

Should we marry the opposite sex?

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My vacation was only two days away. The plans had been made long before — Carcassonne and the golden sunlight of southern France. Those two days were halcyon. Our relationship had subtly changed, and much for the better. And yet . . . and yet?

Things seemed to be working out beautifully. The day before I was due to leave, Terry heard of a better job in the South and he snapped it up.

What are we made of anyway? Here, with happiness in my hands, why should I not wipe out, erase completely the one small uncertainty, the little nagging, nasty doubt? Wo plants nettles in our gardens?

On the morning I left he took off from work to meet me at the station. There was a long black smudge on his cheek. And, oh Lord, the colour of his hair! We had time for a beer and he joked with me, calling me all sorts of names, in high good humor. But I knew what lay behind all this abuse.

He walked me to the train. I found my seat, lowered the window, and looked down at him for what I thought was the last time. Would it be? He was not grinning now, but a faint smile quirked the corners of his lips. «And thanks a lot, Mac, old boy,» he said.

He reached his hand up to mine. I felt his strong fingers around my own. The whistle blew, the train moved out.

(To be concluded)

by Philip Young

Should we marry the opposite sex ?

By JOHN FARLAND

I knew a girl who looked like Elizabeth Taylor. I could offer her only the love of an intimate friend, because I am homosexual.

Time after time, this girl (I shall call her «Carolyn») fell in love with gay men. I'm thankful that she didn't fall for me.

At the time I met Carolyn, she was in love with a man I felt certain was gay. Although she was aware of his past, she was optimistic about her chances. After they had gone together for several months, he decided that it should end. Her reaction was most tragic, her condition being aggravated by a temporary physical impairment.

I tried to help her by several means which were futile. Then, I wrote a story for her, which I like to think helped her some. She cried when she read it. In reading «her story,» Carolyn was able to feel sorry for someone besides herself, because she realized that her story was also my story, from a time long past.

Later, I lost Carolyn's friendship. The last I heard of her, she was working in the Salvation Army, in Greenwich Village, New York.

Here is Carolyn's story, which I called, «I Married a Homosexual.»

Yes, I'm certain that it's right for me to divorce my husband, Bob. I would not want the marriage to last — even if it could. He's a wonderful guy in many respects, but a marriage without love wouldn't work. I started out to take

just a short walk, but my problems are big, so I need a long walk. I'm sitting in a park now; the pleasant scenes here may help me forget — what I want to forget.

I did love Bob at first, but after all we've been through, I don't think I could ever love him again. Bob is homosexual.

I doubt that he ever really loved me, although he may have thought he did. I think he was always in love with that — — that Joe.

But what can Bob see in that Joe? Can it be that Bob really loves him? Maybe it's just that he hasn't ever really been in love.

How was it that I fell in love with Bob? I guess it was that warmth he has, that extreme consideration — and his way of listening so earnestly to everything I say. How was it that I met him? Oh, yes — Mr. Schmidt — in his voice class in college. Mr. Schmidt suggested to Bob that I might like to sing in that vocal number in the Campus Revue.

My first impression of Bob was good, and I think he liked me, too. He seemed quite tall and rather average in appearance, but his personality made him seem quite attractive, in rather a boyish way. I remember the thought occurred to me was that he must be a very happy person.

He asked me to go for coffee with him. We sat in that intimate corner booth in the drugstore. We talked for almost an hour, and it seemed as if I'd always known him; but then I realized there was never anyone like him before in my life.

I remember thinking I could fall in love with him very easily. I never once thought that he might be homosexual, or «gay» — as he calls it. «Gay» is a funny way to describe their life. What's so gay about it? They must feel so unhappy — they live in constant fear of being found out. I don't think Bob's feeling so gay now.

Anyway, Bob seemed normal to me, most of the time. Sometimes, he'd start fooling around, acting effeminate and highly anxious, but I thought that was just his way. «Camping» — he calls it.

When we were working on that college show, I noticed that Bob would become nervous sometimes and I thought he would start hitting people, but he didn't. Bob is almost a perfectionist. He was so upset once that I thought he was going to quit; but he didn't, and the show was very good, perhaps mainly because of Bob's concentration on detail.

After the show was over, he called me or came to see me almost every day. We saw movies, mostly musicals, and we went to the beach. He loves swimming as much, if not more than I do.

I remember wondering when he would kiss me. I think it was over a month after we started dating before he kissed me. I was so thrilled and surprised when he finally did. I think that was when I decided that I loved him.

It was about four or five days after that when he told me his theory about growing in love, rather than falling in love. He told me about a girl he'd been in love with in high school: she fell in love with someone else.

I once had a fear that he was pushing himself to fall in love with me, but I felt guilty in thinking that, so I didn't think about it further. Once, I thought that he might be homosexual, but then I laughed at myself, because I concluded that I mistook a casual glance for one of desire.

Bob's calmness over long periods is maddening. I once said, «Bob, why

don't you scream at me once in a while — you're too easy-going.» He just smiled.

I know he thinks a lot. He tries to be quite a philosopher. He's always reciting theories about emotions and creativeness. Some of his ideas are very good, but some of them are ridiculous, like his theory about not believing in destiny. I know my life is planned out.

Oh, what's the use of thinking about it. It's all over now. He's just part of the past — as if he were dead. I wonder what he's doing now. After we were married, everything went along well for a few weeks. We were so happy together. I remember the cute little apartment we first moved into, and how he'd smile at me when he came home; and — but there's no use reminiscing now. After a few weeks, he started acting restless; I was so shocked the first day he lost his temper with me, because he'd never done it before. He said, «Something's wrong, Margie, but I don't know what it is. It's not your fault.» This puzzled me, but I said nothing.

That night, I was awakened by Bob's talking in his sleep; he mumbled mostly, but I did understand his saying, «Don't hate me, Joe.» I wakened him, and asked him what he was dreaming about. He seemed frightened and he asked me what he had said. When I told him, he said, «Why would I dream about Joe? What could it mean?» I wondered what was bothering Bob, and what could Bob do that would make Joe hate him. I do admire Bob for the honest, straight-forward way he told me about his being in love with Joe; but, I was as shocked as if he had slapped me across the face.

How was it that he said it to me? He just said, «Margie, I have something to talk to you about. You certainly realize that something is bothering me. I don't know what you'll think of me, but I must — I want you to believe me when I say I was sincere in what I did; I thought I was doing the right thing. I thought I was in love with you — but that's the problem — I don't love you. I'm sorry, Margie, but I don't love you. I thought I did, and I tried to love you, but I don't. It's not your fault — or mine; it just happened.»

I couldn't believe it. I asked him, «Are you sure, Bob? Are you in love with someone else?» He answered, «This may surprise you even more — but I'm in love with a man; yes, a man. That means I'm homosexual — I'm queer; I'm in love with Joe — Joe Mitchum.»

I couldn't believe it at first; then I felt my world crumbling around me. I was helpless; what should I do?

I ran out of the apartment and toward the park. I felt I had to get away. I walked like I'm doing today. After a while, I became more relaxed. Then I decided to go back to the apartment. Bob was there, still waiting for me. He said, «Margie, can you forgive me? Believe me, I'm sorry.» I said, «But why didn't you tell me before? Didn't you know you were — that way before we were married?» Bob answered, «No, Margie, I didn't know; I knew I was in love with Joe, years ago, but I thought I could fall in love with a woman. I thought I was in love with you. You were attractive to me and I thought it would turn into love; but I was only fooling myself — I was just playing a role. Now, I realize my mistake; I'm still in love with Joe, and I can't help it. Do you remember that night when I talked in my sleep? I was having a nightmare, but I didn't dare tell you about it. I dreamed that I had tripped Joe and he fell down a long flight of stairs. When I reached the bottom of the stairs, he

was lying face down, motionless, with a phonograph record in his hand. Joe wouldn't speak to me — but he finally got to his feet and walked away. I begged him to speak to me, but he looked straight ahead and kept walking. I thought he hated me. After you wakened me, I tried to interpret my dream, but I couldn't. I thought it might mean that Joe was hurt by my marrying you and he would never forgive me. I wondered why I should care about Joe so much, unless I was really still in love with him. Then I suddenly wanted to be with Joe; but I couldn't leave you in the middle of the night. Then, I felt guilty for resenting you. I wanted to talk to someone about my fears and my thoughts, but I was afraid you'd not understand. The next day, I went to Joe's apartment. It was so wonderful being with Joe, again; then I knew I still loved him. Margie, if you knew Joe better, you'd understand how almost anyone could fall in love with him. He's such a swell guy.»

It didn't seem real. It was like a dream. This was the Bob I thought I knew so well. When would I wake up and learn it was just a dream? But it was really happening — and to me.

I said, «I'm going to divorce you, Bob; you can't expect me to stay married to — to you — knowing what you are. If you don't love me, you don't want to stay married to me, do you?»

Bob answered, «I don't wish to divorce you, but on the other hand, it isn't fair to you to stay married to me. You deserve a husband who really loves you and can fulfill that love. I'm sorry, Margie; I do love you in a way, but it's like the love for a sister or a mother. I'm sorry it had to happen this way.»

Bob's so nice in some ways. Why did he have to be in love with Joe? We could be so happy together. Maybe, if I just waited a while, Bob would stop loving Joe and would fall in love with me. Maybe I shouldn't divorce him — at least, not for a while. Maybe, if I kept showing my love for him he'd really fall in love with me. It would be worth a try.

I wonder what my mother would say, if she knew about this? I know she doesn't believe in divorce, but would she think that I should stay married to a man who didn't love me, a man not just in love with another woman, but in love with a man? I know Mother doesn't believe in promiscuity in marriage, but can Bob's relation with a man be considered as adultery? What is right?

Oh, why did this have to happen to me? Did fate plot this terrible situation? It's the worst thing that's ever happened to me.

No, it might happen the same way all over again. I'd better divorce him, forget him, and marry some «straight» guy — as Bob would say. Yes, I'm sure I'm right to divorce him. I'm going to stick to my decision.

«You can get resigned to something without getting used to it.»

(Thomas White)

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Int. Freundschaftsloge (IFLO) Postfach 1399, Bremen.

Organ: IFLO-Bundesbrief.

Verein für humanitäre Lebensgestaltung (VhL), Kettenhofweg 46, Frankfurt a. M.

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