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## Country Philosopher—

# *The Winning of a Kiss*

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by Arthur Amos Holmes

When I was a young man I was denied those inalienable rights granted to those in search of romance. Girls had a habitual and sorrowful way of ignoring me.

And I just couldn't understand it. I admit I wasn't the most handsome boy in the neighborhood but I also couldn't be termed gruesome. I had nice white teeth, colorful red hair, and a physique that was quite unusual for a boy of sixteen.

What it all boiled down to was the fact that girls, in my day, preferred to give their interest (and other things) to boys whose features were pretty, rather than rugged. And I definitely wasn't pretty.

If you looked like Cary Grant, you had it made. If you resembled Tyrone Power, you were an instant success. But I looked more like Mickey Rooney and this was a terrible obstacle to overcome. I began losing

weight, there appeared an alarming shortage of red corpuscles, and I was literally starving to death from lack of female companionship.

And then I met June Thornberry.

It was the very first day of the school year when I noticed a new girl was sitting two desks in front of me. I doubt if God ever made a more delectable creature. Long blond hair, blue, blue eyes, and a physique that was quite unusual for a girl of sixteen. Each morning as I passed her desk I would use that peculiar sophistication found in youth, and say, "You look just like my sister."

This was really the wrong thing to say because my sister was the ugliest scoundrel that ever lived. My sister was twenty-eight years old and had never had a date. I should have been more clever. I should have said, "you have a physique that is quite unusual for a girl of sixteen." or "Haven't we met someplace before?" or "Pardon me, did you drop this baseball glove?" But I wasn't clever, and I wasn't sophisticated, and I spent almost the entire school year sitting at my desk drooling.

And then one day, a week before school was to let out, I caught up with her on the street as we were going home. Blushing a deep scarlet I asked her if I might carry her books. Unfortunately she agreed to this proposition. I say unfortunately

because her books had a combined weight of over sixty pounds. When I took this burden from her I heard my back crack in two places. But I was so much in love, so terribly delighted that I was with her, that the gigantic, ripping pain of the broken back was ignored.

When we got to her house she invited me in. Her parents weren't home and we sat on a lovely divan in her living room. There was no sense in wasting precious moments so I reached over immediately and started wiggling my lips in the direction of her lips. She pulled back, and said, "Amos, I'm sorry, but I don't kiss on the first date." Somehow I knew I would never find myself in the position of ever getting a second date.

June was talking about her biology class when her dog, Poopsie, walked into the room. The dog came right over to me and cocked his right leg. I said to myself...surely this dog isn't going to use my leg for a bathroom when...in a flash...I became aware that June's dog was using my leg for a bathroom.

"POOPSIE" cried June, "YOU ARE A NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY DOG."

June got up from the divan and went upstairs to get a towel. Poopsie was standing with his back to me. I drew

back my leg and I kicked that dog clear across the room. Poopsie yelped with the enthusiasm of a trumpeting elephant and hurriedly crawled under an over-stuffed chair.

When June returned to the room, she inquired, "Where's Poopsie?"

"Gosh" I said, "he was here a minute ago."

June sat down beside me, and said, "Amos, I'm so proud of you. Poopsie didn't mean to do what he did to you. He honestly didn't. Now he will spend the rest of the day with a bad conscience."

"That's a shame," I said.

"Most young men I know," continued June, "would have gotten angry at what Poopsie did. They might even have kicked him. But you...you in your compassion and wisdom...didn't indulge in juvenile revenge...and Amos...I admire you for that. In fact, I admire you so much that you may kiss me if you still want to."

June lay back against a pillow and I leaned gently on that unique physique. My lips found hers in an exploding ecstasy that lasted well into the afternoon.

And all the time I was kissing this succulent creature I had the full knowledge that Poopsie wasn't the only dog in the house with a bad conscience.