

My Life with George Burns

"Plenty of women have told me how glad they are that he's mine"

By
**GRACIE
ALLEN**



Gracie and George: "Due to bad audiences, stupid theater managers, his success was nothing."

LOOKING back over the twenty-five years that George Burns has been my husband, I can only say they've been the best and the happiest years of my entire married life. We met at a party in Hoboken and George has always said it was a case of love at first sight, but it wasn't really. I'll admit we loved Hoboken, but it wasn't the first time we'd seen it. I can't remember now who gave that party or who took me... but I've never forgotten George. He was so gay and sophisticated as he took me home in a taxi... and, to make sure I wouldn't forget him, he wrote his name and phone number on the I.O.U. he gave me for the cab fare.

He also gave me a pass to the theater in Union Hill, New Jersey, where he was doing a vaudeville act. I went to the matinee the next day and was I surprised! George was being co-starred with a movie called *The Birth of a Nation*, a newsreel and ten other acts, but he was so modest he hadn't even mentioned them. I felt very proud too. There must have been eight or nine people in that audience and I was the only one with a pass.

Anyway, you can imagine how thrilled and flattered I was when he asked me to become his partner in a vaudeville act. Of course, I'd had quite a little stage experience, but I certainly wasn't in a class with a comedian like George. But he insisted. That shows how sweet and generous he is. Due to bad audiences and stupid theater managers, his success was nothing... but even so, he was ready and willing to share it with me.

Of course, the world knows George Burns as an actor, a singer and a fine showman... but people are always asking me what he's like in private life as a husband. I think he's simply wonderful! I'll admit, many husbands have more money than George. Many are better looking and have more glamour. Some may even make their wives happier. But I don't want money and good looks and personality and happiness... I'd rather have George. And I'm not the only one who feels that way about him. Plenty of women have told me how glad they are that he's mine.

Naturally, the only way a husband and wife can really be happy is to be considerate and unselfish. They must be willing to give up things for each other,

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GEORGE BURNS *continued*

"George is convinced th

and no husband could be nicer in this respect than George. Take the time I suggested that he stop smoking cigars so we could economize. George gave them up. Then he suggested that I stop buying so many hats. He gave that up too.

I guess the nicest thing about George is that he leaves all the important thinking to me, although I always pretend I'm letting him help with it. I suppose everyone enjoys doing whatever they do best, and in our marriage, it has worked out perfectly. George is simply crazy about singing . . . in fact, it's his weakness . . . and mine is thinking. It's only natural because thinking ran in my family. I know it sounds like bragging, but George is convinced that I was an infant prodigy. He's always saying that I must have been as smart when I was a year old as I am now.

Another thing . . . We're so fortunate to have Sandra and Ronnie, our teen-age daughter and son. George has all the qualities that make an ideal father, but they'd all be wasted if we didn't have the children. He loves to have Sandra and Ronnie bring their friends to the house. Most of Ronnie's pals are about six feet tall and strong as bulls. Yet when George shakes hands with them, he never winces or wimpers. He just goes upstairs and holds his hand in hot water till the pain leaves. And he never scolds

George vs. other people: "He's very strict, and when he decides to lay do



was an infant prodigy"

when he finds Sandra necking in the den with one of her giant boy friends. He says if they're going to smooch, he'd rather have them doing it at home. Actually, I'm sure Sandra is only necking because she's trying to please her father. . . . I've heard him tell her many times that she must remember to wash her face . . . and neck every night.

But don't get the idea that George allows the children and their friends to run over him. He's very strict, and when he decides to lay down the law, he can make them do almost anything they want to do! And George is brave too. Just to give you an idea of how brave he is and how rough he can be when he wants to, listen to this. Onenight, George and I were having dinner at a night club. Silky Thompson, the notorious gangster and gunman, came in and told George that he had just robbed a bank and he wanted to use the fifty thousand dollars he'd stolen to back George in a show. George gave Silky the beating of his life and threw him out of the place. Then we had chocolate eclairs for dessert.

(NOTE: Just because the part about Silky Thompson robbing the bank and George beating him up and throwing him out isn't actually true, the Editor of LOOK Magazine insists that I say it isn't. All right . . . but even if it isn't true, that's the way George would have handled it . . . so it's still one of

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He can make them do almost anything they want to do. He's brave too."



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George and Gracie's kin: "Even if all my relatives don't like him, Gee knows I love him. So why should he worry? He can't please everybody."

GEORGE BURNS *continued*

"George thinks that my family doesn't like him"

the most exciting moments in our married life."

Getting back to George . . . Well, what more could any wife ask? He's a perfect husband, a devoted father, a true friend, a fine comedian, a sugar-throated singer and a splendid man. My goodness, he's so many wonderful things all rolled into one that sometimes I feel as if I were married to a bigamist! Many people would say that Fate brought us together. That may be what brought us together, but it was due to the meat shortage that George and I were married. We were playing a week at a theater in San Francisco and one night George took me to dinner at my mother's. There were six at the table and my mother only had four steaks, so she said: "Gracie, why don't you and George elope?" So we did.

The only thing that has ever caused any arguments between George and me is my family. For some reason, George thinks my family doesn't like him. That's ridiculous. He's sensitive, I guess, because my mother locks the front door when she sees George coming, but it doesn't mean anything. She does the same thing with my grandfather, but it isn't because she doesn't like him. It's so he'll climb up the rain spout to get to his room. The doctor told my mother that walking upstairs might be a strain on my grandfather's heart. Anyway, even if all my relatives don't like him, George knows that I love him. So why should he worry? He can't please everybody.

** (More of the adventures of George and Gracie will be on the George Burns and Gracie Allen show, CBS-TV Thursday, December 11, 8 p.m. EST.)*

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