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**THE ROMANCE OF A BUSY BROKER
- O.HENRY**

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O. HENRY'S

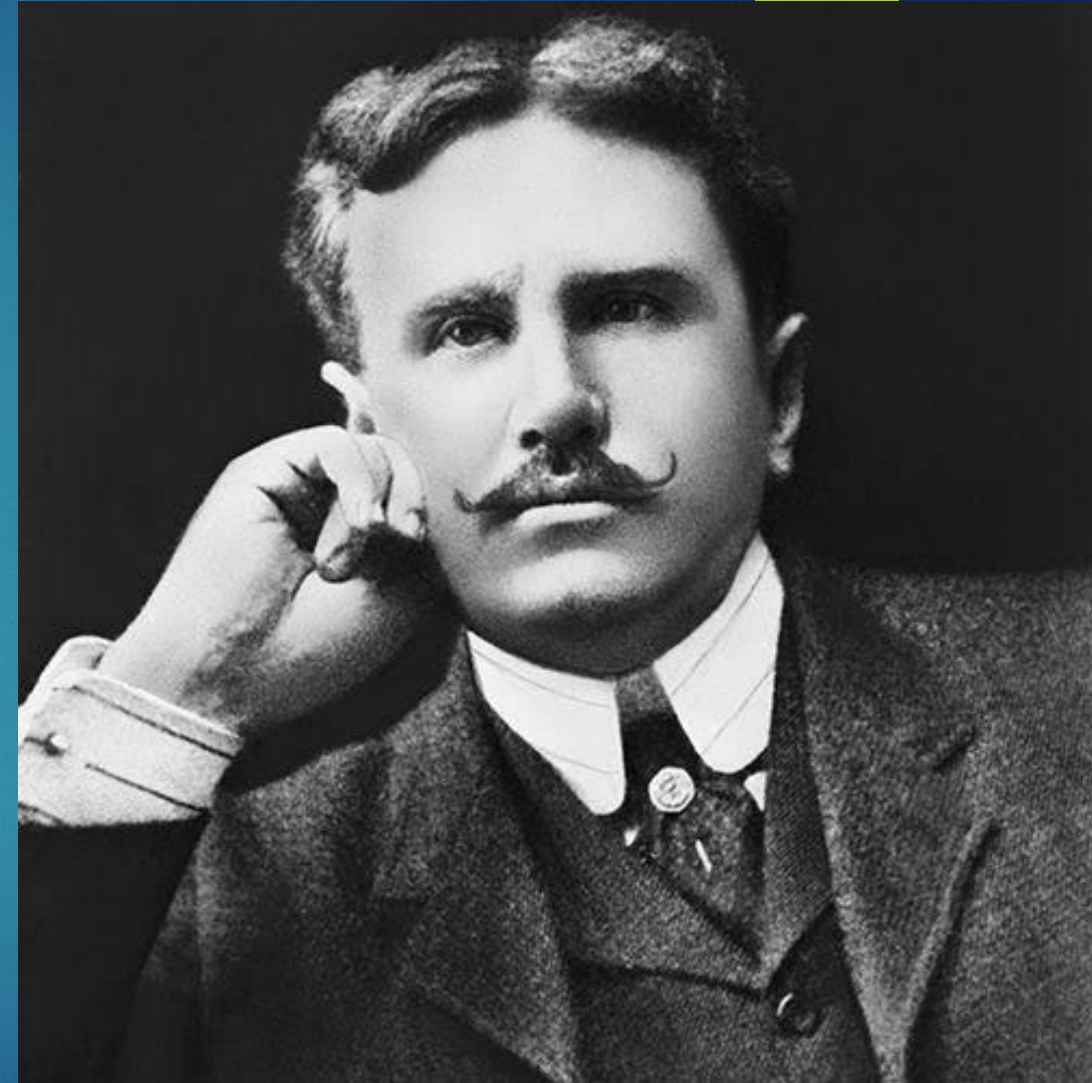
The ROMANCE OF A BUSY BROKER




By Jeff Walker

William Sydney Porter

- ▶ He was born in North Carolina, America.
- ▶ He wrote under the pseudonym O. Henry.
- ▶ His stories became popular because of their human touch, humour, Compassion and gentle irony.
- ▶ His outstanding technical device- the surprising twist in the tail gives an astonishing end to his stories.
- ▶ In this story ,O. Henry has narrated an incident in the life of Harvey Maxwell.



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- ▶ Pitcher, who worked in the office of Harvey Maxwell, **broker**, usually allowed his face to show no feeling. This morning he allowed his face to show interest and surprise when Mr. Maxwell entered. It was half past nine, and Mr. Maxwell was with his young lady secretary.
 - ▶ “Good morning, Pitcher,” said Maxwell. He rushed to his table as if he were going to jump over it. Then he began to look at the many, many letters and other papers waiting there for him.
 - ▶ The young lady had been Maxwell’s secretary for a year. She was very beautiful, and very different from most other secretaries.


On this morning she seemed to shine softly. Her eyes were dreaming but bright. Her face was warmly colored, and her expression was happy. Pitcher watched her. She was different this morning. She seemed not to know what to do. Once she went over to Maxwell's table, near enough for him to see that she was there.

The machine sitting at that table was no longer a man. It was a busy New York broker.






- ▶ “Mr. Pitcher,” she said, “did Mr. Maxwell talk to you yesterday about getting another secretary?” “He did,” Pitcher answered.
- ▶ This day was Harvey Maxwell’s busy day. And there were storms in the business world, fearful storms. Every storm was felt in the broker’s office.
- ▶ Maxwell moved his chair against the wall. Now he was like a dancer. He jumped from the machine to his table to the door and back again



And among all these things there was a young lady. “Lady for that job as secretary,” said Pitcher.

“You are losing your mind, Pitcher,” said Maxwell. “Why should I tell you anything like that? Miss Leslie is a perfect secretary. She can keep the job as long as she wants it.” To the young lady he said, “There is no job here.”

- ▶ The rush of business grew wilder and faster. Maxwell was working like some fine, strong machine. He was working as fast as he could. He never had to stop to think. He was never wrong. He was always ready to decide and to act. He worked as a clock works. This was the world of business. It was not a human world, or the world of nature.
- ▶ When the dinner hour was near, things grew quieter.
- ▶ And through the window came a soft sweet smell of flowers. For a moment the broker was held there, without moving. For this smell of flowers belonged to Miss Leslie. It was hers and hers only.

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- ▶ The smell seemed almost to make her stand there before him. The world of business grew smaller and smaller. And she was in the next room—twenty steps away.
 - ▶ “I’ll do it now,” said Maxwell, half aloud. “I’ll ask her now. I wonder why I didn’t do it long ago.”
 - ▶ He rushed into the other room. He stopped beside the secretary.
 - ▶ She looked up at him with a smile. Warm color came into her face, and her eyes were soft and kind.

- ▶ Maxwell's hands were still full of papers. "Miss Leslie," he began quickly, "I have only a moment. I want to say something in that moment. Will you be my wife? I haven't had time to make love to you in the usual way. But I really do love you. Talk quick, please. I have to get back to my work."
- ▶ "Oh, what are you talking about?" cried the young lady. She rose to her feet and looked at him, round-eyed.
- ▶ "Don't you understand?" said Maxwell. "I want you to marry me. I love you, Miss Leslie. I wanted to tell you. So I took this moment when I wasn't too busy. But they're calling me now. Tell them to wait a minute, Pitcher. Won't you, Miss Leslie?"

The secretary acted very strangely. At first she seemed lost in surprise. Then tears began to run from her wondering eyes. And then she smiled through her tears, and one of her arms went around the broker's neck.

“I know now,” she said, softly. “It’s this business. It has put everything else out of your head. I was afraid at first. Don’t you remember, Harvey? We were married last evening at eight, in the Little Church around the Corner.”



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