

Generic Radio Workshop Script Library [\(BACK\)](#)**Series: The Halls of Ivy****Show: Professor Warren's Romantic Folly****Date: Nov 28 1951**

ANNOUNCER:

The Halls of Ivy starring Mr. And Mrs. Ronald Colman.

MUSIC:

Theme up and play brief intro and then singers do the first two lines of theme song?then hum under?

ANNOUNCER: Welcome again to Ivy. Ivy College that is. In the little town of Ivy, USA. For many families breakfast is a small pandemonium filled with the clatter of cups, the confusion of tongues, desperate last gulps of scorching coffee and the mad dash to the bus station. But for Doctor William Todhunter Hall, president of Ivy, and his wife, Victoria, it's usually an unruffled few moments put aside for their private lives. This morning, for instance, Victoria is arranging a bowl of flowers on the table while Doctor Hall is thoughtfully staring at a highly polished spoon.

MUSIC:

Theme fades as lines begin

VICTORIA: There, now. Nothing like a few well-raised ranuncu ? ranun. Hmm, what's the plural of ranunculus, Toddy?

HALL: Oh, you could express it in three different ways. One, Latin: ranunculae. Two, English: ranunculuses. Three, idiomatic: ah, some of these pretty whatch-ma-callits.

VICTORIA: Oh, yeah. I'll take the idiotic way. But they do make a pretty centerpiece, don't they?

HALL: Ah, ha, they do indeed. Yes, they start the morning off very well. But it is the picture of Victoria, well and beautifully arranged in the opposite chair, which sustains me for the rest of the day.

VICTORIA: Oh, darling. I do feel lovely and conceited. At breakfast, too.

HALL: Where my emotions for you are concerned the time of day is unimportant. My heart ticks away but it strikes no hours. Besides, I've never subscribed to the popular belief, originated by some sour cynic and perpetuated by comic strip artists, that the breakfast table is necessarily a battle ground, strewn with bad manners and resounding with the clash of personalities.

VICTORIA:

That's because you are a dear love.

HALL: As my father used to say, the world would be a happier place if people would start the day by drinking a toast to someone rather than just eating it with someone.

VICTORIA: Ah?that's a wonderful idea. A toast?

SFX: Glasses clink

VICTORIA: Here's to William, the light of my life, from a woman who is extremely happy that I happen to be his wife. Well, the meter may be a little bit ragged but the sentiment is sincere.

HALL: Well, the meter doesn't matter as long as I did.

VICTORIA: Did what?

HALL: Meet her.

VICTORIA: I'm glad you did, too. And not to interrupt a nice sentimental conversation, but may I ask why you keep staring into that teaspoon? Hmm? What's the matter with it? Do you want a clean one?

HALL: No. No. No No. Its quite clean and handsomely polished. No, I was merely fascinated by the optical illusion caused by the reflections in a concave surface. In it I am upside down. It's very refreshing.

VICTORIA: Refreshing?

HALL: Yes. It's a matter of perspective, of course. But any device which can show things in a new light is both stimulating and therapeutic.

VICTORIA: Ah. You mean if the world could see itself reflected in a teaspoon it might stop waving its knives.

HALL: Something like that, yes. And then, too, there's the school of thought which believes that standing one's head early in the morning is stimulating to the brain. It's seems good for-

SFX: Doorbell

VICTORIA: I'll toss you to see who walks to front door on his hands. Have you got a quarter?

HALL: Ha, ha. No. So I'll volunteer.

SFX: Footsteps

Victoria: (Off) If it's a salesman working his way through

college, tell him so are we!

SFX: Door opens

HALL: Well, Professor Warren! It's good to see you. Come in, come in.

SFX: Footsteps continue until Victoria speaks
Door closes

WARREN: I know it's an unholy hour to call, Doc, but I'm on a tight schedule today. Good morning, Mrs. Hall.

VICTORIA: Well, hello stranger. Come in and join us for a cup of coffee.

WARREN: Alright, Mrs. Hall, but only four teaspoons full. And pull down the shades. I've already had my allowance this morning. That housekeeper of mine counts every sip I swallow. I think she's in the secret service of my life insurance company.

HALL & VICTORIA: (Both laugh)

SFX: Cups clinking under next line

HALL: And how is the faithful Miss Prentice?

WARREN: Minding my business as usual. How are you nice people?

VICTORIA: Much better now that our favorite history professor has finally decided to pay us a visit. Here's your coffee.

SFX: Cups clink

WARREN: Oh, a full cup. Thanks for contributing to my delinquency. I never realized how much I miss you two. Since I've been fighting with the publishers of that nauseating monstrosity of mine, which appeared under the revolting pen name of Llewellyn Lafayette. Now they want me to answer all his fan mail. Geeee.

HALL: But I understood you had become reconciled to your triumph as a popular novelist.

WARREN: Oh, yes. But who am I kidding? I'm a glorious failure wallowing in a disgusting success.

VICTORIA: And you love it. It obviously agrees with you.

HALL: Yes, yes. Now tell us, professor, how was your lecture tour this summer?

WARREN: Well, Doc, after autographing the umpteenth thousandth copy of

"The Heart of Passion" I kidded myself into believing that the honking gander that was old Professor Warren had suddenly become the singing swan that is Llewellyn Lafayette.

HALL: Ha, ha, ha.

WARREN: Say, Mrs. Hall. Before I forget what I really came for?have you got a lace tablecloth I can borrow?

VICTORIA: A lace table cloth? Why of course! And you're more than welcome to it.

WARREN: And maybe four fancy napkins? I know I'm more the arsenic than the old lace type, but frankly I didn't know where else to go on such short notice.

HALL: Well, I'm glad you came to us. But you sound so desperate about it.

VICTORIA: Yes, are you testing out a new washing powder to win a prize? You know, "I like Quincy's Rinseys because..." in 25 words or less.

WARREN: Nope. Nothing as easy as that. I'm giving an unexpected dinner tomorrow night and I need you two even more than your tablecloth.

VICTORIA: Ohhh?that's an irresistible invitation, Professor. Thank you.

WARREN: About seven. Black tie, if I can find mine.

SFX: Footsteps

Warren (Exiting) So long folks! I gotta meet a plane.

HALL & VICTORIA: Goodbye! Goodbye Professor.

SFX: Door opens/closes

VICTORIA: How about that new pin-striped suit and the flower in his buttonhole?

HALL: Yes.

VICTORIA: And the haircut. You don't think he's beginning to believe his own publicity, do you?

HALL: Something's happened. I'm familiar with his contempt for convention, but ah, this anxiety of his about a lace tablecloth is a new and baffling facet of his character.

VICTORIA: And he was so anxious about it he forgot to take it with him. I

have finally met an absent-minded professor.

HALL: This dinner! It seems to be an affair of state. Vicky, I wonder if it could be his publisher who is coming.

SFX: Door bell

VICTORIA: Well, absent-minded professor regains memory. You get the door, Toddy, and I'll get the tablecloth.

SFX: Door opens

HALL: Ah?your tablecloth, I presume, professor.

WARREN: Yep. Guess I left my head at home this morning. Doc, I used to think I remembered everything. Now I realize I just ignored everything I forgot.

HALL: Yes, man doesn't realize how much he is indebted to his subconscious. He can do something without knowing why and then find several splendid reasons for having done it. It may account for many of history's heroes.

VICTORIA: (Entering) Here you are, professor. And the napkins.

WARREN: Thanks, Mrs. Hall. Umm?it's gonna be a party, mind you. In fact, just you two of you and?ah?heh, heh?Fern.

(PAUSE)

VICTORIA: Fern?

WARREN: Yes, Mrs. Winthrop.

HALL: Mrs. Winthrop? Have we met her?

WARREN: No. I was gonna keep her a secret until the psychological moment, but I guess I'd better prepare you for the shock. Don't ask me how it happened, but I've got me a lady friend.

VICTORIA: Why that's wonderful, Professor Warren.

HALL: I wouldn't call it shocking. But it is a delightful surprise. Congratulations!

WARREN: Well, thanks. In a way you might say it was a forgotten moment in my past that caught up with me in, of all places, Salina, Kansas. I was out there on my lecture tour. Fern's quite the literary light out there, you know. President of the Byron Society, no less. A widow.

VICTORIA: This is the time to go widow shopping, just before Christmas.

WARREN: (Wistfully) Ahhh?yes. Charming woman. Seems to grasp things. Insight. Sympathy. Genuine enthusiasm. Never known a woman quite like Fern. Which could be explained by the fact that I've never known very many women. Oh, but Fern... Wait until you see her.

HALL: We'll be looking forward to meeting her.

VICTORIA: Is she staying here in Ivy long?

WARREN: Huh? Oh, yes, yes. She's visiting with relatives and she, ah, that is, I persuaded her to stop over at Ivy and see our campus. (Sighing)

HALL: And?

WARREN: What? What did you say?

VICTORIA: Well, ah, would you like me to wrap up the tablecloth and napkins?

WARREN: Oh, no. I haven't time, Mrs. Hall. If any of the nosy neighbors see me I'll just tell them I've started to take in washing. Wouldn't startle them half as much as the truth. Well, I've gotta be going.

VICTORIA: Bye, professor.

SFX: Door closes

VICTORIA: Well! Mrs. Winthrop explains everything.

HALL: Yes. This would be the place to say, "well, what do you know?" If either one of us ever said, "well what do you know?"

VICTORIA: (Laughs) Yes.

HALL: Which neither one of us would be caught dead saying. Which is the first time I've ever said, "caught dead."

VICTORIA: Don't worry. Your secret is safe with me.

HALL: I suppose I'm slightly staggered by the news that the last of the incorrigible bachelors has thrown in the sponge.

VICTORIA: Yes. It looks like the last of the tobacco-chewing professors is going to have to switch to bubble gum.

HALL: (Laughs) But Professor Warren! He was the one man who always

seemed to be self-sufficient, self-reliant and a self-contained entity. Ah, Vicky, I'm afraid he's, ah, got it bad.

VICTORIA: If your "it" refers to what I think it refers to, and you got "it" bad enough, it isn't bad, it's good.

MUSIC: Theme up, then under for?

ANNOUNCER: The Voice of America is bringing you this rebroadcast presentation of "The Halls of Ivy," starring Mr. And Mrs. Ronald Colman.

MUSIC: Theme back up and then fade out during?

ANNOUNCER: And now let's return to "The Halls of Ivy." Doctor and Mrs. Hall are in Professor Warren's parlor, becoming acquainted with his lady friend, Mrs. Fern Winthrop.

WARREN: Well, it's been a long time since you've been in my house, folks.

FERN: Joseph has told me so much about you two that I feel as though I've always known you.

HALL: Well, since Professor Warren always unvarnishes the truth, Mrs. Winthrop, that leaves us without a pretense to stand on.

VICTORIA: It puts us at a disadvantage? told you all about us but kept you a big secret.

WARREN: Well, Mrs. Hall, you know I suffer from a kind of natural shyness.

HALL: Yes.

WARREN: I almost said diffidence, but diffidence is used to describe someone's bad manners.

FERN: Oh, your shyness is one of your sweetest qualities, Joseph. It's what I remembered most about you.

WARREN: Uh, Fern sees me through the wrong end of the telescope. It was way back over 40 years ago?

FERN: I was just a mere wide-eyed child. I remember it as vividly as thought it were yesterday. Isn't it wonderful how fate kept us apart over the years just so we could meet again at the age of discretion? I don't believe that fate is really blind. Do you, Doctor Hall?

HALL: I, um, well, I, ah? it may be due to my own blindness, Mrs. Winthrop, but I think the best way to keep fate on your side is to

have faith.

FERN: (Laughs) Good! Good! Very nice!

WARREN: Well, fate sure lowered the boom on us tonight. Of all the times Burgess has to go and get a sick sister or something?

FERN: Now, Joseph, tell them the truth. They might as well know that your housekeeper simply walked out on you. Mrs. Hall, you have no idea how insolent she was to him. If there's anything that I loathe it's a woman who bullies a man. Oh, Joseph, dear, I meant the silver-leafed ashtrays not those old chipped glass ones.

WARREN: Couldn't find 'em, Fern.

Fern: Well, never mind dear. I always say that if a man can't be the master in his own house, well then, I think?(laughs) Oh, there I go. I haven't let anyone else get a word in edgewise. When I get started on the subject of Joseph Warren I never know when to stop.

HALL: Oh, you needn't stop, Mrs. Winthrop. He's one of our favorite subjects, too. With the added advantage that you can discuss him in mixed company.

WARREN: Doc, if I'm going to be in a fish bowl, everybody else has got to dive in it with me.

VICTORIA: Yes?fish bowl. That's it. I knew something was missing in this room. What happened to it, professor?

WARREN: Well, we?well, um?the fish were getting tired of looking at me anyway so I threw 'em out. Along with that old leather chair of mine.

FERN: Mrs. Hall, the minute I stepped into this room I could sense the conflict. Why that hideous old chair quarreled with everything else in here.

WARREN: Mostly me. Fern's made me realize that that chair is the story of my life. Comfortable, hide-bound and sagging.

FERN: When I saw Joseph this summer he kept apologizing for his age and I said age is only a habit. Now that chair was one of his habits. (Laughs) Joseph has a whole new life ahead of him and I don't just mean because of his novel. There's real poetry in Joseph.

WARREN: I don't claim to be any Lord Byron, but I used to be pretty good at limericks. Wrote one about you once, Doc.

HALL: Really?

Can you remember it?

WARREN: Can a mother forget her children? Certainly I remember it.
(Clears throat)
Will Hall, Ph.D. and M.A.
Solves difficult problems each day,
To keep his school in the groove.
Which just goes to prove,
He's the Will that proves there's a way.

HALL: Very flattering, professor. (Laughs) And it's refreshing to be
the subject of a limerick that can be quoted without sending the
children out of the room..

FERN: I'm so glad you mentioned Byron, Joseph. I can't wait to talk to
you people about him. He's my subject, you know. I can quote him
for hours and hours if I get started. Oh?oh?you people must be
starving. Of course I hadn't expected to cook tonight but when
that woman left so unexpectedly?

VICTORIA: Is there something I can do to help, Mrs. Winthrop?

HALL: I used to slice bread quite neatly until the bakers, in a fit of
jealousy, started selling it already cut.

FERN: Oh, no thank you. It's all in the oven. It'll be done in 15
minutes or so. I do have a few canapes. Will you excuse me?

SFX: Footsteps

FERN: And Joseph?

WARREN: Yes?

FERN: Would you mind helping me, dear?

WARREN: Make yourself at home, folks.

SFX: Footsteps

WARREN: Coming, Fern.

VICTORIA: I loved that old leather chair, Toddy. It was the nicest thing in
the whole room.

HALL: Yes, it was comfortable, wasn't it? And Burgess was a very
valuable woman.

VICTORIA: Mmm-hmm. I miss the fish, too. Such good little things. They
never jumped in your lap to have their ears scratched. Oh dear, I
hope first impressions won't last.

Oh, Vicky. I'm reminded of a scene in my parent's living room. I brought one of my first girls home to meet them. Of course, mind you, mind you, it never amounted to anything.

VICTORIA: You don't have to explain, darling, at this late date.

HALL: I was both apprehensive and defensive. I so wanted my mother and father to approve.

VICTORIA: Well, come on. What did they do?

HALL: Nothing. Very effectively and with great charm they did nothing and it broke the spell. I learned then that non-intervention in matters romantic is the highest form of diplomacy. And the course of true love is not banked on the sharp turns.

MUSIC: Bridge to next scene

HALL: And it seems to me, Mrs. Winthrop, that what was most remarkable was that despite his impatience and slovenly technique, Byron's temperament and vigor gave his verse a timbre all its own. Take the momentum of his anapests², for instance: "I enter thy garden of roses", or better still, "The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold."

VICTORIA: "And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold,
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea."³

FERN: Well, bravo, Mrs. Hall. Better than lovely delivery. You should have gone on the stage.⁴

VICTORIA: (Hesitantly) I gave it some thought at one time.

FERN: You should have obeyed those impulses, dear. Ah, Joseph, do you remember the first time I read that poem to you?

WARREN: Yep. I remember.

VICTORIA: And best of all, of course, is the one that every woman wishes was written for her:
"She walked in Beauty, like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies."

FERN: "And all that's best in dark and bright meet in her aspect and her eyes."

HALL: "Thus mellowed to tender light which Heaven to gaudy day denies."⁵

FERN: (Laughs) Oh, what fun! You see Joseph, this is what I meant by

the companionship I said you needed.

WARREN: Well, Fern, I guess I'm not as pig headed about poetry as I used to be.

HALL: Ah, Mrs. Winthrop, you are a remarkable woman.

FERN: (Laughs)

HALL: You have accomplished the impossible. I have been able to discuss a good many things with my friend here, but every time I mentioned a poet, especially one of the romantics, the wall of indifference became impenetrable.

VICTORIA: Congratulations, professor. And welcome to our association for incurable romantics.

FERN: Well, we're certainly all in tune with each tonight, aren't we? Through poetry we are part of the larger harmonies around us. Poetry helps to brighten up the world for us, doesn't it Doctor Hall?

HALL: Yes, yes. A poet himself once observed that if you take an old, dull brown penny and rub it vigorously with wet sand the penny will come out a bright gold color, looking as clean and new as the day it was minted. Poetry has the same effect on words, and our world, as wet sand on pennies.

MUSIC: Bridge to next scene.

SFX: Doorbell

VICTORIA: Oh, who on earth is that so early on a Sunday morning? Shall I get it, Toddy?

HALL: No, darling. It must be the paper boy and I have the change right here.

SFX: Footsteps under?

VICTORIA: Alright.

SFX: Door opens

HALL: Why-y-y, good morning, Professor Warren.

WARREN: Wet sand! Old, dull, brown pennies!

HALL: (Laughs) Come in! Come in!

SFX:

Door closes

WARREN: I don't want to be brightened up. Oh, good morning, Mrs. Hall.

VICTORIA: Well, sit down, professor. You look tired.

WARREN: I oughta be. Spend most of the night swimming the Hellespont.⁶ Thought I was Lord Byron. But I ain't Lord Byron. So I turned back. Then I got stuck in miles and miles of wet sand. I woke up, it was three a.m. and I couldn't get back to sleep. So I came over to tell you folks that I woke up.

VICTORIA: Well, good morning, professor.

WARREN: I wanna know one thing, Doc. Are you tryin' to marry me off to that?that?wet sand!

HALL: Oh, I'll have to parry that question with another, professor. Why do you assume that I should be trying to marry you off to anybody?

WARREN: (Deflated) Doc, what happened to me? Does the brain really soften when the arteries start to harden? I guess if I had any blood left in me I'd be blushing with shame.

VICTORIA: What for?

WARREN: The only thing worth blushing for?sheer stupidity. For not recognizing that the spots in front of my eyes were just plain dust without any stars in them. And for leading on a kind and pleasant woman. I can only redeem myself now by saving her from an unhappy life. With me!

HALL: Mrs. Winthrop seemed to be extremely happy with you last night?

WARREN: Not when I took my charm off.

VICTORIA: What did you do?

WARREN: I just stopped being Llewellyn Lafayette and became Joe Warren again. First I told her what I thought of Byron. It was plenty. It was not enough. Then I told her I wanted my bad habits back. The old leather chair, for one. And the fish! But what really threw her was when I took out my plug of chewin' tobacco. You see, I got honest again, Doc. You folks know that I'm a pretty cranky old man when I'm my true self.

HALL: No, we don't know anything of the kind. Frankly, I agree with what Mrs. Winthrop said about you.

WARREN: What?

HALL: Well, you do have poetry in?

WARREN: No.

HALL: - how you express yourself. I've learned that if one looks over the wall, however high and insurmountable it may seem, one will always find the garden in the heart of any man.

WARREN: Well, maybe, Doc. But we don't all grow roses, do we. Maybe some of us just have a small backyard with one shade tree. And have grown so used to it alone that we don't know how to share it anymore.

SFX: Footsteps under?

WARREN: Well, so long folks.

HALL: Goodbye professor.

VICTORIA: Goodbye professor. And we're glad you're back.

WARREN: Thanks. Maybe you two didn't have anything to do with saving me and Fern from a fate worse than-- but I want to thank you anyway. Because I think maybe you did.

SFX: Door opens

WARREN: And to quote Byron for the last time: Maybe I am ashes where I once was fire, but when you get along toward winter, there's nothing like ashes to keep you from slipping.

SFX: Door closes.

VICTORIA: Oh, Toddy, you're policy of non-intervention seems to have been a diplomatic triumph.

HALL: Yes. Yes. I've always believed that the unknown sculptor of the Venus deMilo deliberately left it incomplete.
Victoria: Why?

HALL: To show the world that the goddess of love recommends a hands-off policy.

VICTORIA: It might also show why cupid never wears any clothes. Love should have nothing up its sleeve.

MUSIC: Theme up and play to end.

ANNOUNCER: We'll be seeing you again next week at this time for The Halls of Ivy, starring Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Colman. Professor Warren was played by Arthur Q. Bryan and Fern Winthrop was Sarah Selby.

Tonight's script was written by Barbara and Milton Merlin and Don Quinn. Music was composed and conducted by Henry Russell.

MUSIC: Male chorus performs all of The Halls of Ivy song.