were holding hands? And what was she doing here, sitting holding the big hand of a boy who was almost a stranger, with a boy she didn’t actively dislike, but who certainly didn’t interest her? The back of her head and neck began to ache; her hand in his was sweaty and uncomfortable. He no longer paid attention to the film, and instead was giving her pained amorous glances which annoyed her.

She was glad to be outside in the air again. She really didn’t want anything to drink, but he was trying hard to show her a good time. To cooperate would be the only proper thing, then, she thought. Again she found herself at a small table and smiling out of kindness. His puppy-dog eyes were adoring her. She sleepily watched the dancing couples and some half drunk and very gay lieutenants at a nearby table. In the crowd she saw a girl she knew, a skinny blonde. The place was hot and blue with cigarette smoke. She wanted to be outside in the air again.

He hailed a cab to take her home. He had been very kind tonight. Going home in a cab was so much nicer than going home on streetcars. Yes, he was very kind, although so unlike what she wanted . . . . She saw that he was uncomfortable, seated beside her. Perhaps he wasn’t too simple to realize what was going on in her mind. Maybe he did realize that she was going out with him merely because everyone else she knew was gone and she was bored and lonely. Poor kid, he had such a crush on her. She felt sorry for him and ashamed of herself and moved toward him.