SAMUEL SWEETLAND, a typical West Country farmer, owner of a prosperous farm, and a widower, buys Applegarth Farm at an auction after a lively bidding duel with a rival farmer. He decides to get married again. His favoured farm servant, Churdles Ash, out-and-out poacher, deplores this step on the part of his master and confidentially remarks to quiet Araminta, the house-keeper, that to his mind “Marriage don’t alter women, they change their clothes, but not their claws.” Sweetland consults Araminta on this momentous matter, and between them they draw up a list of “probable runners.” His first proposal is to the rich huntin’ and shootin’ Widow Windeatt, who, to his astonishment, firmly and definitely refuses him. The second one is Thirza Tapper, a finicky old spinster. A momentous moment arrives when Miss Tapper gives a very select party at her small villa. Miss Tapper is overcome with maidenly excitement when the farmer proposes, but refuses and tells him that she is not a marrying woman. With the two most probable starters in the “Marriage Handicap” off the list, the farmer becomes desperate and decides to try the last one. This is the barmaid at the local inn. She, too, refuses him after a very stormy scene. Sweetland bursts into a most violent tirade and gives her his most candid and undiluted opinion of her. To assuage his sorrow, he decides to go to the village cattle and flower show to forget his round of disastrous courtships. A prize bull runs amok at the fair, dashing wildly amongst the crowded booths and sideshows . . . . the happy laughter looks like turning to tragedy until Sam Sweetland tackles the maddened bull alone and after a terrific struggle, subdues it. The farmer finds himself a hero, and the Widow Windeatt, the finicky Thirza Tapper and Mary Hearn, the barmaid, all now want to marry him. He contrives his escape, leaving them engaged in a heated argument. The tussle with the bull has told Samuel Sweetland something he never knew before; he remembers the quiet and efficient Araminta and returns home, a happy and wiser man. Sheepishly, he makes his last proposal, saying, “Don’t think you’ll make me angry if you say ‘No!'” Araminta, however, says “Yes.”

THE CAST

Samuel Sweetland . BASIL SYDNEY
Churdles Ash . WILFRID LAWSON
Petronella . Bunty Payne
Sibley . Patricia Roc
Richard Croaker . Michael Wilding
George Smerdon . Kenneth Griffith
Araminta . Nora Swinburne
Louisa Windeatt . Betty Warren
Thirza Tapper . Viola Lyell
Mary Hearn . Enid Stamp-Taylor
Tom Garnsey . Edward Rigby
Henry Coaker . A. Bromley-Davenport
Valiant Dunnybrigg . James Harcourt
P.C. Chave . Mark Daly
Sergeant . Jimmy Godden
Susie . Davina Craig

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The story is too well known to need emphasis, but briefly it concerns Samuel Sweetland who buys a Devon farm and looks for a bride. Ignoring the obvious claims of his loyal housekeeper he makes a list of the eligible—a sporty-hunting woman, a puritanical spinster and the colourful barmaid of the local inn. How his proposals are turned down by the three in turn is really very funny and should evoke much laughter. The riotous climax shows the farmer flooring an enraged bull at the cattle show as it charges his housekeeper, and the three women he has proposed to. Seeing his housekeeper in danger the farmer realises that it is she who would make the ideal wife and he sets about making another proposal, uses an entirely different technique and on this occasion is successful.

Norman Lee and Leslie Arliss were the co-directors of the production and a grand supporting cast includes such names as Bunty Payne, Nora Swinburne, Michael Wilding, Patricia Roc, Betty Warren, Viola Lyel, Kenneth Griffith, Enid Stamp-Taylor, Edward Rigby, A. J. Bromley Davenport and Jimmy Godden. Claude Friese-Green, one of the ace cine technicians of this country is responsible for the splendid photography, and the slick cutting is credited to Flora Newton.

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