



# A Matter of Love & Death

by Arthur Larsen

**T**HE ACT of making a will often brings out the worst in men and women who are lovesick or sick of love. Unable to resist getting in that last word, many make it an eloquent one.

A prime example concerns the man who left his wife everything he owned provided she remarry after his death. Unfortunately, that provision wasn't a touching demonstration of his concern; he just wanted some other man to be as miserable as he had been.

One wealthy husband left his wife \$1,000,000 on condition that she daily smoke five of the cigars she had forbidden him to enjoy during his lifetime. Another seemingly generous husband willed a large sum to his better half. The catch was that she could use it only to pay for her burial.

A thrifty but cynical Glasgow gentleman left his wife just enough money to buy a handkerchief to cry into. An Italian agreed to bequeath his unbeloved mate \$500,000 if she entered a convent and spent the rest of her life praying for his soul. A penurious husband presented his wife with one shilling, her punishment for picking his pocket too often.

One of the strangest bequests ever made in the name of love involved a man who not only left his business to his chief clerk but threw in his wife besides. Fortunately, the lady seemed happy about the arrangement and legalized matters by marrying the lucky clerk. A certain financier's will had a similar twist. It read: "To my wife I leave her lover and the knowledge that I wasn't the fool she thought I was."

Though wives generally have fewer worldly goods to leave behind, they too contribute to odd will lore. As witness the woman who directed that \$1.00 from her estate be invested and the interest on it given to her spouse "as evidence of my estimate of his worth." Another wife left her estate to seven pet lizards, her husband to collect only as each of the pampered creatures died.

A Kentucky lady who had loved not wisely but too often directed that tobacco be grown on her grave and given to her grieving lovers to smoke.

A grateful Frenchman gallantly left his cash to the woman who had refused his offer of marriage 20 years before—thus permitting him to enjoy the carefree life of a bachelor!

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