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EVERY TUESDAY 6^D

Red Letter

— THE PAPER FOR GOOD STORIES —



**I CAN'T
LIVE
WITHOUT
YOU!** TENDER STORY
ON PAGE 3

WHAT COULD SHE SAY?

One Sunday afternoon I was in the Underground, and while I was waiting for a train I got a packet of chewing-gum out of the machine, and put a piece into my mouth, just as a train came in.

I got on to the train and into a practically empty compartment, and sat down opposite a nice-looking old lady. I sat in silence for several minutes, chewing my gum, when suddenly the old lady leaned forward and said, "It's so nice of you to try and make conversation, my dear, but I must tell you that I'm terribly deaf!"

—Miss Pauline Elsbury, London.

SAY IT WITH CHIPS

One evening I went with a party of women to see a special film. Before leaving home I left my husband's tea, which consisted of fish and chips, in the oven. Unfortunately, the oven was too warm and the chips were spoiled. He had to go out himself, and when I returned I found that he had spelled out with the dried-up chips—"But I still love you."

And that after being married forty years.

—H. S. Orkney.

YOU AND ME AND HE AND SHE

DOING THE JOB PROPERLY

Just after passing her driving test my aunt decided to take her van with her on holiday. One day, whilst visiting a nearby town, she was going down a road when she came across a band of workmen. She carried on quite confidently until she got to the other side when she said, "They're all looking at me."

"Maybe that's because you've just gone through their freshly cemented road," replied my mother.

On the way back she made sure to go on the other side. Imagine her horror when she realised that while she had been gone they had cemented that side.

Only my aunt could do a thing like that.

—Elaine Irwin, Cranham.



THIS is your page, readers—and we love hearing from you! So why not drop us a line? Every letter printed wins a guinea. All letters must be original. Our address is—You and Me, Red Letter, 18a Hallingsworth Street, London, N.7.



Between Ourselves

Delving into an old book the other day, I came on what the writer called "A Goodwife's Guide." It said the perfect missus should be—

Like a kettle, keeping the fireside cheerful.

Unlike a kettle, not keeping the house in hot water.

Like Big Ben, keeping perfect time.

Unlike Big Ben, not talking so the whole town can hear

Like an echo, always speaking when spoken to.

Unlike an echo, not always wanting the last word.

When I told my wife, she said, "Now tell me what the book said about being a perfect husband."

I had to admit it didn't say anything. No doubt the writer was a man!

—THE EDITOR.

BARE - FACED CHEEK!

TWO years ago my son, John, grew a Van Dyke beard, as was the fashion. As his hair was light brown, it surprised me when his beard grew red.

I didn't like it, as it made him 10 years older. I never looked at him without wishing he would shave it off so I could see his face!

Well, last night he came to see me from work before he went home to his wife.

I was just ready to go out, but poured him a cup of tea, gave him some cake, had a few words with him, and rushed out. I remember thinking, How thin his face is. I wonder if he's well. His lips look pale. Then I forgot all about it.

When I came home later that night my husband said, "Did you notice anything about our John?" I answered, "Well, I thought he didn't look too well."

Then he told me, "You're a nice one. You've complained and fussed for years about that beard, and you didn't even notice—he's shaved it off!"

All I'd seen were his lips, and they'd been hidden for two years. While I'm writing this I'm just dying for tonight for him to call—so I can see his face for the first time in two years!

—Mary Hoole, Cheshire.

A NATURAL INSTINCT

Recently I watched a little girl washing her dolls' clothing.

She leaned over the bowl with flat hands, dunking the clothes up and down in the water; she clenched her fists and rubbed the more soiled portions.

She looked delightfully competent yet she was barely six years old. Perhaps, in females, these movements are instinctive, inherited from generations of clothes-washing ancestors.

Yet as washing machines become more and more common they may die out, becoming redundant like so many of our ancient skills; such as spinning, weaving, and bread-making.

Were our machines one day to desert us, we should indeed be in a sorry state!

—Mrs J. G. B. Wood, Hessele.

ARMED FOR BATTLE

The wedding gift card read:—

"This wedding gift accept from me, Its use I recommend, In sunshine use the bushy part, In strife—the other end."

The gift? A broom, given by the bride's small brother.

—Mrs E. Young, Co. Durham.

There's no greater pain for a girl than giving her heart to someone who doesn't care for her in return.

LEARNING TO LIVE- AND LOVE-AGAIN

WHENEVER Sheila Stuart was low and things went wrong, she started thinking about Keith; but when everything went well, she was able to put him completely out of her mind.

New boy friends always helped. But when Bill or Mike or Simon took a sudden, unexplained likeness to Keith, Sheila's heart would miss a beat and vivid memories would race back.

She would remember the day in early spring when she went on the bus to Sandhills to be alone, to be able to sob silently, sitting in that deserted shelter on the front.

And how, suddenly, she wasn't alone, and a quiet, deep voice beside her had said, "Is there anything I can do to help?"

Sheila had raised her head slightly and looked at the stranger, who was young like herself, and whose eyes were blue and kind. It was awful being alone here, and although this was a perfect stranger, she had to tell someone.

"My parents," Sheila almost choked on the words, "and my sister were killed in a car crash a fortnight ago. I—I was one of a family. Now there's only me—"

The stranger, who was Keith, didn't say a word, but he took her cold hands in his and pressed them till they were warmer. After that they sat there, looking out to sea, so that Sheila wasn't sure which were tears and which were sea-spray on her face.

But there was a faint beginning of warmth in her heart, and she didn't feel alone any more.

THEY met regularly after that, either in town where Keith would meet Sheila from her office and they'd have a meal or see a film, or they'd go in Keith's car to Sandhills, where he was lodging, and walk along the cliffs hand in hand.

To have such sudden happiness after her recent misery and heartbreak was almost too much for Sheila, and sometimes she would cross her fingers and pray for it to last.

Her lips would cling to Keith's in a kind of desperation as she returned his kisses.

Supposing she lost him, or he went away, or something happened to him? She was always expecting something terrible to happen and her fear never left her.

Yet when Keith told her one day that the export firm he worked for was sending

him abroad for six months, it was like a terrible blow to her, and even though she had never felt really secure, the shock of actually hearing he was going made her heart almost stop.

"No! Oh, no, Keith, darling!" She couldn't keep the desperation from her voice. "You can't go. I won't let you. I can't do without you now."

"Never mind, love." Keith's brow was furrowed. "It won't be for ever. And maybe it—it's time you stood on your own two feet. I mean—"

And his voice trailed off. But, guiltily, she knew what he meant. She leaned on him too much, making him her world, and for the first time Sheila began to wonder if the fetters

she had put on Keith were too heavy for him to bear.

But she was being ridiculous! Keith loved her as much as she loved him, and one day they would get married, and be together for always. She'd just have to be brave and try to control her tears when they said good-bye.

So Keith went away, and his letters started to come regularly.

THEY were all Sheila lived for, and she would read them over and over again.

Two months later she re-read the bit about the girl Keith had met in their overseas office. The girl, Elizabeth Warner, who, Keith said, reminded him a little of Sheila, and who had been very kind to him, showing him around the district.

After that she could read between every line in his letter of Keith's growing interest in Elizabeth. She noticed it

"Keith! Oh, Keith!" Sheila called joyfully as she ran towards the boy sitting in the shelter.



OUR COVER STORY

especially after he'd stopped mentioning "Liz" at all in his letters, which suddenly weren't so regular or so loving now.

Keith was breaking loose from his chains, and there was nothing Sheila could do about it except to stop writing to him for her pride's sake, and hope he'd think that maybe she'd found someone else, too.

If Keith was in love with another girl, and Sheila was certain he was, she couldn't bear to have to read it in one of his letters, and so it was the end.

Keith wrote once more, but when he didn't get a reply he didn't write again.

And Sheila, lonely and unhappy, vowed she would never go to Sandhills again.

She kept thinking of what might have been, if only he hadn't gone away, if "that girl" hadn't grabbed him.

But she knew it was no use lamenting, and no pain lasts for ever.

She was a pretty girl, with her soft fair hair and brown eyes, and Keith wasn't the only pebble on the beach!

One day I'll fall in love again, she thought, and then it will be as if Keith never existed.

But somehow nobody came along to sweep her off her feet, although they were such nice boys, and they all had that hopeful look in their eyes when they held Sheila in their arms.

"That third finger of yours looks rather naked," Bill Rivers said to her. "And they do say diamonds are a girl's best friend!"

Bill was fun to be with, and would make someone a marvellous husband one day, if you loved him. If you loved him.

And another boy, Pete Ross, wanted her to go to Scotland to meet his folk.

Keith didn't have any family. Only a sister living in Canada.

Oh, if only all roads didn't lead to Keith. If only she knew for sure he'd never come back to her again. But you never knew.

Supposing he discovered he didn't love Liz the way he'd loved Sheila? After all, it was only just over a year since he'd told Sheila he wouldn't be away for ever.

If only she could break the bonds which still seemed to attach her to Keith. But at times they seemed stronger than ever.

THEN one day something made her feel she had to go to Sandhills again. Had fate decided to give her another chance? she wondered. Would she meet Keith again? A Keith who was still in love with her as she was with him?

When Sheila got off the bus it was drizzling, and the promenade was deserted.

Instinctively she made for the shelter. And then she saw him, sitting in a corner, the collar of his raincoat turned up.

She could see just part of his nose and that lock of dark hair which he always kept brushing back impatiently from his forehead.

"Keith, oh, Keith!" Joyously Sheila ran towards him.

Then the man turned, and it was a stranger's face looking at her, a strong, good-looking face, but not Keith's face.

"Oh, I'm—I'm terribly sorry. I thought—"

Sheila's knees gave way under her, and she sank down weakly on the seat.

"That I was someone else?" The voice was cool, indifferent. "Quite natural. Common type, me."

Then he looked at Sheila again, and must have seen the misery and disappointment on her face.

"Your boy friend?" His voice was a little more friendly. "Had a quarrel with him?"

"No." Sheila shook her head. "And he isn't my boy friend, either. Just someone I used to know, who was sorry for me."

"Pity akin to love," he mused, "but

it's cold comfort, isn't it? As no doubt you've found out."

Yes, she'd found out all right, but a little late in the day. Odd how it had taken a rainy day, and a stranger in a shelter, who looked like Keith, to make her see suddenly and clearly that Keith had never really been for her, and never would be.

Keith had found someone else, someone he truly loved.

"I expect he's married by now," Sheila said aloud. "With a baby, maybe. A lot can happen in a year!"

"Yes, it certainly can," the stranger said. "I've had a broken engagement, a change of job, and, just lately, a bad dose of flu."

He went on to tell Sheila his name was Robert Drew, and that he was staying with an aunt in Sandhills to convalesce after his illness.

"They thought the good sea air would do me good," he said.

He looked ill, and somehow lifeless, and Sheila felt a stab of pity for him,

**WHEN REPLYING TO ADVERTISEMENTS PLEASE MENTION
"RED LETTER."**

thinking at the same time that that was probably exactly the way Keith had felt about her when they first met. Only the pity had never turned to love.

"I wonder," Robert's voice broke into her thoughts. "We both seem to be free just now. So maybe we could meet in town one night and see a film, or anything else you'd like to do?"

He gave her an odd look as he added, "With no strings attached, naturally."

Sheila looked back at him, and started to shake her head. It would be crazy to start something which most probably would never lead to anything.

THEN she thought of all the different boys she'd met, of a year of missed opportunities which she'd been too blind to see and grasp.

And she thought, too, that attaching strings to your love is like catching a butterfly in a net, so it just feels trapped and wants to escape.

If a man knows he's free to go, he's much more likely to stay for ever.

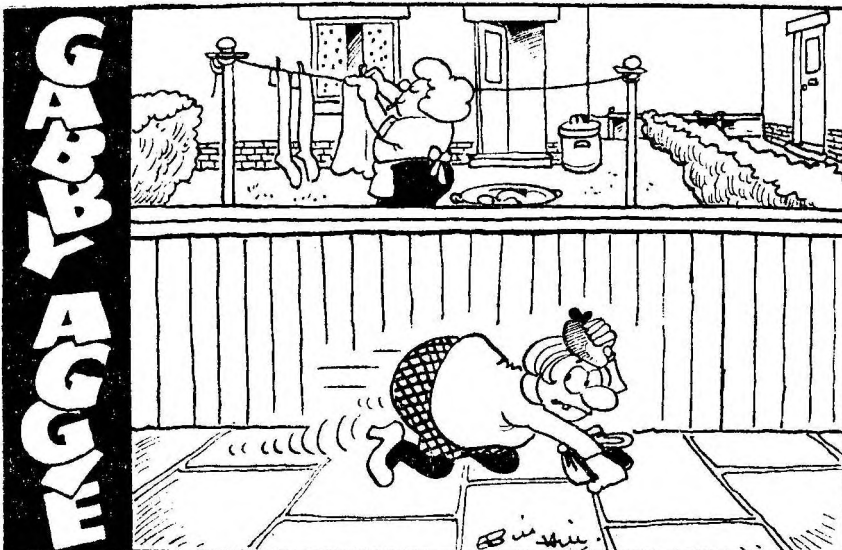
So, in her new wisdom, she nodded and said to Robert, "That might be nice. But, like you say, no strings attached."

And when Robert smiled at her, a happy kind of smile as if he'd been waiting anxiously for her reply, Sheila smiled back at him.

She knew this new friendship could easily lead to nothing. Just a few dates, and then good-bye. But on the other hand, there was the possibility that it might lead to everything.

And the only way to find out was to take a chance

THE END.



"I was late for work yesterday. Must be on time today."

As she sets out to visit Greg,
there's nothing to warn
Lydia of the danger that
goes with her . . .

WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK.

WHEN her husband, LEWIS, died after an operation, BARBARA BLACK accused DR GREG MANSON of murder. The motive, she claimed, was jealousy, because Greg's fiancée, LYDIA BENSON, had been having an affair with her husband.

An inquest was held and Greg was found not guilty—but not in Barbara's eyes. She wanted revenge.

Tired of the scandal, Greg left Meltree and went to help DR ANDREW OSBORNE with research work on a Scottish island. There he met JANET SHAW, who fell in love with him.

Barbara soon followed Greg, and under the name MRS WHITE, became Osborne's housekeeper. She set about slowly poisoning Greg.

When he discovered this and Barbara's true identity, Barbara returned to the mainland.

Greg was happy now. He enjoyed his work; he had Janet; and Lydia and he were still good friends, writing to each other.

Barbara was annoyed that her plan to make Greg suffer had failed. But she wasn't finished yet. She'd get at him indirectly—by hurting the girl he loved.



I could do it now, thought Barbara. A sharp push . . .

WATCH BARBARA BLACK — SHE'S DANGEROUS

"YOU were going to tell me your secrets," Janet said to Greg as they walked together along the shore.

"I haven't any interesting ones," said Greg.

"Why did you leave Meltree and come here?"

"One of my patients died after I'd operated. There was an inquest afterwards."

"And they found it was your fault?"

"No. I was cleared."

"They why did you leave?"

"It's no good, Janet. Bless you for being interested, but I really don't want to go into all the details."

"You don't trust me?"

"Yes, I do, but it's all past history now. It doesn't even seem quite real."

"I know that feeling," said Janet. "Funny, isn't it? One moment, everything that's happening to you seems so important, as if nothing afterwards could possibly matter again—and the next, that so-important past seems dream-like, and it's the present that counts."

"Of course it is," he said. "And

now what about your 'past history'?"

"I told you once before that secrets have to be exchanged, not one-sided."

"I've told you half of mine."

"All right. Then you shall have half of mine. My 'little adventure,' though I'm warning you it's going to be a terrible anti-climax!

"I wanted to be an actress. One of the summer visitors got me talking in the post office one day and told me he was an agent for young actresses.

"He seemed nice and honest, so, when he left, I went with him."

"And did he get you any jobs?"

"No. And he'd no intention of, either. I soon found that out."

"What did you do?"

"I was ashamed to come back to the island, so I got a job in a laundry—it's a rotten old job and they always need girls—and one of the girls there told me where I could get a cheap room.

"It worked out all right. I just did that job every day, slept in that beastly little room every night—and missed the island.

"When I felt I couldn't bear it any more, I came back.

"And the people on the island are very good, Greg. They asked questions at first, and they gossiped of course, but no one was nasty to me, and most of them, when I just said I'd had a 'little adventure', left it at that.

"But I enjoy being thought a mystery woman after my adventure. I like to think of them thinking I led some sort of glamorous life while I was away when all I was doing was working in that terrible laundry!"

"But your grandmother knows it all."

"Oh, Gran knows everything. But now we're unequal. I've given you more than the half-exchange. How about the other half from you now?"

Without hesitation, he told her now.

"The man who died on the operating table was the lover of my then fiancée."

"Oh, my poor darling!" said Janet. "Oh, Greg! Poor Greg!"

And then their arms were about each other and he was holding her close.

* * * * *

That evening, when Janet served dinner to Andrew and Greg, then left the room again, Andrew said, "What's the matter with that girl?"

"The matter? Nothing as far as I know," said Greg. "Why?"

"She looks beautiful. She's always been a good-looking girl, but tonight—she looks beautiful. A light inside."

Greg said nothing.

"Meet anyone on your walk this afternoon?" asked Andrew.

"I met Janet, as a matter of fact."

"Are you going to marry her? It would suit me fine if you did. It would make certain that you'd stay here until our job is finished. I can't think of a better security."

"I have no intention of marrying anyone just to suit your work project."

"Why be huffy about it?" said Andrew, quite placidly. "I'm simply saying that if an afternoon walk on the beach can make our Janet look as beautiful as that, and you so cheerful and with a good appetite, then marriage is a fine idea."

LIFE at the house went on smoothly for a few weeks. Greg and Janet still went for walks and they saw each other in the evenings when she came to do the cooking.

Work was going particularly well at the moment, and Greg was throwing himself into it with great zest and intelligence. Though Andrew never said so, Greg had become invaluable to him.

Most evenings, unless there was work to be done, Greg walked back to the cottage with Janet and went in for a final cup of tea or coffee.

Mrs Shaw was more genial towards him now. She had come to like him and that liking seemed to have banished her initial fears.

Janet was so obviously happy that even if her romance didn't last, nothing could take away what she'd had.

In their long talks together, which they both so enjoyed, Greg kept only two things from Janet: the first, that Mrs White had been Lewis Black's widow and had tried to poison him—that seemed to him a brief, mad episode and best forgotten; the second, far more important to his mind, that he was corresponding with Lydia.

It should have been easy to tell Janet that he and Lydia were still friends and wrote to each other. Janet would have understood—he knew that. Yet he didn't tell her, and the longer he put it off, the more difficult it became.

Then he received an unexpected and troubling letter from Doctor Frayne.

Dear Greg,

Although I hardly ever receive a line from you (and if you're thinking that's a complaint, it is, but no hard feelings) I do sometimes see your letters to Lydia, so I know you're doing well.

Your letters have meant a lot to Lydia.

She's been a very sick girl and hearing from you in such a friendly way, has really helped her progress.

I have a suggestion to make which I haven't yet mentioned to Lydia—and will not do so unless I get an O K from you. It's this: You and Osborne will presumably be tucked away in your ivory tower for some months yet at least, so how about inviting Lydia to stay with you for a short time?

The original arrangement was that Lydia would go home. But her parents have problems. Mr Bedford's father has been very ill, needs constant attention, and is staying with Mr and Mrs Bedford at the moment. Mrs Bedford is worked to death as it is, looking after the old man as well as her husband, so it was decided that Lydia should stay on in hospital meantime.

It's a pretty sad situation. Lydia is standing it bravely. But I suddenly thought of you. I'm not matchmaking or anything like that—but you're obviously still fond of her, and I know she still feels guilty about you—so if you invited her to convalesce

**EXCITING!
INTRIGUING!
BAFFLING!**

A great new story—

THOSE TERRIBLE MIDDLETON GIRLS

begins in **Red Letter** next week. When one Middleton sister vanishes mysteriously, and the other risks an amazing masquerade, the results are thrilling. Don't miss a word of it!

I think it would do her as much good, and more, than anything I can do with my pills.

So there it is, Greg. If you don't fancy the idea, just say so, and no hard feelings.

"Of course she can come," Greg said aloud to the letter, as if he were replying to Doctor Frayne in person.

"What?" Andrew looked up from his breakfast.

"Would you mind if Lydia Bedford came here for a short time?"

"Lydia Bedford? Who's she?"

"You remember—the girl I used to be engaged to—the one who had the accident."

Greg passed over the letter. Andrew read it.

"It'll interfere with our work," he said.

"Our work!" flared Greg. "And

you're supposed to be a doctor! The girl needs to convalesce, so can she come or not?"

"Certainly she can come, as long as she doesn't interfere with our work."

"Good. Then that's settled. She comes."

"And what about Janet?"

"Janet wouldn't mind cooking for three instead of two," Greg said. "I'll write to Doctor Frayne and say Lydia can come. I'll write to her, too, a proper invitation."

LYDIA was now released from her wheelchair, but she was still a little precarious in her walking and depending very much on a walking-stick.

She received Greg's letter. It was short and straight, saying simply that he had heard from Doctor Frayne that she couldn't go home for some time, so how about coming to "Osborne's Island" for a holiday?

Lydia showed the letter to Dr Frayne.

"Did you ask Greg to ask me?"

"Yes."

"So he couldn't very well refuse."

"Certainly he could have refused, as I hadn't told you I'd written. If he'd refused, you wouldn't have known a thing about it."

"I'm sick of being a patient! People doing things behind my back all the time and not telling me! It's humiliating!"

"My dear girl that doesn't only happen to patients. It happens to everyone, most of the time, all the world over. Lydia—don't be foolishly proud. It'll be interesting for you, if nothing else. And—" he added cunningly, "—it'll prevent your parents from feeling too bad about not being able to have you home."

Lydia smiled.

"You're right," she said. "I'll write to Greg tonight."

Greg told Janet when they were out for a walk one afternoon.

"Andrew and I have a guest coming shortly."

"Oh? Who?"

"Her name's Lydia Bedford."

Janet showed nothing in her proud little white face. No one would have known that inside her a silent voice was crying: It's ending—it's almost over—face up to it—show nothing!

"Who is she?" asked Janet.

"The one I told you about. The girl I used to be engaged to—the one who had the accident—"

"And then her lover died. I remember."

"She's been very ill. The doctor in charge of her, a friend of mine, wrote to ask if Andrew and I would invite her here for a holiday. So we did."

"Shall you want me to cook for you all? I asked Janet. "Or have you and Dr Osborne had any response from those advertisements for a housekeeper?"

"Not a sausage," said Greg. "And it's up to you whether you come to help us out or not. You know we'd love to

have you, but if you don't want to—"

"I'll think about it."

"Don't be jealous!" he said impulsively.

"Jealous? You're only jealous about things you've got. I have nothing. So where does jealousy come into it?"

"Come here." He held her close, fiercely close. "I'm sorry, but what could I do? Lydia needs a break from hospital routine—"

"Then she's going to get it, isn't she?" Janet broke away from him. "I expect I'll come and cook for you evenings, if you want me. Anyway, I'm glad of the money Doctor Osborne pays me. I'll let you know definitely later. O.K. Greg? I'll be getting home now—Gran will be wanting her tea—but I'll be round at the house tonight to cook your dinner."

And she ran off.

When she came to the house that evening, there was no laughter, no semi-secret kissing. She prepared the meal, served it to Andrew and Greg, washed the dishes, went home.

"Aren't you going to see her back to the cottage?" asked Andrew, as the front door slammed behind her.

"No. Not tonight. She wouldn't want me to."

"You've told her about Lydia's coming."

"Yes."

"I tried to warn you, but you wouldn't listen. And then I didn't bother because our work is so much more important than all this nonsense. But now you see what you've done."

"I haven't done anything," said Greg.

"Maybe that's the worst of it," said Andrew.

BARBARA BLACK came to Mel-tree Hospital to ask for a few words with Doctor Frayne.

She was shown to his consulting-room.

"Hello, Mrs Black," he said. "What can I do for you?"

"So you remember me, Doctor."

"Certainly, I do."

"I never wrote to Doctor Manson, the way I said I would."

"I guessed that. Most of the letters I've forwarded—well, I've recognised the handwriting of the writers."

"I didn't know what to say," she said.

"when you're really sorry about something you've done—what do you say? Anything you say would sound silly."

"Don't worry about it any more," said Doctor Frayne. "It's over. Water under the bridge. Doctor Manson has a good job now. He's interested and happy in it, so you needn't feel guilty about him any longer."

"I still want to repay."

"There's nothing you can do."

"But I think there is!" Her eyes brightened. "I've heard that Miss Bedford is going to stay with Andrew Osborne and Doctor Manson."

"That's quite true, but where did you hear it?"

"I know one of the nursing auxiliaries here. They know everything. Doctor Frayne—that girl shouldn't travel alone—especially in winter—" She stopped.

It was a careful, actress's pause. But honest Doctor Frayne didn't see it as such. He simply thought that what this woman had said was quite true.

Lydia shouldn't really travel alone. She wasn't strong enough yet. She'd be fine when she got there, obviously, with Greg there—but the journey—Doctor Frayne had thought worriedly about that journey.

"May I go with her?" said Barbara.

"You?"

"Why not me? I've had nothing to do since my husband died. I've been lonely, and I've had too much time to think about the way I behaved when I demanded that inquest. By doing that, I hurt Doctor Manson, and probably Miss Bedford too, indirectly.

"I did try to write a letter of apology to Doctor Manson, but I didn't know what to say.

"But Doctor Frayne, here's something practical I can do to make amends. I can accompany that poor, young girl on her difficult journey to the island, see that she gets there safely.

"And I wouldn't do any more than that. Just see her to the island—see that she's properly met at the shore—and then sail

away again by the same boat. Now, isn't that a good idea?"

It was a perfect idea. Doctor Frayne wondered why he hesitated for one second. Yet he did. Why?

The woman seemed genuine enough, and he knew, as all people know, that deep desire to make up for past mistakes—and yet—there was something about her eyes. He didn't like her eyes.

"I'm not sure," he said.

"Trust me," said Barbara. "I promise you that if you let me accompany Miss Bedford, I'll get her safely there. I promise you!"

Doctor Frayne had another small battle between intuition and practical commonsense. Practical commonsense won.

"All right, Mrs Black," he said.

"Thank you. You're very generous and I think it is a good idea. I'll let you know which day Miss Bedford leaves here, then you can accompany her on the journey. And thank you again."

"Thank you, Doctor Frayne." Barbara's lips parted in that unsmiling smile.

"Just one thing though—you'd better not tell her who I am, just in case—well, you know, she was very fond of Lewis. She never met me—so you'd better tell her I'm — well—Mrs White.

"Not that I'd mind her knowing who I am—but she has been ill and it might upset her. After all, the whole object of this exercise is to make her feel better, safer isn't it?"

"You may be right," said Doctor Frayne.

★ ★ ★

Doctor Frayne rarely deceived patients, and he didn't enjoy deceiving Lydia. But he did it.

"You won't have to travel alone tomorrow," he told her. "A woman called Mrs White has offered to accompany you on the journey. She'll just see to the practical things, Lydia, so that you won't have to put out too much effort yourself."

"A volunteer—like the Red Cross?"

"A bit like that."

"How very kind of Mrs White, whoever she is," said Lydia. "I was feeling a bit scared about that journey. When you're not very steady on your pins, it's

THE FOLKS OF CARNATION STREET



amazing how dangerous the old everyday world can feel. Thanks for arranging it, Doctor Frayne. I'm sure I'll like Mrs White."

Doctor Frayne wished that he were so sure.

THE outside world seemed noisy and dangerous when Lydia came into the street for the first time after so many weeks in hospital. She was glad of Mrs White's company in the taxi to the station.

"Mrs White, it's very good of you to give up your time to come on this journey with me," she said.

"Not at all. I've nothing else to do. I'm a childless widow."

"Oh, I see. I'm sorry." Then Lydia jumped as a car roared past them.

"You're very nervous, aren't you, Miss Bedford?"

"I'm afraid so. But I expect it'll wear off in time." And she turned to the window again and made herself look at the traffic instead of shrinking from the sight if it.

Barbara looked at the girl's thin, tense face.

Lydia's appearance had surprised her. The girl had changed during her illness. When Barbara had seen her before, at the bank, she had seemed vivacious, confident. But she didn't look like that now.

Her hair was as beautiful as ever, but that air of youth and vitality had gone. She walked hesitantly now, gripping her

stick as if she were an old woman. She had lost weight, so that the pretty curves of her figure were no longer there.

Her face was pale and anxious, and she had that ugly red scar on her brow. That would fade in time, but it would never vanish.

In spite of herself, Barbara found that she could no longer hate Lydia Bedford.

Not that that would stop her from carrying out her plan. The girl was merely a tool in her plan, a means to an end. The punishment of Greg Manson was the main object of the exercise.

★ ★ ★

That same day, Greg received another letter from Doctor Frayne. It told him the date Lydia would arrive and concluded: "In fact, by the time you get this letter, Lydia will be on her way to you.

"She's still very nervous and fragile, poor child, but I think she'll stand up to the journey all right. I had thought of engaging a travelling companion for her, but hesitated because the Bedfords aren't all that well off and these things cost money.

"However, the problem was solved by a volunteer. And you'll never guess who. Mrs Black—Lewis Black's widow. She was very anxious to make amends for all the trouble she caused you in the past, so it's a good solution—"

Greg couldn't believe it. He read the lines over and over again. A feeling of nightmare closed on him.

What could he do? Lydia's journey had already started. She was with that evil woman, at this moment.

Greg cursed himself for not having told people about Barbara Black's mad behaviour when she was housekeeper. He had felt so sorry for her

But he should have told Doctor Frayne. He should have guessed that a woman like that, set on revenge, doesn't give up after the first set-back. And now—

He hurried into the laboratory, Frayne's letter in his hand.

"Andrew, something has happened—"

"You're late," said Andrew, absorbed in an experiment.

"I've got a letter—"

"Leave your personal correspondence until another time. You're here to work. Get on with it, man."

"Andrew, listen to me! You remember Mrs White?"

Andrew turned, irritated, frowning.

"I have no desire to remember that woman. She walked out at a moment's notice and left us in the lurch."

"She tried to poison me with arsenic—that's why I was so sick—and she wasn't Mrs White—she was Mrs Black—Lewis Black's widow—and I sent her away because I found her out—and now she's with Lydia—"

"Greg, have you taken leave of your senses?"

"No! I'm telling you what happened! She's with Lydia now, as her travelling companion. And I think she means Lydia



Noele Gordon's

SAUSAGE AND CAULIFLOWER SAVOURY

- 1 lb. park sausages.
- 1 large onion.
- 1 medium cauliflower.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint stock.
- 1 oz. flour.
- 2 teaspoonfuls chopped parsley.
- 1 teaspoonful made mustard.
- 2 tablespoonfuls vinegar.
- Salt and pepper.

Fry sausages gently for about 20 minutes. Lift out of pan and cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cubes. Peel and slice onion and cook in boiling salted water for five minutes. Add cauliflower sprigs and cook until just tender, strain vegetables, and retain $\frac{1}{2}$ pint stock. Thicken stock with flour, stir in parsley, mustard, vinegar, and seasoning to taste, add sausages and cauliflower mixture, and heat through carefully. Serve hot.

CHEESE AND HAM FLAN

- 6 oz. shortcrust pastry, using 6 oz. plain flour, etc.
- 2 eggs.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk.
- Salt and pepper.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ level teaspoonful dried sage.
- Dash of Worcestershire sauce.
- 2 salad onions, finely chopped.
- 4 oz. ham, chopped.
- 4 oz. Cheddar cheese, grated.

Roll out pastry and use to line an 8-inch flan ring. Beat together the eggs, milk, salt and pepper, sage, and Worcestershire sauce. Add the onions, ham, and cheese. Pour into the case and bake at 400°F (Mark 6) for 20 minutes, then reduce heat to 350°F (Mark 4) for about 45 minutes until set and golden brown. Serve hot or cold.

QUICK 'N' EASY cooking guide

MEAT AND GAMMON SANDWICHES

- 4 salad onions.
- 1 lb. minced meat.
- Salt and pepper.
- 2 tablespoonfuls made mustard.
- 4 slices gammon.
- 2 oz. melted butter.

Finely chop the salad onions and blend with minced meat. Season and mix well. Spread mustard all over gammon slices. Cover mustard with a thin layer of meat mixture on both sides of each slice. Brush with butter. Grill on both sides until golden.

Something Special!

GLAZED GAMMON WITH APPLES

- 3-4 lb. middle gammon.
- Whole cloves.
- 1-2 tablespoonfuls honey.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint bottled liquid apple juice.
- 3-4 cooking apples.
- Little lemon juice.
- 1-2 oz. sugar.
- 2 teaspoonfuls cornflour.

Soak gammon overnight in cold water. Drain, weigh, and calculate cooking time, allowing 20 minutes per pound, plus 20 minutes over. Place in large saucepan, cover with water, and bring to the boil. Remove any scum, cover pan, and simmer for half of required cooking time.

Remove gammon from liquid, and with a sharp knife, cut off skin. Score fat, making regular diamond pattern, and stick a clove in the centre of each diamond. Place gammon in a roasting tin, spread with honey, and pour apple liquid round joint. Bake at 375°F (Mark 5) for rest of cooking time, basting every 15-20 minutes.

Peel apples, core, and cut in half. Sprinkle with lemon juice. Twenty minutes before end of cooking time, place apples round gammon, and sprinkle with sugar. Serve this apple liquid as gravy, thickened with cornflour.

harm. Why else should she do it?

"We've got to do something—warn Lydia—find them before that woman does anything—"

"There's nothing you can do," said Andrew. "So you might as well get on with your work."

"Surely the police—?"

"Don't be daft, lad. The police have got more to do than chase up an invalid girl and her travelling companion, journeying respectfully between London and this island."

"You don't believe me! You think I'm making it up," Greg blazed.

"You've always been imaginative."

"Thanks for all your help," said Greg, walking out of the laboratory and banging the door.

Andrew, left alone, tried to concentrate again, but couldn't. He found himself thinking over what Greg had said, piecing it together, remembering Mrs White—

He left his work and went to find Greg.

As he entered the living-room he saw Greg at the telephone, heard him saying: "No, of course I can't make any charges against Barbara Black—I have no proof of anything—but I'm telling you the truth."

He listened to the voice at the other end of the line, said: "Thank you," and rang off. Then he put his elbows on the desk and covered his face with his hands.

"What did they say?" Andrew asked.

Greg started, turning round.

"They said they'd do what they could, but I think they thought me a raving nut-case, just as you do."

"No, I don't," said Andrew. "I've been remembering Mrs White. I think you could have reason to be worried."

IT was dark when Lydia and Barbara boarded the boat for "Osborne's Island." They were both exhausted, Lydia with travelling when she felt so scared and shaky; Barbara with the tension of plans so far unfulfilled.

So many obvious opportunities missed—standing on a platform, a train coming in—a sharp push; alone in a railway carriage with Lydia—open the door—a sharp push; waiting on the dark quayside for the boat—standing near the water's edge—a sharp push—

But so far, Barbara Black had done nothing.

The air was cold, but the sky was clear. There was a moon. The two women stood leaning against the rail, looking down at the water, now up at the sky. The other few passengers were in cabins, cowering from the cold.

I could do it now, thought Barbara. A sharp push . . .

"Are you as tired as I am, Mrs White?" asked Lydia.

"I am tired, Miss Bedford."

"Please call me Lydia. I know we started off as strangers, but we're friends now. And I honestly don't know how I'd have got this far without you. Doctor Frayne said that you were just going straight back home as soon as you'd

THE WAY TO BE HAPPY

IT'S twenty years since I moved with my parents from a big town to the tiny village that's been my home since. My first waking there was a dream of delight. Apple blossom waved in the warm sunshine outside and birds were singing everywhere.

The gate latch clicked and I saw a boy about my own age coming up the garden path with a bundle of newspapers in a bag.

His face was one big smile, even allowing for the fact that he was whistling merrily in imitation of the birds.

That morning I was very happy, too.

Next day everything—almost everything—was different. It rained and the blossom hung wet and sad, while the birds were silent.

Then the latch clicked again and the same merry whistle as of yesterday trilled on the air.

At the door I heard Mum express her surprise that the paper boy should be so happy on such a miserable morning. I heard his soft laugh. "If I could change things by NOT whistling, ma'am," he explained, "then I wouldn't whistle. But I can't. So I just goes right on whistling."

At school I came to know Jimmy, the paper boy. I came to know him better when I nursed in the local hospital and he was brought in to have a leg amputated after a road accident.

Matron didn't allow whistling.

As I write this, I can see from my window out there beneath the apple tree my two little girls romping with their dad, shrieking with laughter every time he falls over trying to catch them.

Running on grass doesn't come all that easy with an artificial leg. If Jimmy could change that, he would. But, since he can't—why, he just goes right on whistling.

OUR QUIET CORNER

'delivered' me, as if I were a parcel—but if you haven't really got anything to go back to, then I'm sure Doctor Osborne and Doctor Manson would be glad for you to stay."

"That's very generous," said Barbara.

"No, it's dead selfish. I'm only being generous with other people's hospitality. I'm scared of this visit really, but if you stayed with me . . . Mrs White, do you know anything about the situation between Greg Manson and me?"

"No."

"Well, we used to be engaged. I was unfaithful to him. I fell in love with a married man. We never actually became lovers, but we felt love for each other, and I never told Greg, nor did I break our engagement—which I should have done. It's easy for people to preach about what one should do, but it's so difficult to actually do things."

"Yes, it is," said Barbara. *A sharp push.*

"This other man, this married man—we used to see each other at work. Sometimes we had lunch together. We talked a lot. That is, I told him everything about me, but I suppose he didn't tell me much really. He gave me a feeling that his wife was difficult and unkind, but he never really criticised her.

"Anyway, we never went out together in the evenings. Except once. The first and last time. That was when we had the car accident.

"Greg—poor Greg—he was on Casualty duty that night and he had to operate on the man—and the man died—and I'm still here.

"There was an inquest about it, but Greg was cleared of blame. Yet he must have felt to blame, because he left Meltree and came to this island.

"Goodness—why am I telling you all this? You can't think much of me now."

"I understand the torments of love," said Barbara.

"It is torment, isn't it?" said Lydia. "It's all right if it happens to fit in with the rules, but if it doesn't—you're sunk."

A sharp push . . .

"Lewis was so kind," said Lydia. "Lewis—that's the name of the man—the married man. He was so kind and sweet and I loved him. But now that he's dead, I find what a faithless person I am. I can't honestly love the dead. I did at first. But it's faded."

"That's perfectly true," said Barbara, thinking of Lewis, trying to see him clearly in her mind's eye, love him in her mind's heart—but she couldn't. Lewis was dead—really dead. It really was over—and this girl felt the same—

"Sometimes I wonder about his wife—his widow now," said Lydia. "I shall probably never meet her, and I wouldn't want to, of course, but I think women who love the same man must have something similar about them, don't you?"

"It's possible," said Barbara, adding, unwarily, "But you and I are very different."

Lydia took this remark entirely at its surface value.

"Of course we're different," she said, a little ashamed now of her confession to a virtual stranger. "You're the sort of angel who accompanies poor old decrepit patients to far-away islands, and I'm the decrepit old thing who is thus waited on. Oh, when we get there, we must ask Greg if you can stay!"

"When we get there," said Barbara, "you'll go ashore and be met, and I'll stay on board and go back. You needn't be afraid. You'll be all right with Doctor Manson. You won't need me. Anyway, I'd prefer to go home."

GREG and Janet waited together on the shore. Janet had heard the full story now. Her jealousy over Greg's ex-fiancee coming to stay was still there, of course, but she was concerned for the girl, too.

She and Greg stood side by side waiting.

The boat loomed up out of the darkness and edged its way alongside the quay. Lights shone, voices sounded. The gang-plank was set in place. A few passengers disembarked.

Then a girl with fair hair, and with a walking stick gripped firmly in her right hand, made her way slowly down the gang-plank.

(Continued on Page 28.)

The Duke of Bedford now lives in Woburn Abbey, one of Britain's most famous stately

homes.

**BUT HE ONCE
LIVED IN ONE
ROOM IN
BLOOMSBURY
ON LESS THAN
TWO POUNDS
PER WEEK!**

IT would be so easy to guess wrongly about their lives and the manner of their meeting. Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Bedford each year receive visitors by the hundred thousand at Woburn Abbey, one of the most famous stately homes in Britain.

One might think from the grandeur and richness of the setting that they have both known nothing other than gracious living and that they met in aristocratic circles, probably through a formal introduction. Yet the truth is far, far different.

The Duke remembers that when he was twenty he found himself in the depth of winter with no overcoat and no money with which to buy one.

He had, at the time, been sent by his parents to a students' hostel in Bloomsbury, London, where he lived in one room on an allowance of less than two pounds a week.

Though friends insisted on buying him a coat, and though his allowance was raised to just under three pounds a week, it was still a meagre, dull existence.

Today, looking back, he feels little sympathy for his lot all those years ago. But he realises he felt differently at the time, since he had never been trained for work. Nor had his ancestors, apart from ensuring that the

**The People You See
On Television
by
MAURICE
RICHARDS**

family estates were being efficiently run.

He fell in love when he was 21. But the elegant and vivacious Clare Holloway was 13 years his senior, and their marriage was in the face of opposition from his family.

His allowance, which had then been raised to a handsome figure of £1000 a year, was stopped. He set determinedly about making his own way in the world.

First he had a spell working for a firm of estate agents. Then, with war looming, he joined the Coldstream Guards, only to be discharged on medical grounds before long. He became a wartime reporter for a national newspaper.

But tragedy struck in 1945 when his wife died suddenly and he was left to bring up two small sons.

He was married again in 1947 to Lydia Lyle, who came from an aristocratic family and was the widow of an Army captain killed during the war.

For a while the newly-weds lived in London, where he was a working director of an export firm. Then, feeling the need for a warm climate, they moved to South Africa, where they ran a fruit farm.

HIS father died in 1953 and he became the thirteenth Duke of Bedford. Not long after he and his wife returned to live in Britain.

Woburn Abbey had become neglected over the years and the family estates in general had dwindled seriously because of taxation.

But he was determined to save Woburn and he realised his main chance of doing so was by opening it to the public.

A colossal amount of work had to be done to get Woburn ready for the venture. It was work which he and

An informal study of the Duke and Duchess.



his wife organised and in which they took an active part with no thought of the hours they worked.

Woburn was opened to the public in 1955. It proved an immediate and powerful attraction, and 181,000 visitors were welcomed during the first year.

But if the Duke was heartened by the success of the venture, he was deeply saddened when his marriage started to break up in 1957.

When he realised it was beyond saving he eventually threw himself into a frenzy of work to help him overcome his sadness.

In particular he embarked on all sorts of schemes to publicise Woburn in Britain and abroad.

"SOME Enchanted Evening" is a song from "South Pacific" which tells of seeing a stranger across a crowded room and realising at once that this is the person who will share your life.

This is what happened to the Duke,

though it was on a cold afternoon rather than an enchanted evening.

A film series, "Dick And The Duchess," was being shot in Britain for showing on American television. They wanted a real Duke to pose with the stars for publicity pictures.

The Duke of Bedford was asked to come along and accepted. He stood smiling with Margaret Rutherford, Richard Wattis, Hazel Court and other members of the cast. It was then the photographer's flash obstinately refused to work.

In the face of such a crisis, they had a break for tea which was taken in the office of the lady producer. The room rapidly became crowded with stars, visitors, publicity people, secretaries, and so on.

But the Duke found he had eyes for no one but the producer, who was blonde, attractive, and spoke with a French accent. Her name was Nicole Mininaire.

Her life, too, had been arduous. Born

in Paris she had, at the age of 17, entered into an "arranged" marriage with a much older man.

During the war she joined the French resistance movement and was in a group of 18 people—15 of whom died in concentration camps.

After the war, though her husband was rich, she found she couldn't rest content with an easy, domestic life. She went into business, travelling all over Europe to sell fabric designs.

She survived a plane crash in Sweden and, while she was getting over her injuries, she happened to visit a film studio run by a friend. She found herself absorbed by the film world and decided to make a career in it.

By the time she met the Duke she had produced hundreds of TV films and won awards for her work. Her marriage had ended some years before.

AFTER she had posed for a photograph with the Duke he was asked to sign a Woburn guide book for her. He wrote not only his name, but the invitation, "Will you come to the theatre one night?"

She replied that she would, and it was the start of their romance.

She became the Duchess of Bedford in September 1960, and began to play her part in the successful running of Woburn.

When the Duke was first planning to open Woburn to the public, it was said of some stately homes that their technique was to get people in, take their money and then usher them out as quickly as possible.

"That," declared the Duke, "is one policy I shall not follow for one moment."

He has been as good as his word. Visitors to Woburn are greeted with friendly informality and given plenty of time to view the house and grounds.

The Duke and Duchess are pleased to chat, to sign autographs and be photographed with members of the public.

Americans are specially pleased to find "The Dook" and his wife are so friendly and down-to-earth. (It has been estimated that 80 per cent of the Americans who come to Britain visit Woburn.)

"Nicole," the Duke once declared, "has been the most wonderful wife. She helps and inspires me with the running and maintaining of Woburn."

Yet they might never have met—but for the photographer's flash which refused to work!

**NEXT WEEK—
MATT MONRO.**

**MAKE SURE OF YOUR
"RED LETTER"
BY PLACING AN ORDER
WITH YOUR NEWSAGENT
NOW.**

FISH FOR HEALTH

IM often asked what's the best food for warmer weather.

Salads are, of course, excellent. But for sheer value you can't beat fish.

Ounce for ounce, there's more nourishment in fish than in fresh beef. And it's only about half the price. It's three times less fattening than meat. It also gives you extra goodness you don't find in meat at all.

So, Mum, try to have it on the menu at least three times a week.

Now, what's the best kind of fish?

It's herring. It's packed with vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin. There's nothing better for a growing family.

Herring is even a tonic for the eyes. It protects the throat and chest. If you get your fair share of herring from now until the end of October, you'll be far less likely to go down with bronchitis and sore throats next winter.

Next on my list is haddock. It's one of the best all-rounders.

Oh, I know some people prefer sole. But, really, haddock's every bit as good—and it's about half the price.

Haddock steamed with a knob of butter is far better for you than a plate of stew or steak pie.

Another thing. If you're prone to an upset tummy in the summer—and many of us are—you'll find filleted haddock is nature's kindest food.

Poached in milk, you can take haddock when you couldn't even look at anything else.

Here's the reason. Cut a piece of haddock with your fork and it falls apart! You won't do that with steak, or even corned beef.

It's the same with the digestion. It has a fair job coping with a steak. But haddock almost digests itself.

Tastiest of all is halibut. It may be more expensive than the others, but it's chock-a-block with energy.

That's why I often recommend it for anyone who's gone off their food. It's excellent for whetting a jaded appetite.

If you can't afford halibut, cod's the next best buy.

Some folk are a bit wary about mackerel. I don't know why. They make a grand meal, especially for the manual worker.

Of course, remember that different fish do you good in different ways.

Kippers contain most iron. They're also rich in the stuff that keeps the complexion fresh, enriches the blood and guards against cracked lips and sore tongues.

There's as much calcium in a kipper as in the same weight of milk! So they are good for the bones and teeth.

What about salmon? It's delicious. But, of course, it's a luxury.

And, honestly, you get just as much good out of a tin of sardines at a fraction of the price.

Lastly, is there anything in the old story that fish makes you more intelligent?

Well, I have an elderly patient who was making do with far too much bread and jam and potatoes.

I put him on a fish diet. Now he's not only healthier, he's far brighter mentally.

And don't forget, Mum, that frying can make fish far harder to digest. So ring the changes by serving it up in other ways.

The Doctor Talks To You Again Next Week.

We regret that the doctor cannot reply to individual queries from readers.

Lynne's disapproval of Valerie as her stepmother was daily made very obvious.



IT was a beautiful wedding. Valerie was a cool, lovely spring bride, and as they drove away to their honeymoon the guests murmured appreciatively among themselves.

It was when they returned that the trouble started. Valerie was Adam's second wife, and he had a daughter, Lynne.

Lynne was just sixteen. An almost impossible age, Valerie thought. She watched the girl as she sulkily made her bed, and handed her a duster.

"Just give everything a quick dust, will you?" Valerie asked Lynne apologetically. "We'll have to start getting packed for the cottage today."

Lynne's face grew even more set. "That rotten old cottage in the middle of the wilds," she muttered. Valerie felt her heart sink, but she smiled determinedly.

"Your father said you enjoyed it last time you went," she said pleasantly.

"That was years ago. And anyway, Mother was still alive."

The implication that she was no good as a substitute mother wasn't lost on Valerie. There had been so many hints that she was beginning to feel inadequate and helpless. She went downstairs into the bright, sunny sitting-room which

Her Father's Wife

she'd just had redecorated. Even that hadn't been accomplished easily.

"I like it white," Lynne had stormed, when Valerie had shown her the new colour scheme. "It's always been white, ever since I can remember!"

"Then perhaps it's time for a change," Adam had said with unexpected sharpness, coming in at that moment.

Valerie had hesitated. "Perhaps it would be better——"

"You have it yellow if you want it, Val." Adam had smiled at her over his daughter's mutinous head. "Have it

shocking pink, if you like, I don't mind."

"Well, I do!" Lynne's voice broke shrilly. "This was Mum's room and you ought to remember that!" She disappeared upstairs and slammed her bedroom door with a resounding thud.

Valerie felt tears sting her eyes. "I don't know," she said helplessly. "Everything I do seems to be wrong."

Adam touched her cheek gently. "It'll be all right," he said. "She's a good kid, really. After all, she's been undisputed queen of the household for five years, and her nose is out of joint. You're too easy with her. Try a little firmness."

BUT Valerie couldn't bring herself to be firm with Lynne. She'd lost her own mother when she was young, and could still remember the

"You little wretch!" Valerie stormed. "I've a good mind to give you a sound thrashing!"

emptiness and aloneness, even though her father had been a staunch ally and friend.

Putting herself in Lynne's place, she knew she, too, would have resented a stepmother suddenly appearing on the doorstep and taking command of the household.

Now, she stood looking into the sitting-room, with its pale gold walls and daffodil yellow paint, and suppressed an exclamation of anger. Oscar, Adam's ancient and beloved basset hound, was stretched blissfully out on the sofa, and there were muddy paw marks all over the cover.

Valerie bit her lip angrily. If she'd told Lynne once, she thought, she'd told her fifty times, not to let Oscar on the sofa without brushing the mud off first.

COMPLETE STORY

She was beginning to think the girl deliberately took him out, got him dirty, and then let him loose in the house.

Oscar opened one eye and grunted companionably at her.

"Off!" she said sharply, slapping him lightly on his hindquarters. He yawned sleepily at her. "Off! At once!" Suddenly furiously angry, she tipped him off unceremoniously and he yelped protestingly, slinking under a low table and peering at her with reproachful eyes.

"I saw you!" Lynne said shrilly from

the doorway. "Hitting Oscar! I'll tell Daddy!"

Valerie ignored her and went out to the garden.

Surely it would be better when they went down to the cottage next week.

But it wasn't. Adam was a freelance writer, and he'd rented the cottage some years ago. This year they had lent their own house to friends and taken the cottage for a month, so that he could get on with some writing in peace and solitude.

"It's a beautiful spot," he'd told Valerie. "Just off the seashore, and nothing but a few old fishermen's cottages and a village shop-cum-post-office. Long empty sands and seagulls on the cliffs. You'll love it."

"I know I will." If only, Valerie thought longingly, we could be going together, just the two of us, and no Lynne. She looked at Lynne's closed face as she hunched in front of the TV set, and tried to push the thought away.

WHEN they arrived at the cottage it was a disaster. They'd been travelling all day cooped up in the car, and Oscar had been sick three times. Then after a picnic lunch it had begun to rain and never stopped. And Adam couldn't find the cottage.

"I thought it was down here," he said, driving down an overgrown country lane. "Can't be, though." They stared at a row of bungalows, all brand new and freshly painted. "We must be in the wrong cove."

"No, we're not, Daddy! There's the farm!" Lynne was peering through the driving rain at a sign in the hedge. "Rooks Farm," it said. "Get your milk and cream here."

"Then where on earth—" Adam pulled up and stared aghast across the road. A huge holiday camp sprawled in what had been open fields, lights blazed from chalets, and a few dripping holiday-makers were running from one building to another.

"It can't be!" he said, horrified.

But it was. The cottage was at the end of the lane, and had been converted. Instead of a fisherman's cottage, with a charm of its own, it had had walls knocked out and glass partitions put in, and gas fires instead of cosy open coal fires.

Adam was appalled. "They've ruined it," he said, staring at the fitted carpet and modern spiky chairs. "We never used to have to bother about sand, or housework, or anything. Val, you'll have to keep the place clean all the time! And what's that?"

In the distance they could hear the sound of music rolling across the fields and above the rain and wind.

"Oh, Val, love," Adam groaned softly. "Some peaceful holiday this is going to be for us!"

"Lovely!" shouted Lynne from the kitchen. "Life at last!"

They grinned wanly at each other.

"Well, someone's happy, anyway." Valerie smiled weakly, wondering how

much sleep they were going to get each night, with that racket going on.

Even the beach had changed. There was a cafe, and the smell of fried onions from the hamburgers wafted out on to the salt tasting wind. There was a gift shop, and an ice-cream parlour, and a man with pedal boats, and in the afternoon a girl arrived with two donkeys, parading them up and down the wet sand with children of assorted ages clinging on precariously.

"At least the sea doesn't change," Adam said, staring at the pounding white surf.

The rain had stopped, but there was a high wind, and Valerie could feel the skin on her face tightening in the wind and sun, and suddenly she caught Adam's hand.

"Come on! Let's paddle!" She raced him down the beach to the sea, standing in the shallows waiting for him, the sea cold against her bare legs. She rolled

=====



*Have a heart that never hardens,
a temper that never fires,
a tongue that never hurts.*

=====

her jeans up higher and ran towards him as he walked gingerly into the water.

"You look about sixteen," he said suddenly. "Alice used to shed years when she was down here."

Valerie's heart lurched uncomfortably. He didn't often talk about his first wife. He was staring back at the beach, a frown between his eyes.

"Remembering?" she asked quietly.

He shook his head. "Wondering where Lynne is," he said. "She's a bit of a worry lately. She never used to be."

"It's my fault," Valerie said suddenly, feeling her twenty-eight years weigh her down again. "If you hadn't married me, she'd be all right."

"Silly," he squeezed her hand comfortingly. "We'll cope."

BUT they found it increasingly difficult as the days passed by, for Lynne had met a boy.

Valerie, the first time she saw them, couldn't believe it. Lynne, normally unapproachable and untouchable, was holding hands with a long-haired blond boy of about eighteen. He wore what looked like a Red Indian jerkin, with a fringe, and was trying hard to grow a beard.

Lynne, when she saw Valerie, jumped guiltily. She was sitting on a breakwater, her feet dangling in the rising waves. Valerie had left Adam writing and was taking Oscar for a walk.

She was wearing jeans and a loose, yellow blouse, and was aware she looked her best, with her face tanned and hair bleached by the sun. The boy blinked when he saw her.

"Oh, Valerie!" Lynne took her hand away from his quickly. "Valerie, this is a friend of mine, Edward. This is my step-mother," she added hastily. Surprisingly, he stood up and shook hands with her.

"The legendary ogre?" he smiled. "I must say you don't look like the usual step-mum, anyway!"

To her annoyance, Valerie felt herself flushing. Instinctively, she wished she looked more matronly, and looking down saw her bare toes wriggling in the hot, dry sand. She smiled suddenly.

"Why don't you come along for a meal tonight, Edward?" she invited on impulse. "Lynne would love to have you along, I'm sure."

He looked surprised. "Well—thanks. I'd like that. Yes, I will, thank you."

Lynne, to Valerie's consternation, was glowering furiously at Oscar as he dug a hole in the sand, and she hurried off along the beach wondering what she'd done wrong now.

The evening meal was a total disaster. Adam took one look at Edward, still in his Red Indian outfit, and joined Valerie in the kitchen.

"Where did she find him?" he demanded, hastily pouring himself a glass of cooking sherry.

"On the beach, I believe," Valerie, deep in the preparations of a chicken casserole, was offhand. Lynne, she'd noted ruefully, had taken pains with her dress and make-up and was sulkily silent all through the meal.

Adam seemed puzzled and tried to make the conversation go with a swing and failed dismally.

"I'll go wash up," Valerie said hastily. "You all go and watch TV together."

Edward started clearing the table. "We'll help," he offered. "We'll wipe, won't we, Lynne?"

Lynne nodded silently, and Valerie felt her heart sink. If ever there was a reluctant helper in the kitchen, it was Lynne.

"No," she said firmly. "I insist. You two run off. Go along, now."

Reluctantly, Edward allowed himself to be shooed out of the minute kitchen, and Valerie leaned thankfully against the sink, staring out at the holiday camp over the road.

Edward, she assumed, was staying there. She wondered how long he'd be there, and whether he'd be frightened off by Lynne's unapproachable sullenness.

THE next day Lynne hardly spoke to Valerie or Adam. She left the cottage early and disappeared, coming home only in time for supper.

"Where've you been?" asked Valerie, exasperated. "We were worried about you."

"You weren't," retorted Lynne. She had her hair up again, and she looked older. "You don't care." she added.

Valerie felt guilty. It was quite true, the morning had been wonderful. Adam had deserted his writing and come swimming with her, then they wandered home and picnicked on salad and fresh fruit.

It was during lunch that they began to worry, and Valerie found herself almost disliking Lynne for causing Adam's worried eyes and frequent glances at his watch during the afternoon.

Now he stood white-faced, looking at his defiant daughter. "Have you been with Edward all day?"

She nodded silently, biting her lips. She was sunburned, and the skin was peeling a little on her smooth forehead. Valerie felt a pang of compassion for her. For all her attempts to appear older, she was pitifully young.

"You will not go out with him again unless you tell us where you are going and what you are doing. You understand?"

She nodded again. Valerie moved forward impulsively, and put her arm round the thin young shoulders.

"Your father was worried, Lynne. So was I. Please don't think we don't care about you, it's just not true."

Lynne wrenched away angrily. "Don't touch me!" she said hotly. "You don't care. You don't! I saw you both, holding hands on the beach like a couple of—of teenagers! You're too old for that!"

She burst into tears and ran out, leaving Valerie stricken, staring at Adam.

The next day was very hot. They got through breakfast somehow, the three of them awkwardly polite to each other, like strangers at a hotel table. Adam tried hard to start a normal conversation.

"Are you going to the beach today, Lynne?"

"Yes. With Edward," she added defiantly.

"We'll see you down there, I expect," Adam said hopefully. "Perhaps we could have a swim together."

But when Valerie and Adam arrived on the beach and Edward waved to them, they saw Lynne speak hastily to him and they went off in the other direction, Edward, in swimming trunks and bright red shirt, looking surprisingly muscular, and very brown. Beside him, Lynne looked very small and fair.

"Well," said Adam gloomily. "That was pointed, if you like. At least," he added, "he's not got his Red Indian jerkin on."

They struggled through the long, hot day, both depressed and miserable. Lynne came in for lunch and informed them she was going fishing with Edward and that was the last they saw of her till supper-time.

THEN the next day, she disappeared.

She told Adam she was taking Oscar for a walk at nine o'clock, and by four o'clock she still wasn't home.

Valerie tried to keep it from Adam as long as she could, but when he emerged from his study tired and bleary-eyed at four o'clock, she knew he'd realised something was wrong.

"Not been back at all?" he demanded, trying to clear his brain of the customary fog after hours of concentrated writing. "So that's why you brought me lunch on a tray?"

She nodded miserably. "Oscar's not back either, so I suppose she's taken him off with Edward for the day again!"

Adam's eyes blazed. "I won't have it!" he exploded. "Worrying you like this, it's not fair. I'll—I'll send her to her Grandmother tomorrow, so that we can have a little peace!"

"Oh, no, Adam, don't. She'd hate us for ever if you did that!"

"I won't have you upset like this," he repeated. "And where is she, anyway? In that wretched holiday camp, I suppose. I'm going to find her!"

He almost ran down the path, and she followed hastily.

"Adam, don't! Don't make a scene! She'll be so—so mortified, Adam!"

"Serve her right," he snapped, and disappeared beyond the ornate gates into the holiday camp grounds.

Half an hour later he was back again. "She's not there. And nobody's ever heard of Edward. Who is he, Valerie? Where's he come from?"

"I don't know," she stared at him blankly. "I always thought he was on holiday there."

At seven o'clock they still hadn't found her. They'd walked along the beach in the late afternoon sun, looking for Oscar's familiar brown body or Lynne's fair hair.

An odd unease had caught hold of Valerie, worry over Adam's unhappiness mingling with her own sudden deep anger with Lynne for causing him worry.

Then she suddenly saw a familiar figure coming towards them. She caught Adam's arm.

"Adam! There's Edward!"

Edward was coming away from the cottage, a towel slung over his shoulder. He smiled at them. "Is Lynne around? I wondered if she'd come for a late swim."

Fear clutched at Valerie. "We thought she was with you!"

He shook his head, puzzled. "No, I've been working all day. I told her I wouldn't be able to see her today." Seeing their puzzled faces he explained. "I live at the farm. Rooks Farm. When I'm home on vacation I help Dad as much as I can. I'm an art student."

Adam let out a deep breath and Valerie laughed shakily. "That explains why we couldn't contact you at the camp. We've been so worried. Lynne's disappeared, and we thought she was with you."

Adam leaned wearily against the low cottage wall. "Where is she, then, Edward? Where can she be?"

"We must look for her. Properly." Edward started organising rapidly. "I know the area better than you. Adam, you go along the cliffs, and I'll go over towards the village. Valerie, you'd better go along the beach."

"But we've been," Valerie protested weakly.

"This afternoon?"

She nodded.

"The tide's on the way out, now. It's just possible she got caught round the Point."

VALERIE set off once again along the beach. It was empty now, littered with empty ice-cream tubs and pieces of newspaper desolately wedged with pebbles to stop them blowing away.

She followed the tracks of the donkeys along the dry sand beyond the tide mark,

OUR VET ANSWERS -

Readers' Queries

MY budgie drinks such a lot of water that his droppings are always wet and make such a mess of his sandsheets each day. He eats well and looks in good condition.—Mrs D. Beck, Boston.

This sounds like indigestion. Try sprinkling a little Bismuth powder on his seed.

Keep him in a high temperature and give a little bread and milk twice weekly. Condition powders or liquids can be obtained at a pet shop.

Perhaps he is getting too much green food, and wet or frosted green food is always bad for budgies.

● D. Butler, High Wycombe—A yellow discharge suggests an infection of the uterus. This will need antibiotics given by a vet.

If you can't afford his fees, the R.S.P.C.A. or National Canine Defence League may be able to help you with regard to payment. Their address will be in the telephone directory, or the local police could probably help.

MY two-year-old Labrador bitch seems in perfect health, although rather too fat. But what is worrying me is that she has not yet been in season. Can you tell me if this is unusual, or harmful?—E. Hartley, Suffolk.

It is unusual, but not harmful. Her fatness and ovary upset may both be caused by a hormone lack. Your vet should be able to help.

MORE ABOUT PETS NEXT WEEK

Our Vet will be pleased to answer readers' queries about their pets. So if your pet is off-colour, or if there is anything else troubling you about it, write to the Vet for advice. Your queries will be answered on this page. We regret that no private answers can be given.

Address is — Pets' Corner, "Red Letter," 18a Hollingsworth Street, London, N.7.

and went round the Point, shivering a little.

Suddenly, in the distance, she saw a tubby little brown dog. Oscar! He suddenly saw her, and started barking exuberantly, running backwards and forwards over the rocks, his stubby little legs going like pistons.

"Oscar!" she called. "Here, boy, here, Oscar!"

But he kept prancing across the rocks, yelping excitedly, and she hurried towards him. Abruptly he disappeared and she wondered, foolishly, if her eyes were playing tricks. Then she saw Lynne.

"You little wretch!" Valerie exploded. "I suppose you were scared to come home after all this time? We've been looking all over the place for you. How dare you worry your father like this?"

"I've a good mind to give you a sound thrashing. I've tried to be patient with you. I've tried to be friendly but, oh, no. Our selfish little Lynne didn't want any of it. Well it's got to stop, do you hear? Any more childish nonsense from you again and I won't be so lenient with you. You're sixteen, so for goodness' sake act like it!"

Lynne smiled shakily. "Wow, you're human after all," she said, to Valerie's consternation.

Surprised, Valerie stared at her. "What do you mean?"

"You actually lost your temper. Usually you're so—so saintly, no matter what I do, I could scream." She moved slightly and winced, and Valerie noticed that she was lying awkwardly.

"You're not hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"It's my ankle. I can't move it. Oscar got stuck up the cliff and I fell down trying to get him. He thought he was a mountain goat," she added, ruefully.

Valerie knelt beside her. "Oh, what a nit I am, reading the riot act to you when you're hurt!"

"I'm sorry, Lynne. But we've been looking for you for hours, and we were so worried. Edward's looking, too. Why," she asked suddenly, "didn't you tell us he lived at the farm? You deliberately let us believe he was a—hippie, or something!"

"You didn't give me a chance," Lynne said. "Dad was creating, and you were being, oh, cool, calm and placid, again. Not like a real mother at all," she added suddenly, and tears brimmed in her eyes. She grasped Valerie's hand.

"I was so frightened, Valerie. When the tide came up. I couldn't get up over the rocks. And Oscar's such a fool, he

wouldn't go back to the cottage without me."

"He's a faithful old hound." Val patted him fondly. "For that you can lie on my sofa any time!"

Then Lynne noticed a small figure on the cliffs waving frantically at them.

"Look, there's Daddy," she said, "Looking for us."

"Dad'll be here in a minute or two and I'd like to say something to you before he comes." She took a deep breath. "I'm sorry, Val, for all the trouble I've been to you and Dad. I was jealous of you and of the way Dad and you looked at each other. Shutting me out, I felt. I just felt alone and I wanted to fight you for it."

"Don't you worry, Lynne," she said softly. "In future I'll storm at you like Edward's ogre of a stepmother. I'll live up to my name!"

They laughed shakily, and Valerie looked up as Adam reached them.

"It's all right, Adam," she said. "She's hurt her leg, and had a nasty scare, but she's O.K."

She met his eyes calmly, and saw sudden understanding in his eyes.

"Everything's all right, darling," she said. "Everything's fine, at last."

And it was.

THE END.

You'll Be A Success If You Dream You're A Barber

PETER ZADEUS EXPLAINS THE MYSTERY OF YOUR DREAMS.

THEY will never build a computer as intricate or as complicated as the human mind. It is linked to a memory system so complex and comprehensive that no library could ever contain so much information.

We control and set our minds to work on fairly simple tasks when we are awake, but when we are asleep we let them loose to work on all the stored material in the memory.

Naturally, the mind sorts through the new "in tray" material—the actual day's events, those events still "pending" and those coming up for immediate future attention.

So, when you come to interpret your dreams, remember that they deal with current events, most likely of all something that has happened during the day or is being anticipated for tomorrow.

The mind gives priority of attention to matters coming up for the dreamer to attend to. Next, it concentrates on understanding any of the new events that are either incompletely or bewildering.

It has little time for idle, valueless speculation. It puts the problem into the memory, demanding all relevant information from personal experience or observation. With all this material supplied it creates a story.

More often than not it takes a dominant symbol and weaves the story around it. The symbol is always something having meaning to the dreamer.

I can only talk in this series of articles about the most general interpretation of these symbols. The inter-

pretations, however, are based on a lifetime study of dreams and the symbolic meanings used in them.

If you dream of **Banjo Playing** the meaning is that you will enjoy unsophisticated, simple entertainment. You do not need to put on an act with someone you are taking out. To impress by spending money would be foolish.

If you dream of being in a **Bank** and withdrawing money, you have some financial problems and should seek to settle them. If you are paying money in, you can anticipate business success.

If you dream of going **Bankrupt**, the time has come to make some fresh start. It need not necessarily have anything to do with money. Just turn over a new leaf in whichever area of your life this is apt.

To dream of a **Bar** means loneliness. You can successfully seek new partnerships. To dream of many people drinking at a bar, yourself one of them, means you should be beware of keen competition from partners and friends.

Dreaming of being in a **Barber's Shop** means that you are neglecting emotional affairs and not profitably employing your business hours either.

To dream of being a **Barber** means that you are on the right lines for success.

Sounds heard in dreams must always be suspect as symbols, because often they are physical experiences heard by a sleeper who does not waken, but whose mind uses the sound as a dream starter.

But to hear dogs barking in dreams

means being a welcome visitor. To see the dog that is barking, however, means that you will visit as an unknown stranger. If the dog is barking at a group of people, including yourself, some mystery is about to be cleared up.

Baskets in dreams are symbolic of the standard of living you can anticipate. A full basket means success and financial rewards flowing in. An empty basket means debts will be owed to you and that you should press for repayments or recompense.

Generally speaking, to dream that you are taking a **Bath** means danger of missing an opportunity. Taking a cold bath is symbolic of a state of good health—a hot bath, symbolic of continuing and increasing affluence in life.

Taking a bath early in the morning means an important social event, possibly a marriage. Taking a bath late at night symbolises emotional happiness.

Bathing, as opposed to taking a bath, is most often related to actual experience, a remembering—like pleasantly looking through holiday snapshots.

Where it is symbolic, however, bathing alone in either sea or river means you will soon find a new friendship. Bathing with a mixed group of known friends is symbolic of popularity.

Bathing with a group of strangers means travel in the near future. Bathing with someone you love means the romance or love will prosper.

Her problems would be over when she reached London, Hazel thought. But little did she know that they were only beginning.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

THOUGH innocent, **HAZEL WILLIAMS** was found guilty of taking part in the jewel robbery her husband, **JACK**, committed. The jewels weren't recovered; Jack was given 12 years and Hazel 18 months. During that time, her daughter, **RUTH**, was born.

Hazel was happy living with her grandfather, **SAM TYLER**, when she came out. **DAVID LAWRENCE** was a frequent visitor. He was a private detective, trying to trace the jewels through Hazel.

DON CLAYTON, the leader of the gang Jack had been working for, had the same idea. He threatened that Ruth would die unless Hazel found out where the jewels were. He advised against going to the police.

Hazel visited Jack in prison, but Ruth's life meant nothing to him and he agreed to tell where the jewels were only if Clayton helped him escape.

Clayton was angry at this, but he gave Hazel one last chance. She was to write to Jack, persuading him to give up his secret. A messenger would collect the letter and smuggle it into the prison.

It was a woman who came and no sooner had Hazel handed over the letter than the police arrived. They took the woman away. Realising something was wrong, David and Sam had gone to the police!

A few minutes later, Hazel was running from the house with Ruth. She got on the first bus that came along. Had she escaped Clayton? Could she just vanish? It was her only chance of saving Ruth.



"Sorry, the room's not to let," the woman said. "I don't take babies."

WITH Ruth in her arms, Hazel sank back in the bus seat. She felt completely drained by all the fear and tension of the last few hours.

But, almost instantly, she was sitting up taut again. Turning round as far as she could, she looked back along the road. Was the bus being followed? Had Don Clayton put a watch on the house, seen her leave?

Then she relaxed a little. There was no car at all on the road behind them; no vehicle of any sort, not even a bicycle.

So she had a chance. Because, if she could get to London, surely she could just fade out of sight amongst the crowds there? "Fare, please."

Hazel almost cried out, her nerves were so much on edge. She stared up at the conductor and fumbled for her purse.

Where did she want to go? She tried to think of the town they were approaching but she couldn't seem to visualise it.

"All . . . all the way, please."

"That'll be one and four." The conductor clipped the ticket. "Nice kid," He smiled at Ruth.

Hazel wanted to hide her baby. Anyone taking notice of either of them presented a danger. If anyone asked about them, they'd remember.

But everyone seemed to notice Ruth.

At the next stop a woman settled into the seat beside Hazel and instantly smiled at the baby. "Little love," she said. "What's her name?"

"M . . . Mary." Hazel drew as far into her corner as possible and turned Ruth so that she faced the window.

"Look," She pointed at nothing in particular. "See, darling." She bent over the small figure to hide her.

However, the woman was not deterred. "So intelligent!" she went on. "You can always tell!"

Hazel made no answer and soon something else distracted the woman. She started talking to her neighbour across the aisle.

The bus went on and finally turned into the town bus depot. The thought of getting out terrified Hazel. Someone might be waiting, watching. She hung back, only to hurry off suddenly when she realised that the last person off was the most conspicuous.

Now what? There was a waiting-room and she almost ran to it and then stood close to the window, to see if there was anyone . . .

But everybody seemed occupied, hurrying this way or that.

Only a policeman was standing still, looking about. Hazel wasn't scared of him. Clayton wouldn't have gone to the police and it was too soon for Granddad to have realised that she'd gone.

She mustn't linger here, though. So she left the waiting-room and went up to the police officer.

"Which . . . which way is the railway station?" she asked him.

"Turn left, out of here," he directed, pointing, "then it's the third on the right, down the hill. You can't miss it."

"Thank you," Hazel said and turned to leave the depot.

There was a long-distance bus near the entrance and the indicator board said: "London." She looked back. The policeman was talking to someone else. If . . . if anyone asked about her and Ruth, if he remembered them, he'd say they'd asked for the railway station. So, if she took the coach instead . . .

The driver was standing by the door.

"When do you leave?" Hazel asked.

"In three minutes, lady." He helped

I MUST SAVE MY BABY

her on board and she found a seat near the back.

HAZEL slid as low as possible in the seat, as the bus drew out of the depot. As long as the policeman didn't see her . . .

She didn't think he had and, in that case, no one in the world could tell Clayton where she was. He might guess that she'd make for London, but he wouldn't know exactly when or where she'd arrive.

By now he might have realised that his messenger, with the letter for Jack, had been picked up by the police and he'd think Hazel had contacted them, but . . . she'd got away. She had Ruth with her and they were safe.

She must make a plan, decide what she would do in London. But her brain seemed incapable of thinking. She was so tired. All she could think of was Clayton and that he mustn't find her because he would . . . kill Ruth.

What was she going to do in London?

She and Jack had known so few people when they'd lived there. They hadn't been there very long, even though they'd bought a flat. Jack had said it was a good investment.

Even the few people she had met through Jack . . . she'd never dare contact them, because they might know Clayton, too. She just couldn't be sure.

So she wouldn't dare go to anyone; she'd have to manage on her own. She and Ruth . . . alone in the world together.

They'd have to get a room, that was the first thing. Once they had that, then she could rest. And that was all she felt she wanted in all the world, just hours and hours of rest.

On this coach, Ruth was restless. Hazel realised that she must be hungry, for it was more than time for her feed.

Fortunately the seat next to them was empty, so she was able to have her grip-bag on it and get at the bottle for Ruth and the screw-top jar of baby food. After being fed, Ruth settled for sleep and she didn't wake until the coach reached London.

As they rolled towards the bus-station Hazel felt a knot of fear gather inside her. It was all so huge. The tall, grim houses in unending rows, the towering skyscrapers, all the traffic.

And, at the station, there seemed to be dozens of coaches everywhere, hundreds of people, all in a hurry. How was she ever going to cope?

Yet she must; she had no one to help her. As she stood by the coach, Ruth in her arms, Hazel suddenly thought of David Lawrence. If only . . . oh, if only

David suddenly came through the crowds towards her . . .

But there was no familiar face anywhere. Hazel moved away. Ruth must be changed, so she went to the waiting-room. The attendant was kind and, desperately, Hazel asked her: "Do you know of anyone who has a room to let?"

"A room?" The woman laughed. "Dozens there are, love. All round this district. Bed-sitters mostly. All the houses is let out. But . . ." She paused and looked at Ruth. "You've got a baby, though. Not many landladies will take a baby. That'll make it harder for you. Still, you might be lucky."

Outside again, Hazel went to the cafeteria. She was very thirsty and, though she wasn't in the least hungry, she knew she'd better try to eat something. She had tea and a ham sandwich.

FINALLY, Hazel set out. Starting with a street close to the station, she walked along, looking for a "Room To Let" notice, somewhere. When she found one, she knocked on the door.

The woman who opened it merely said: "Yes?"

"It's about the room," Hazel told her. "The notice says . . ."

"Oh, sure. Single room, top floor, six guineas a week. But I only take business gentlemen. You've got a baby." The door was shut.

Hazel went on. No babies! And six guineas on the top floor. She could never afford that, not even for a few days.

Another woman was a little kinder.

"I'd try behind the station, love. Be a bit cheaper there."

So she tried, one house after another. But it was the same everywhere. Either there were no vacancies, in spite of the notices, or it was "No babies."

Hazel was ready to drop. She didn't think she could go on. Ruth seemed twice as heavy by now. She must sit down. They were in a run-down square and there was a seat by the square garden, by a bus stop.

It took Hazel more than five minutes to get a break in the traffic to get over. Then she dropped on to the seat.

For a few moments it seemed all that she wanted. But then the nagging question was back. What was she to do? She must find somewhere and it was already getting dark. She closed her eyes. "You all right?"

With a gasp, she looked up. A policeman was standing beside her. For no reason at all, except perhaps her exhaustion, panic flooded over her.

"Oh yes, yes I'm all right. I'm just . . . waiting for someone."

"I see." He moved on, but then he stopped and looked back.

Hazel wanted to run. What . . . what if Clayton had thought of reporting to the police that she'd run away from him? He could describe her and Ruth. To be told by the police that they'd found her and then to drive up in his white car and . . . collect her—that would appeal to him. If she protested, he would certainly sweep it aside as hysterics.

She must go somewhere else; she mustn't linger round here any more. A bus drew up. It said "Islington" on the front. That . . . that was near where she and Jack had their flat.

She was on the bus almost before she knew it. And she was asking the conductor for the only place she could think of on the route: "To The Angel."

Then, as she put away the change he gave her, a sixpence slipped down into the bottom of her handbag. Fumbling for it, her fingers touched something else. A key on a keyring. Hazel drew it out and stared at it.

It was the key to the flat where she and Jack had spent the brief first months of their marriage. She hadn't even realised that she still had it. So . . . why should she find it now?

Unless it was a sign? She had no idea what had happened to the flat or to the furniture. She had never asked. She hadn't wanted to be reminded of the time when she and Jack had been taken from there to prison.

But now? Could it still be there, empty? They had bought it. And she had nowhere to go.

Ruth, in her arms, reached out for the ring, thinking that her mother was holding it up for her. But Hazel dropped it quickly back into her bag.

Dared she go there? Would it be . . . safe? She must find some shelter for the night, she couldn't walk the streets with Ruth. And no one wanted to take them in. Why . . . why should it occur to Clayton that she might go to the flat? If there had been any chance of the jewels being in the flat, the police would have found them and they hadn't.

Could she go just for one night?

"The Angel," the conductor called out. Then he came along the bus and stopped beside Hazel. "You wanted The Angel, didn't you?"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "Oh . . . oh yes."

He took her grip and helped her off.

"End of a long trip, eh? You look pretty tired. Not far from home now, I hope!"

"No, not far." Taking the grip, Hazel turned away. His kindness made her want to burst into tears.

HER feet seemed to know the way automatically. The flat was over shops, up steps at the back. She stared upwards. Was it empty? Could it be?

Their flat was on the second floor. When she reached it, Hazel stared at the windows, hardly daring to believe what she saw. Because she recognised the curtains; they were the ones she had made and put up. And, though by now there were lights on in the other flats, there were no lights on here.

Dropping her grip, she shifted Ruth's weight again and then tried the key in the lock.

The door opened. She carried the baby and the grip inside and switched on the hall lights. Except for Ruth, she could have been stepping back over two years. The little table, the picture on the wall. The table was thick with dust. So . . . no one could be here.

Still not really believing it, she went into the sitting-room. It was the same, just the same. Even an old copy of the magazine she had always taken was still there!

She had left the grip in the hall and now she laid Ruth down on the sofa. Then she just sagged into the armchair and burst into tears.

She was so utterly tired, but they had found shelter. For a long moment that was enough, but then, suddenly, she was on her feet.

Someone might notice the light on, where no lights had been for two years.

Clayton might even send someone round to keep watch. No one must know she was here. No one.

In an instant, she was at the window, pulling the curtains across, making sure there was no chink left. She switched on a small table lamp and turned out the main light. She flicked off the hall light. No one must suspect, guess . . . anything.

But the baby couldn't know about the need for secrecy. She started to cry.

Curtains couldn't shut that in. Hazel picked her up. With her free hand, she got out the remaining food. Then she changed Ruth and carried her to the bedroom.

Here, even the beds were still made up. Dragging the sheets off one, Hazel took clean ones from the cupboard and spread them. She tucked the baby in.

But she was capable of doing nothing else except take off her shoes and drop on to the bed herself. She couldn't have eaten anything even if she'd had any food available. There were probably some tins in the kitchen cupboard, but she had no strength left to even open one.

For quite a while, she just lay there, too tired to sleep or even to think. Then she must have dosed off.

Because suddenly she was awake, wide awake. Sitting up, tense and listening. Somewhere there had been a noise.

It wasn't Ruth. She was fast asleep, making tiny contented snuffly sounds which Hazel was used to. They wouldn't have woken her.

This noise was a sound which shouldn't have been there. A noise which had scared her, even in her sleep. Now her heart was pounding with such fear that she couldn't seem to hear anything else.

Then the sound came again. Outside or . . . or in the hall. What was it, what could it be?

Hazel was out of bed immediately. Her eyes were used to the dark now; she went straight through to the sitting-room door and into the hall.

She got there at the exact moment the front door swung open and a figure slipped through, closing it again softly and then standing against it, as tense as she was.

Twice Hazel tried to speak but no words came. She licked her lips and swallowed. Was it . . . Clayton? Or . . . or someone he'd sent?

It was a man by the door, anyway, she could tell that much by the faint light through the glass.

At last words came.

"Who . . . who is it? What do you want?"

The answer came quickly, harshly. "I knew someone was here. Who on earth are you?"

But she knew the voice. It was incredible, unbelievable, but she knew.

JACK!"

"Good God, Hazel!" He knew her too. And he came a step further. "You didn't tell me you were using the flat. You said you were with the old man." Then his fear came uppermost again. "Don't put the light on!"

Jack . . . here? She felt stunned. It should be a dream, a nightmare, but she knew it wasn't. He was here.

Now his eyesight had adjusted, too. He was beside her, gripping her arm and pushing her back into the sitting-room. He shut that door, too.

It was Hazel who got to the small lamp, who turned it on, feeling for the switch but keeping her eyes on where she knew her husband to be.

The instant the light came on, she saw him look over at the drawn curtains. He was still by the door, but he seemed to relax. He had on trousers and a coat which were too big for him; he was dirty and he looked exhausted. Now he stumbled to the sofa and almost fell on to it.

Hazel stayed by the lamp.

"You've escaped," she whispered.

"That's right." He seemed to have gained new vitality from somewhere, his voice was stronger. "This afternoon. From a working party. The chance came and I took it. I decided I'd been a mug long enough.

"With Clayton after me, the way you said, I'd got to do something. You were right when you said I wasn't safe from him, even inside. I didn't really believe that he'd get me out. Even if he did, he'd

get his own back, once he'd got his hands on the jewels. I couldn't bargain with Clayton. So the only thing I could do was to get out, get the jewels and . . . disappear."

"But . . . won't they come here for you?" Jack Williams shrugged.

"They may not know that the flat is still ours. It was a chance I had to take. And I've been dead lucky so far. I could be on a lucky streak."

Now that he'd started to talk, it seemed that he couldn't stop. He leant forward eagerly.

"You see, one of the officers with our working party slipped into a ditch, twisting his foot pretty badly. The other officer went to help him and I had my chance. I was farthest away. I slipped through a hedge and jumped a lorry.

"You wouldn't believe it, but the chap who was driving had been 'inside,' knew what it's like. He was all ready to give me a break. Brought me right to London, then took me to his own place and gave me these clothes. Bit bigger than I am!"

Jack laughed. His confidence was coming back quickly.

"I couldn't make a get-away looking like this, but I knew some of my own gear was probably still here. Had to break in though, they took away my keys. You gave me a fright all right. I never thought of you being here."

"I had to come. No one would take me with . . . with a baby."

"So you've got the kid here? Why not leave her with your grandfather? He's had her most of her life, hasn't he?"

"No!" Her cry was fierce. "I won't leave Ruth with anyone. Clayton wants to kill her!"

"Oh rot!" Jack shook his head in disbelief.

"He does!" Hazel clenched her hands. "Do . . . do you think I'd be here otherwise? Why should I leave Grandad or come to see you in prison unless it was because of my baby?"

IT was at that moment that Ruth awoke in the next room. Perhaps the subdued but urgent voices had woken her. Whatever the cause, she didn't like finding herself alone, knowing somehow that she was in a strange place.

At her first cry, Hazel was back with her lifting her into her arms. "I'm here, Ruth. Mummy's here."

She mustn't cry; it could be so dangerous if anyone heard.

She brought Ruth through to the sitting-room.

Jack had taken off the jacket he was wearing; as he flung it across the back of a chair, he turned and saw them.

For a moment he stood quite still. Then he came nearer.

"So that's the kid, is it? Ruthie. My kid."

He had never seen her before; never thought of the baby as a personality, anything to do with him. Now he reached out and touched the baby's soft cheek with his finger. "Think she'd come to me?"

Hazel let him take her.

Holding her carefully, Jack went back to the sofa and sat down.

"Well . . . hello, Ruthie," he said.

Hazel didn't move. She just looked at them. Ruth in her father's arms. It should have been an emotional moment, yet she felt nothing at all. Very slowly she came forward to the armchair and sat down herself.

But for Jack the moment was unique. When he spoke again, to Hazel now, there was a new excitement in his voice.

"We'll get away all right," he declared. "I'm glad you were here. We'll go together. To Ireland first. Belfast! The moment I get those jewels. We'll leave by morning, get clean away. You and I and Ruthie, here.

"She . . . she's quite a kid, isn't she? A bit like me, too. Oh we'll have a grand time, the three of us. I'll make things up to you, now, Hazel, make you forget the bad luck we had. From now on everything will be different, I promise you. We'll have money, be able to do anything we like?"

Hazel felt a wave of despair flood into her. Jack hadn't changed. He was weaving day-dreams again, just as he'd done before. Already he'd thrust aside the fact that he'd been caught, that he'd gone to prison; that, even now, he was a hunted man. In his own mind he was a millionaire; a man with money to burn.

"Hey!" He was looking across at Hazel now. "Isn't there something to eat around this place? I had a beer at the van driver's place but he didn't want me hanging about for too long. I'm pretty hungry."

"Oh, Jack." Hazel felt like giving up. "How can there be food here? It's two years since we were here."

"Didn't you bring any with you?"

"No!" She was on her feet, coming across for Ruth. "I was frightened when I left Grandad's. I only wanted to get away. And I'm still frightened. You . . . you talk as though we were safe, all of us. How can we be when . . . when the police want you and Clayton wants to kill Ruth?"

"Oh now, see here," he protested. "We're going to get away. I only need a few hours and . . ."

"We can't get away," she interrupted. "Not unless you let Clayton get what he wants; not unless you tell him where those jewels are. Tell him, Jack. Please tell him."

He let her take the baby and then he was on his feet too.

"You're crazy," he flung at her. "Do you think I've managed to get away from prison just to meekly see Clayton scoop everything from right under my nose? If you do, then you *are* crazy."

He'd never see, never understand. Hazel turned away.

But, before she reached the bedroom doorway again, she stopped. Then she turned round and her face was whiter than ever.

For the doorbell had rung. Clearly and distinctly. At three o'clock in the morning . . . the bell had rung.

(To Be Continued.)



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I didn't consider myself mean with money—just careful. And if my wife couldn't manage with what I gave her, then she'd just have to economise.

I'D watched my father hand over his pay packet to Mum every Friday night for years. And I'd noticed how little was left for him out of what he earned at the factory.

He seemed resigned to the little bit of pocket-money to spare after everything else had been accounted for.

He cycled to work and carried sandwiches for his lunch.

I used to feel rather sorry for my dad when I watched Mum take charge of his pay and hand him his small allowance.

This always stuck in my memory, and I was determined that when I got married I would be the one who handled the money. I wasn't going to work hard each week to be given a few shillings for my trouble.

By then I'd come to ignoring the fact that Mum needed every penny she could to look after the family.

So, when I met Linda and we got married, I had everything planned. I asked her how much she thought she could manage on, gave her that amount each week, and kept the rest myself.

I wasn't going to have any woman, even my wife, organising MY money!

It worked all right at first, but then, with a baby coming, Linda needed extras.

I put her housekeeping up to what I considered was enough, but another baby arriving soon after the first began to put a strain on the budget.

I told Linda to try to cut down on the spending, but she pointed out that with rising prices and the children getting bigger it wasn't easy.

She suggested we sat down together and tried to work out how we could best handle our finances.

"Do you realise I don't even know how much you earn, Steve?" she said, and memories of my Dad leapt into my mind.

"I don't think a wife needs to know!" I told her sharply.

"Most of them do," she replied quietly. "I feel rather hurt about it, as if you don't trust me in some way. Or perhaps you think that I'll keep everything?"

"What I saw in my own home taught me enough," I told Linda. "As long as I provide for you and the children, the amount written on my pay slip is my affair!"

THE money I kept I considered to be mine to do with what I liked.

I smoked, and I liked a drink on the way home sometimes.

I suppose I spent quite a lot of money wastefully, but my conscience didn't bother me until this rise came up at work and I decided to keep the news to myself.

At first I was going to tell Linda and give a little extra to her, but then I thought again.

My Selfishness Could Have Wrecked My Marriage!

Linda seemed to be managing all right, so why not leave things as they were?

I treated her to a hairdo or some new stockings now and again to keep my conscience clear, I suppose.

I didn't know until much later that she never went inside a hairdresser's, but that she put the money into the housekeeping or bought something for the children.

If any man had said I was keeping my wife short, I'd have thought he was only jealous.

All the men at work seemed to live for pay day, and I often heard them complaining about bills and living costs.

Then one morning Linda had been talking to the wife of a man who worked beside me, and when I got home that night I could see that she had something on her mind.

"Steve," she said over supper. "You

**THE LIFE I WANT
TO FORGET**

didn't tell me you'd all got a rise a few weeks ago."

I could feel my face grow hot, and I decided to make it look like anger.

"Should I have told you?" I asked. "Look, love, I'm head of this family, and we get along all right, don't we?"

Poor Linda looked doubtful about that!

"It isn't easy," she told me. "I'd like to replace some of the household things, Steve, and both the children need new shoes. It's the extras which make life more comfortable, but I'm finding it hard now to cope with the essentials."

I counted out the price of new shoes for Jenny and Chris.

"Now, cheer up," I said. "Don't let's get like some of the others I know, who

always seem to be quarrelling over money. Look, I'll add another ten shillings a week to the house-keeping, and that's the limit."

A WEEK later she handed me a little note-book, and I stared at the neatly-entered facts and figures.

"Just to show you where the money DOES go to, Steve," Linda told me quietly. "I'm tired of having to budget for everything I buy. I wouldn't mind so much if I knew we HAD to struggle, but knowing that you put quite a bit in your own pocket makes me resentful.

"Maybe there are some extravagant wives about, but you should know that I'd make good use of everything you gave me. We ought to work things out together properly."

"You'd have me handing over my pay packet unopened if you could, wouldn't you? And give me back a few shillings of pocket money? Well, it isn't going to be like that—ever!"

I hated quarrelling with Linda, especially as I felt there was no need.

There was an awful two-day silence after that row, and I felt so miserable that I nearly gave in. Perhaps I was wrong to let my marriage be ruled by what I'd seen and felt in my home as a youngster. Was it really all that important to keep so much of my wages back for myself?

Then Linda did something which made me furious. She went out and got herself a job.

"I can't manage," she told me flatly. "So there's no alternative. Mrs Robinson next door is looking after Chris and meeting Jenny from school. I shall pay her for her trouble, and still have enough left to make life a lot more comfortable—for me and the children!"

"And you consider having a stranger to look after them is making them more comfortable?" I shouted at her.

"I can't see any other way, Steve," she replied. "Unless you are prepared, like your Dad was, to put his family before himself."

I just glared at her, but underneath my stubborn anger was a feeling of unhappiness about the rift that was growing between us.

I'd heard it said that money was the cause of friction between a lot of married couples, but I began to see Linda's job as a form of blackmail.

I thought she'd soon get tired of it, and decided I'd sort out the money business as soon as she gave up her job.

LOTS of things changed when Linda started working. The house wasn't quite as tidy and I found myself helping to make the tea which was never ready.

Week-ends were a mad rush of washing, ironing, and housework.

I didn't like it and I was sure Linda didn't either, for she was looking very tired, but she wouldn't give up.

Both the children had new coats and Linda never talked about money.

We'd become like two independent people living under the same roof; I was losing my loving wife and the children seemed to be missing their Mum.

"Linda, love," I said to her one night. "This is stupid. If I give you . . ."

"I'm earning a good wage, Steve," she said in a flat voice. "There are things I want urgently for the children and the home and I don't have to scrimp and save this way. Another ten shilling rise in my housekeeping won't cover it all!"

I didn't like having a working wife, and strangely enough I stopped wanting to rush off and spend money in the pub any more. I realised at last that if a fellow wants the comfort of a home and family, he can't expect the gay life of a single man.

I thought about my mum and dad, and began to see them in a different light, too. Home had been as good as they could make it by their joint efforts—Dad in providing and Mum in managing.

I started to realise all these things, and yet that stubborn streak in me still wanted Linda to give way first.

But fate took a hand and made me regret not doing something before that ghastly afternoon when I was called to the manager's office.

"I'm sorry, Steve, but we've had a call to say your wife's had a bit of an accident," he said. "She was a bit careless, tired I suppose, and damaged her hand. Take the afternoon off. She's in the infirmary, and she'll be needing you."

Linda was in the casualty ward.

"Linda, darling," I said, and she reached her other hand to hold mine.

All this has happened over money, I told myself bitterly.

LINDA stayed in hospital for four days before she came home.

Her hand was still very painful and she couldn't do any work about the home, so I had to stay off work. I made her stay in bed and took over the house and the children myself.

Even with the money in hand, I found that keeping house was a far more difficult task than I'd imagined.

I did all the shopping and paid the bills, and at last I understood one or two things.

The day Linda came downstairs I told her that there was to be no more working for her, and that we would work out my pay together every Friday night.

I said I'd do a bit of overtime, too, if that was necessary, then I put my arms round her and held her close . . .

Linda kissed me and put her head on my shoulder.

"I think I've been rather silly, too, Steve," she said. "If only we could have sat down and talked like this before . . ."

"It was my fault we didn't, love," I admitted quietly, and I knew everything was going to be all right from then on.

THE END.

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HE CAME FROM OUT OF THE NIGHT

MAUREEN noticed the local newspaper propped against her pillow when she awoke. Of course this was no ordinary day!

Mum must have put the newspaper there because she was always up first in Riverside Cottage.

It was Mum who had ringed that paragraph in the "Announcements Column" with blue pencil so she would see it at once.

To Maureen Holmes, of Riverside Cottage. Many happy returns of the day on your twenty-first birthday—Aunt Jane.

What a lovely thing to do!

Maureen rolled out of bed and crossed to the window to look out on the world which seemed different because she was twenty-one today. The fields were greener, the river more silvery, the street brighter.

As she went scurrying down the corridor it occurred to her that it was very nice of her brother Bob not to bag the bathroom first this morning, and not to bang on the door when she took an extra few minutes to do her face—as this extra special day demanded.

He merely tapped politely and murmured, "Get a move on, Sis!"

And when she came out, looking fresh and lovely with the colour glowing in her cheeks, her blonde hair brushed until it gleamed, he gave her a bear-like hug.

"Many happy returns of the day, Sis."

While she dressed carefully she could hear him singing, slightly off key: "I've got the key of the door, never been twenty-one before."

Running downstairs a few minutes later, she saw her dad sitting at the breakfast table. This morning the newspaper was not propped up against the toast rack, but still folded neatly beside his plate.

"Many happy returns of the day, Maureen."

There was something funny about the way he held her face between the palm of his hands before giving her a kiss. It was as though he was trying to see in her the last traces of the little girl she used to be.

Then Mum was hurrying in with the breakfast, a suspicious, weepy look about her eyes.

"Happy birthday, darling!" There was something funny about her kiss, too. Maureen felt there was something final about it.

A twenty-first birthday is something very special. And this special day was to bring Maureen a romance she hadn't even dreamed of.



Maureen came to a sudden, frightened stop. There was someone there!

"Now do sit down, darling. Open up your presents."

"You'll know mine because it's the biggest," Bob cried. "I'm nothing if not generous."

Bob's present was a long dress-gown—and it showed very fine taste in colour and cut, too. But Bob was engaged and he'd had lots of experience buying things for a girl.

Mum had given her a dozen very finely-made handkerchiefs. Dad had dived deeply into his pocket and bought a rolled gold ball-pen. There were gloves from Aunt Jane and a scarf from Mrs Davis next door.

"Get cracking, Maureen," Bob exclaimed. "Open up that mystery parcel. It didn't come by post. It was left on the doorstep. What's in it? Who's it from?"

The parcel was a square cardboard box tied with ribbon. For a moment

Maureen studied the handwriting of the address, but didn't recognise it.

She took the knife Bob was eagerly thrusting at her and cut the ribbon. There was a lot of tissue paper to be removed before she saw the bright bunch of violets, the sweetness of their fragrance seeming to fill the room.

"Who sent them?" Bob demanded.

Because Maureen was lifting the flowers so she could feel their softness against her face, Bob decided to rummage amongst the tissue paper himself.

"No card, Sis. Not a clue to the sender—unless you know."

Maureen was aware that her family were wondering about this mysterious romance, a little hurt that she had not

COMPLETE STORY
STORY

confided in them. They found it hard to believe her when she spoke.

"I've no idea who could have sent the flowers. But—oh, aren't they lovely! I'm going to put them in water to keep them fresh. I'll wear them at the party tonight."

THAT evening, when Maureen returned from the office, the violets were still standing bravely in the tumbler of water.

As she pinned them to her dress, before the party, she thought how strange it was that this one present should have given her so much joy. All day she had wondered who could have sent the flowers and why he hadn't disclosed his identity.

Somebody who was too shy? Well, that ruled out Nick Williams who worked at the same office. There was nothing shy about Nick because she had been out with him once or twice and he knew his way around.

Maybe it was the newcomer, Brian Whyte. Several times she had caught him watching her at her desk as though wanting to talk to her. But only that morning he had said, "I hear it's your birthday, Miss Holmes. Funny thing, it's my fiancee's too."

No, it couldn't have been him. The bus conductor, then? He was a cheery young man who always wore a flower in his lapel, but he couldn't have known it was her birthday.

Even if he had read the announcement in the local paper, he couldn't have found time to leave the present on the doorstep so early in the morning. And that ruled out quite a lot of other people, too.

"Do hurry up, darling," Mum called from the foot of the stairs. "Your guests will be arriving any moment now."

The front room was completely transformed. There were streamers swinging across the ceiling—the left-overs from Christmas. A table in the corner bore the weight of the big birthday cake with its twenty one candles. Dangling from the ceiling was an enormous silver cardboard key.

Dad was wearing his new suit and smoking a fat cigar—also a left-over from Christmas. Mum was rushing here and there making last-minute arrangements.

A knock at the door heralded the first of the guests. Nick Williams, of course. Trust him to be the first at any party and the first to give her a big, walloping kiss as he thrust a box of chocolates into her hand!

For the next hour the door bell was ringing continuously. The boy next door, Ian Clark, possessive and ready to scowl at any chap who dared look too long at Maureen because he still had hopes of marrying her. A crowd from the club where Maureen was a member of the amateur dramatic society, arrived together.

Then there was dancing, and Maureen found herself whirled around by Nick, who said at once; "Thanks for wearing my violets."

Oh, no, it couldn't have been Nick who had sent the lovely present! It just couldn't be! There was nothing very romantic about him, and somehow, for the first time, romance had touched Maureen.

"Nick you didn't send them! You never said anything about it at the office this morning, and—"

"Excuse me." It was Ian Clark. The next thing she knew, he was walking, rather than dancing her round the room, a look of annoyance on his face.

"What do you see in that fellow?" he wanted to know. "I don't like the way he holds you, Maureen. Look, he's flattened the violets I left for you this morning."

You—you left them!" Maureen gasped. "Ian Clark," she accused. "You're as big a fibber as Nick Williams. Neither of you left my violets on the doorstep. My mother told you both about it and you're both taking the credit."

★ ★ ★

With one mighty puff, and amidst wild cheering, Maureen had blown out the twenty-one candles. There had been singing and then the cake had been cut, slices handed round and part of the cake left to be sent off in the little boxes.

Liz Baldwin, the life of the party, had started games. Forfeits was the first choice, of course, and poor Dad had been obliged to bark like a dog.

Mum had been commanded to sing a song and she had sung "Silver Threads Amongst The Gold," so sweetly that a silence had fallen, and there had been a lumpy feeling in many throats.

Then laughter again when brother had had to kiss every girl in the room and had enjoyed every minute of it.

Then it was Maureen's turn.

"Go forth into the street and invite the first young man you meet to join the party."

"But Liz! I-I couldn't do that-not really!"

IT was useless to protest. Maureen was hustled to the front door and thrust outside into the night. Bewildered, she made her way to the front gate and peered into the street. It was deserted.

Surely she wouldn't have to search the whole town for the guest, she thought, and hurried back up the path to come to a sudden frightened halt. A shadow had moved from behind a bush and a voice said:

"For goodness sake, don't be scared!"

It was a tall, young man.

"I-I'm new to the town. I'm looking for a Mr Black who lives in this street somewhere. I thought this must be the house and—well, I knew it was the wrong number when I reached the door. Then I heard the singing and stopped to



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listen. I'm sorry if I've frightened you."

Maureen drew in a deep breath.

"If—if you liked the singing won't you come inside? It's my twenty-first birthday party and we're playing forfeits. I've been sent out to bring in the first young man I meet, to join the party. Please be a sport and come inside."

She could see him smile and it seemed to turn her heart right over. There was something so nice about him.

"I'd love to," he said. "My name is Tom Murray."

There was a roar of approval when Maureen introduced the new guest to the party, and somehow he seemed to fit in without much trouble.

"What next?" demanded Liz. "I know—couplets." Quickly, she formed the company into a circle and pencils were handed round.

"This is the idea," she explained. "I write the first couplet, the rest of you add one each. The subject is Maureen who'll read out our efforts afterwards."

After much giggling and laughing as the paper was passed round, the masterpiece finally reached Maureen.

"Come on, read it out."

Liz had started off the poem with the couplet:

"Some mystery, perchance,

Fragrantly on her bosom lies."

And immediately following was:

"By some happy chance,

Violets to match her eyes."

Maureen must have finished the poem

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somehow because there was cheering, but all the time her eyes were fixed on the second couplet.

The writing! She had seen it before! It had been on the box which had contained the violets! She looked round the room to find that the strange young man was sitting next to Liz.

"You sent me the violets," she exclaimed as soon as she found herself next to him. "But—but I don't understand. I—I've never seen you before in my life."

There was warm colour in his face as he explained.

"I told you I was new to the town," he replied. I started my new job last week at the 'Gazette' offices as a typesetter."

"But—"

"Yesterday I 'set-up' your birthday announcement and—"

"Yes, go on," Maureen invited, her heart beginning to beat quickly. "Why did you send me the violets?"

He flushed slightly. "I reckon it was a sudden whim," he said. "I—well, I liked the name because that was my mother's name. She died last year. I always used to send her violets on her birthday and—"

The words came quicker. "I was lonely, I suppose. I don't know anyone in this town and—well, it just came over me all of a sudden. I bought the violets on my way to work yesterday afternoon, packed them in a box and left them on the doorstep before anybody was about.

"I suppose you think I'm slightly crazy, don't you?"

"Then you came along this evening just to listen to the party," she whispered. "And—and I came out and invited you in."

"You're not angry?" he asked.

"No, I'm not angry," Maureen replied softly. "I'm very happy, Tom, that we should have met this way. It makes my twenty-first birthday a memorable one. I shall never forget it. Even when my violets die I shall—"

He reached out and took her hand and held it tightly.

"Remember, Maureen, there'll be other violets and—and I hope I shall be the one to send them to you."

"I hope so, too," Maureen whispered.

THE END.



How The Stars Chart Your Fate

CAPRICORN (December 21-January 19)



You have a week which should be long remembered, not for events, but for its happiness. You are given evidence of someone's feelings.

TAURUS (April 21-May 20)



News of general interest has personal importance to you. A dispute between important people works out to your advantage.

VIRGO (August 22-September 21)



A period of hesitation ends with someone's "clean break" decision. A stormy scene is likely over a question of alternative choices.

AQUARIUS (January 20-February 18)

You may feel sensitive this week, regard yourself as ignored, overlooked, snubbed by someone actually unaware of your reaction.



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)

Expect an invitation of a generous nature from someone, or more possibly two people, in whose debt you are, in some way.



LIBRA (September 22-October 22)

Someone seeks your help this week in a way that could be embarrassing. Avoid taking sides between two people who are important to you.



PISCES (February 19-March 20)



Vital information comes to light this week which could alter long-term plans. Improvements could cause you loss unless you act swiftly.

CANCER (June 21-July 21)



Family matters will dominate, probably prove troublesome at first. Play for time if getting your own way is really important.

SCORPIO (October 23-November 21)



An unexpected ending comes to some routine matter you have taken for granted. A gap lies ahead to be filled. Set about replacement at once.

ARIES (March 21-April 20)

Somebody's memory of past events could be of value this week. Those who have taken you for granted show unexpected appreciation.



LEO (July 22-August 21)

Things happen this week to make you change your mind. Someone of whom you have disapproved commands your admiration and respect.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22-Dec. 20)

You are due to start on new spending or a long-term commitment. Check resources, and if possible be ambitious.



I LEFT Ben carefully arranging some biscuits on a plate and putting the teapot to warm by the fire-side. Young Cathy would be home soon, and he always liked to have a cuppa ready for her.

Of course, she scolded him for waiting up, but he'd never be able to get off to sleep until he knew she was in.

Besides, that nice young man of hers never kept her out late unless it was a special dance or party, and he looked forward to this quiet time with his granddaughter, sitting by the fire drinking tea and listening to the account of her day at the boutique or how she and Peter Crossley had spent the evening.

His Cathy was a great joy to him. She filled the place with sunshine, and he even forgot the years which crept up on him in the light of her youthful zest for life.

Yet there was nothing thoughtless about her. She liked parties and having fun, and he reckoned her skirts were as short as any fashion could wish! But she was a gentle, understanding girl for all that.

He remembered the pressure of her slim fingers in his hand when lost in the deep, silent grief of Grandma's death.

"We've got each other, Gramps, and Grandma'll want us to be happy."

She'd been seventeen when Harriet had died, and her quiet comfort had been his strength.

The clock chimed a quarter to eleven and he put three spoonfuls of tea in the pot and poured on the boiling water.

Five minutes later he heard Cathy's key in the door and her light step in the hall. There was a heavier tread, too, that would be young Peter's, and Ben hurriedly put another cup on the tray.

"Hello, Gramps." Cathy came into the room, her cheeks flushed and her eyes bright. "Have you been all right?"

"Fine," he assured her. "Dr Grant beat me at chess again and we had a long chat. You look excited, lass. Something happened?"

"Oh, yes, Gramps, look!" She held up her left hand and Ben saw the ring glinting on her third finger. "Peter and I are engaged! Isn't it wonderful?"

"I hope it's all right with you, Mr Williams," Peter put in. "From the very first time I saw Cathy I was determined to ask her to marry me one day when I was in the position to do so. Well, I got my promotion last week and—"

"Yes, lad, I'm pleased." Ben waved aside his explanations. "I know you and your folk and I know, too, that you'll make my lass happy."

HE felt a small pang in spite of his words. He'd

miss her, but he had known that one day someone would come along and take her away. It was the way of life and the right way.

"Oh, Gramps, thank you!" Cathy hugged him. "I want to be married on my twenty-

or two of that chocolate cake left to cheer up the biscuits!"

Peter left half an hour later, and when Cathy came back from seeing him out Ben was sitting looking into the fire. She knelt beside him on the hearthrug.

"You are pleased, really and truly, Gramps?" she asked quietly.

"Yes, love." Ben nodded. "If you are happy, that's all that matters to me."

When Cathy became engaged, Grandpa Williams proudly brought out the wedding-dress his own wife had made and worn. He wanted Cathy, too, to wear it.



BUT A BRIDE MUST SEW HER OWN DREAMS!

first birthday in three months' time, if you agree."

"Steady, love." Ben smiled. "Let me get the tea poured. Yes, I'd say that would be a good day to be married. We really ought to have something a bit stronger than tea to celebrate with. Still, there might be a slice

"And you matter to me, Gramps," Cathy said. "You mustn't think you're losing me. You see, Peter and I hope to buy a little house out Littleton way, and we want you to come and live with us."

"No, Cathy." Ben laid a hand on the soft, fair head

at his knee. "I couldn't do that."

"But we want you, Gramps. Honest! Peter told me to be sure to tell you that."

"Bless you, but young folk want to be on their own," Ben said. "I'm not so old that I can't remember how I'd have felt having an old person under my feet when I was newly wed."

"You're not just an 'old person,' Gramps, you're YOU!" Cathy insisted. "And this house will be too big for you. Be honest, Gramps, you know it will."

"Yes, you're right there," Ben admitted. "I might put in for one of those pensioners' flats they're building in March Lane."

"Oh, Gramps! Wouldn't you hate it?"

"Oh, I daresay I'd find no end of things to grouse about at first," he admitted. "Bath'll be too small and the windows too large, and I've heard you can't have paper on the wall for the first six months, but I'd soon settle once I'd had a good grumble."

"I'd have my own things around me and my stamp collection and there's a No. 9 bus goes from March Lane to Littleton every half hour, so let's hear no more arguments," he finished sternly.

NEXT morning Cathy bounced into his room with his early cup of tea.

"I'm off to the boutique, Gramps. I can't wait to tell Linda my news. I want her to be my bridesmaid and we'll be able to work on some designs together."

"Bye, lass, see you tonight," Ben called after her as she disappeared downstairs. He smiled as he heard the front door slam. There'd be a hectic time ahead if he knew anything about women and weddings!

Cathy would make a lovely bride. He could just picture her walking down the aisle in Harriet's wedding dress.

As a child, one of her greatest pleasures was to be allowed to look at her grandma's dress.

"It's like a fairy queen's frock," she'd said. "Save it for me to wear when I grow up, Grandma."

Now the time had come for her wish to come true.

That afternoon he went up to the spare room and opened the trunk under the window and lifted out the large cardboard box.

He unfolded the dress from its layers of tissue paper and lavender and laid it on the bed.

He smoothed the creamy lace, barely touched by age, with hands that were not quite steady because so many memories came dancing back, making the years

fall away, and he was once again the nervous young bridegroom waiting for Harriet.

She'd looked so sweet coming towards him, all lace and blue ribbons, that he'd been quite dazed. So much so that the vicar had had to nudge him to repeat the vows.

They'd had a good marriage and many happy years together. They'd have liked several children, but had waited almost ten years for the first and only child.

Still, that was God's will, and he'd been a bright, strong laddie, their Charles, determined to succeed in everything he did. A son to be proud of.

Maybe if he hadn't done so well in life there wouldn't have been the quick promotion in his job that led to the trip to France and the plane crash which took him and Pam, his young wife, and left three-year-old Cathy an orphan.

FOLK had said it wouldn't be easy bringing up a child at their time of life, but they hadn't seen it that way.

Now Cathy had grown into a woman and was soon to be a bride. It didn't seem possible that the years could have gone so fast.

"Know what I did this afternoon, love?" he asked her that evening as she washed up after their meal.

"No, Gramps. What?"

"I got out your Grandma's wedding dress. Well, your wedding dress now. It looks a treat, Cathy, and you're as slim as your Grandma was, so it'll be a perfect fit."

Cathy turned from the sink. "Oh, Gramps, but I— I mean, I didn't think about wearing Grandma's dress!"

"Goodness me, why do you think it's been stored away so carefully all this time? Come up and have a look at it, lass."

Cathy followed him upstairs to the spare room. She looked at the dress spread across the bed.

"It's beautiful, but would Grandma really want me to wear it?" she asked thoughtfully, smoothing a blue ribbon between her fingers. "A wedding dress is so special."

"Of course she would," Ben said. "Don't you remember when you were small you persuaded her to try it on one day and you said, 'Will you save it for me to wear when I'm grown up, Grandma?'"

"Yes," Cathy nodded. "It was my seventh birthday. And you, Gramps? Does it mean so much to you to have me wear it?"

"That it does," Ben smiled. "When I walk you down the aisle to your Peter, there'll be no man more proud."

"Well, we'll hang it up carefully for now," Cathy said. "I'll try it on later.

There's plenty of time, and I'd hate to damage that lace in any way, it looks so fragile. Thank you, Gramps. It's such a lovely dress."

THEY wrote out the invitations and planned the reception in the days that followed. Although Cathy and Peter had said they wanted a quiet wedding, Ben wouldn't hear of them skimping on anything.

He had a special "Cathy's day fund" saved, he assured them.

"You're too good to me, Gramps," Cathy said. "I must be awfully spoilt."

"Not you, lass," Ben assured her. "And I'd be a poor old stick if I couldn't see my grand-daughter properly launched."

"You make me sound like a ship," Cathy laughed. "Gramps—"

"Yes, love?"

"Oh, nothing." She shook her head. "It doesn't matter. I must dash, anyway. Peter's been to a sale, and I'm dying to know what he's bought."

Something did matter, though, Ben was sure of it. Cathy seemed happy, but there were times when she was quiet, almost as if something were on her mind.

When he asked her what was wrong, she hurriedly denied that anything was.

He was certain she hadn't quarrelled with Peter, and they'd managed the deposit on the little house they wanted.

It was most likely wedding nerves and all the excitement, he tried to reassure himself.

Cathy tried the wedding dress on, and it fitted perfectly. He noticed a tear on her cheek when she came downstairs to show him how she looked.

"A wedding dress always makes a woman cry, Gramps," she said rubbing it away.

And a sentimental old man, too, Ben thought, conscious of the mist before his own eyes.

He might have gone on wrapped up in his memories if the catch hadn't stuck on Cathy's bedroom window one morning.

He went up to fix it while she went to shop as she usually did on her day off from the boutique.

He happened to brush against the cupboard by the window in her room and knock some magazines to the floor.

As he picked them up some sheets of paper floated out. They were sketches Cathy had done of a dress. Across the top of one she had written "MY WEDDING DRESS."

SO that was it. Cathy didn't want to wear her Grandma's dress. She

wanted to make her own to her own design.

Why hadn't the lass said? Because she knew how he'd set his heart on her wearing Harriet's dress, and she loved him too much to disappoint him?

He reckoned his had been a man's way of thinking. If Harriet had been alive she would have told him how special a wedding dress was to the woman who wore it.

Hadn't she spent weeks making her dress to wear for just a few short hours, and when he'd marvelled at all the work she'd smiled and said, "I put a dream in every stitch."

Carefully he put the sketches back between the magazines. Every bride had her own dreams to sew.

He went into the spare room and took the dress from its hanger. He folded it once again in its tissue paper and laid it back in the trunk.

He was making the coffee for their elevenses when Cathy came back from town.

"The supermarket was crowded," she told him. "I had to queue for ages."

"Thursdays are busy," he nodded. "Cathy, love, I looked at the wedding dress while I was upstairs, and you know you were doubtful about having it cleaned before the big day?"

"Yes, Gramps, the lace is so delicate."

"Well, you were right. I don't reckon it will stand up to cleaning, and, now I look closely, those ribbons are rather faded. I guess we forgot just how old it really is. Cathy, would you mind very much if we put it back in the trunk and got you a new one?"

"But you wanted me to wear it so much," Cathy said.

"Maybe. But we can't risk it falling apart on you walking down the aisle, can we? Will you be too disappointed, lass?"

"Not if you aren't, Gramps," Cathy said. "It's a lovely dress, but I can make one in a similar style. I think, though, I'll have tulle instead of lace and maybe a little train edged with pearls. What do you think, Gramps?"

"It sounds grand, just grand," Ben said. "And, Cathy, love, don't forget to sew a dream in every stitch."

★ ★ ★

It was a very proud Gramps that gave Cathy away.

At the reception he told me the story behind Cathy's dress.

"I wonder if she'll keep it for her grand-daughter to wear, Dr Grant?" he said with a chuckle.

Look for another Dr Grant story next week.

Our Kids—bless them

ALL MOD CONS

While taking our two nieces for a drive in the country we passed two reservoirs.

The younger asked, "Auntie, why are there two?" But before I could reply, her sister said, "One's hot and the other's cold, silly."

—Mrs D. Mills, Burnley.

GAS LAMPS

While watching television recently, all the lights and the TV suddenly went out.

I asked my daughter to look and see if the lamps in the street were out, whereupon she replied, "It can't be a power cut, as all the motor cars have their lights on!"

—Mr Scott, Dundee.

KINDNESS ITSELF

There were two apples in the fruit bowl, and my nephew had asked for one.

He picked one up, and as it was wrinkled at the stalk, he took the other one instead. "What was wrong with the other apple?" his mother asked.

"Oh, I couldn't eat that one," he replied. "It looked so worried!"

—Mrs Wivell, Newport.

CHINA DOLL

I was looking after my neighbour's little girl recently when I had to lift her up for something.

"My, you're a heavy girl," I said. "Whatever does Mummy feed you on?"

She looked at me for a moment, then she said, "A plate!"

—Mrs Davies, Cookely.

RATIONS

I sent our son to buy some potatoes, but when he arrived at the shop he forgot how many I wanted.

"How many does Mum want to feed?" asked the shopkeeper.

"All of us," was the prompt reply.

—Mrs M. Pearce, Chippenham.

What lovable, laughable sayings our kids come away with! Gain a Guinea by sending us your kiddie's latest.

Write to:—OUR KIDS — BLESS THEM, RED LETTER, 18a HOLLINGSWORTH, ST., LONDON, N.7.

Every letter printed wins a Guinea.

WILL SHE FIND SHE STILL LOVES HIM?

SIX years ago I was engaged to be married, but my fiance let me down just two weeks before the wedding. He went abroad after leaving a letter with his friend, saying that he couldn't bear the thought of being tied down. His friend did his best to help me over those first horrible weeks. Then when I discovered I was having my fiance's baby, his friend said he would marry me. I didn't believe he was serious at first, but he said he had been in love with me for ages.

Our marriage has been happier than I ever imagined, especially since our baby arrived. Now my first boy has come home again. I love my husband and wouldn't part with my children, but I don't feel the same thrill of excitement that I used to get when I saw my first boy. So now I'm scared that when I see him, and I'm bound to, I might act as stupidly as I did all those years ago. What can I do? I'd hate to hurt my husband.—Mixed-Up.

● Dear Mixed-Up—You've had six happy years of marriage, and although you say this partnership isn't as exciting as your former one, it's probable that you share a more mature and deeply satisfying relationship.

Your husband helped when you were in trouble, now is your chance to repay that loving kindness. Make sure that you don't see this other man alone, then there will be no difficulties. Although it's my guess that seeing him now, against your background of a happy marriage, will bring home to you just how shallow a person he must have been to leave you, as he did.

Constant Fighting

PLEASE help me, I'm at my wit's end. My problem is my children—a daughter of six and a boy of five. Their constant fighting is making me into a nervous wreck. Every time I turn my back they are fighting again. I try to be firm by cutting out sweets as punishment but it doesn't seem to make any difference.

Should I carry on as I am, or try to ignore them and let them fight it out, or should I give way to my urge to give them both a good spanking?—Referee.

● Dear Referee—Most children fight sometimes with their brothers and sisters, but it's ridiculous that their constant quarrelling should affect your health. Next time they refuse to behave try sending them off to bed and cut out any treats they were to have had. Perhaps, too, if you could separate them during the day it might help. Haven't they other friends with whom they could play for a while? And an occasional spanking wouldn't go amiss either.

Trust Is Essential

MY husband and I have been married for just over two years. We have one girl and I am expecting another baby in a few months.

My problem is that three times since we've been married, I've found different girls' photos in my husband's pocket. When tackled he always has an explanation, but they just don't ring true. He swears he would never do anything wrong, but how can I believe him?—Depressed.

● Dear Depressed—In any marriage trust is essential if the couple are going to have a happy relationship. Perhaps your husband doesn't realise just how worrying this matter is for you. Most men would admire an attractive woman and it doesn't necessarily follow that your husband is having an affair because he has these photographs. Therefore, it might be a good idea to explain how you feel about the matter, accept the explanation he gives you and then try to put it all out of your mind.

**speaking
personally** BY JEAN
DIXON

FROM HER DEEP KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE, MISS DIXON

GIVES YOU HER SINCERE, SYMPATHETIC ADVICE

ON YOUR PERSONAL PROBLEMS.

Not Ready For Marriage

I HOPE you don't mind a man writing to you but I thought you might be able to help me with my problem.

I've known my girl for three years and I thought it'd be nice if we got engaged on her birthday—she'll be 19. But now she says that, although she loves me, she's decided to train as a hairdresser and it would be better if we waited until she's at least half-way through her course. But that's going to take a couple of years! Do you think she really loves me?—Baffled.

● Dear Baffled—My guess is that, while she is probably sincere in her feelings for you, she realises that she's not yet ready for marriage. She wants to branch out into a new career, develop her personality and it would be wrong of you to try to dissuade her. You can only accept her answer and, if you care enough, wait until she is ready for a more serious relationship.

WATCH BARBARA BLACK — SHE'S DANGEROUS

(Continued from Page 9.)

"That's Lydia," said Greg. "Oh thank God!"

He ran to meet her.

And Janet stood back, watching the girl with fair hair almost collapse into Greg's arms.

"Greg—oh Greg—I actually made it!" said Lydia.

"Yes, here you are, all safe and sound. What sort of journey did you have?"

"Oh—noisy and awful and terrifying. But an awfully nice woman came with me—a Mrs White, some sort of voluntary worker. I thought she might like to stay, but she wanted to go straight back on the boat.

"Oh, Greg! It's lovely to see you."

"It's lovely to see you," he said.

Then he remembered Janet.

"Janet! Where are you?"

But Janet had vanished.

"Who's Janet?" asked Lydia, as she and Greg walked slowly towards the house, his right arm enclosing Lydia's left, and her right hand still firmly on her stick.

"A girl from the village who cooks for us."

How he hated himself for saying that, so casually, as if Janet were some sort of servant, impersonal, not mattering at all.

Andrew was waiting for them when they arrived.

"Hello, Lydia," he said, not waiting for any sort of introduction.

Lydia leant back on the couch in the comfortable living-room.

"Isn't this lovely?" she said. "I'm so glad I came!"

"Good," said Andrew. "And you're welcome here—as long as you don't interfere with our work. If you do, you'll be out again within twenty-four hours."

"Fair enough," said Lydia.

"I'm hungry," said Andrew. "Greg, did Janet come back with you?"

"Not *with* us, but I think she's probably here now. I can smell food."

That evening, Janet served dinner for three—Andrew, Greg and the fair-haired girl who couldn't walk properly without a stick.

Janet did her job to perfection. She met no one's eyes. She didn't say a word

After the meal she cleared the dishes, washed them up, then went home.

She didn't want to see anyone. She was too full of tears.

BARBARA BLACK stood at the rail of the boat which was taking her back to the mainland. She felt cold right through, not only because of the cold wind, but because of her inner despair.

She looked back coldly on her own actions of the past weeks. She watched herself, as if she were a stranger watching.

She saw the plotting and the planning, the cunning and the lies, the passion and the purpose—and the sheer wickedness of it all. No wonder Lewis had avoided her when she had all that concealed evil inside her. No wonder he had loathed her love.

But it was finished now, for that lust for revenge had been motivated by her love for Lewis—and she no longer loved him.

I have nothing to live for now, thought Barbara. No one loves me, no one ever will, and I hate myself. Even worse, I don't love anyone, and never shall again.

A sharp push . . .

It would be easier if someone could do it for her, give her that sharp push from behind. But in her last action she would have no help. No one knew, no one cared. She had to do it all by herself.

She climbed to the top of the rail.

Then she felt sheer terror and tried to get back on deck. But a gust of fierce cold wind pushed her—a *sharp push*—and she went overboard.

She had been helped after all.

No one heard the splash.

★ ★ ★

Life at the house on the island was quiet. Andrew and Greg carried on with their work for most of the time. Lydia rested and read books.

It was some days after Barbara Black's suicide before anyone at the house heard about it. They were all only mildly horrified. The whole incident seemed dreamlike.

★ ★ ★

Came the day when it was time for Lydia to return to hospital to complete her treatment. Greg saw her to the boat.

"I know you've forgiven me," Lydia said. "We understand each other better than ever before. I wonder whether we'll ever meet again."

"Of course we shall. One day. When my job here is finished and I come back to London."

"When will that be?"

"Lydia, I have no idea. Research work is like that. You never know when you're going to make the final breakthrough."

"Greg—what a good thing we didn't get married."

"Why?"

"You'd have missed out on so much. You'd have been stuck in the suburbs, afraid to do anything adventurous because

of money and me. But more important than that—we weren't really in love."

Greg smiled. "No, I don't suppose we were."

The boat came. He helped her on board. They embraced, gently and affectionately and he kissed her cheek. "Good luck, Lydia," he said. "Bless you. Take care of yourself—and be happy."

"And you. Good-bye, Greg."

JANET, standing in the cold on a deserted beach, saw this touching embrace.

She began to cry, let herself cry, aloud, because with the noise of the birds and the waves and the wind, her own small noise was drowned.

Then suddenly a figure bore down on her and grabbed her by the shoulder.

"Janet—don't—Janet—please, it's all right—"

And he stopped her weeping by crushing his lips against hers.

"How did you know I was here?" Janet whispered at last.

"I didn't. I came for a walk."

"You weren't looking for me?"

"No, but I was thinking of you."

"Is Lydia coming back?"

"No, Janet."

"Why not?"

"Nothing to come back for."

"You, surely."

"She doesn't want me, nor I her."

"I liked her."

"I like her, too. But liking and loving are very different. I love *you*, Janet. Let's get married."

"Do you want to be tied here forever?" she said.

"No, but I want to be tied to *you* forever. When the time comes for me to leave, you'll come with me. You would, wouldn't you?"

"To the moon, if you like," said Janet.

They kissed again, then scrambled to their feet.

"Let's go and tell Andrew," said Greg.

Andrew was working when they arrived. However, he did deign to look up when Greg came in.

"So you saw her off all right," he said. Then he saw that Janet was there, too.

"Good grief, boy, you leave with one woman and return with another. You're woman-mad."

"We're getting married," said Greg.

"Fine. That means we'll have a free housekeeper, full-time. Now please get out of here and let me get on with my job."

Suddenly children again, the two crept out. They went into the living-room and closed the door behind them before they let their laughter break.

And then they roared with it, shook with it, hugged each other with it.

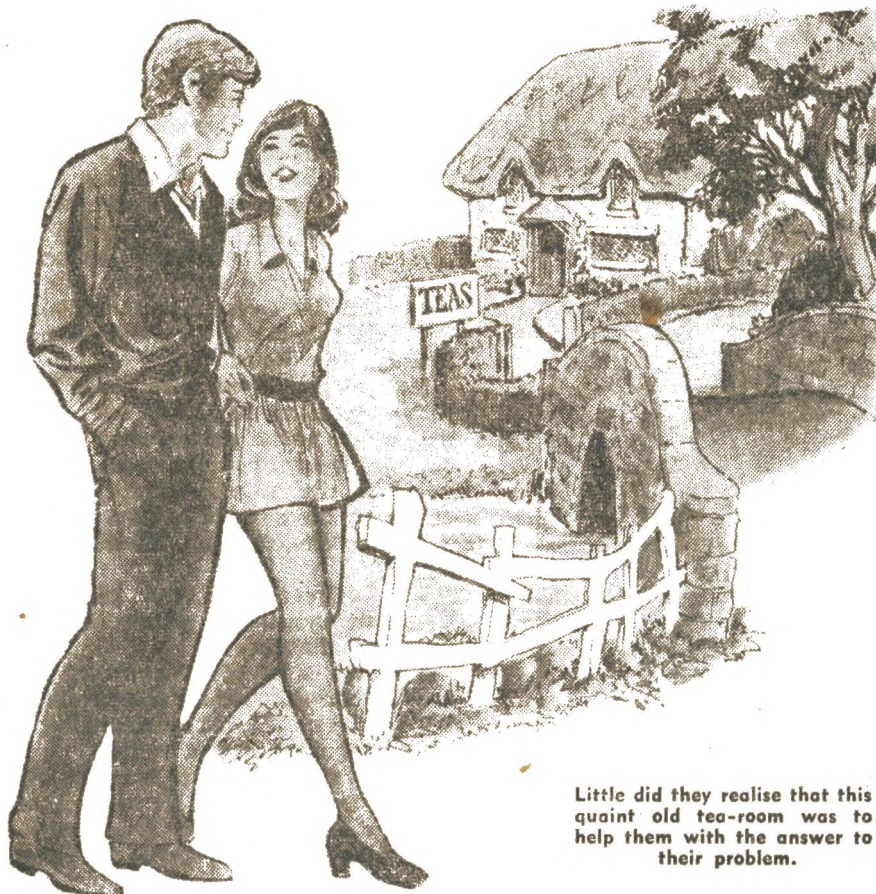
Happiness is strong stuff.

THE END.

AN EXCITING NEW STORY STARTS NEXT WEEK. READ MORE ABOUT IT ON PAGE 6.



Life doesn't often give you a second chance. So you're best to make use of the first before it's too late.



Little did they realise that this quaint old tea-room was to help them with the answer to their problem.

be packing. Two weeks on Saturday he goes to Canada."

THAT was how they had met, with the threat of Canada hanging over them from the start. Every day since then, they had been together.

Alan hadn't much wanted her to come with him on this visit to Uncle Joe's house.

His father had said that morning, "Look, Alan, I wish you'd call round there and sort out any books and things you fancy. Joe would have hated the thought of anything you want being sold to strangers."

So he was calling round.

He pushed open the gate. It was a corner house, rather Edwardian like Joe himself had been.

Alan leaned against a garden seat.

"It's only for three years," he reminded her.

He worked for a telecommunications firm; they were sending him to Canada for experience, and had promised him a junior executive job when he came back.

"Let me go home with you on Wednesday and tell your parents. I can explain

"I know what they'll say; that three years isn't long to wait!" Mary objected.

"Your people are different, Alan. They're so casual, if we tell them we're getting married next Friday your mother will smile vaguely and say, 'But, of course, bless you both.'"

"The Day Fate Stepped In"

LEAVING the car on the main road, they walked hand in hand down the quiet suburban avenue to Uncle Joe's house.

In the car, Alan had argued his case while Mary remained stubbornly silent, but now he was silent, too.

When they reached the garden gate he looked down at her with a slow shake of his head.

"It doesn't matter," he said. "In spite of it all, we love each other."

Mary gave him a quick, approving glance and smiled, tightening her grip on his fingers.

It was Sunday afternoon and very quiet as the London-bound rush of cars returning from the coast had not yet started.

There was a smell of wood smoke. Gardens were trim and colourful, and only Uncle Joe's lawn was shaggy, the border plants unstaked.

It was to be expected, for Uncle Joe was no more than a memory now.

Mary had never known Uncle Joe. After all, it was less than a week since she had met Alan.

She had come down from London to

visit Alison Shaw, an old school friend who had married a Delston boy last year.

Alison had taken her to the Taylors' house, apologising in advance for the shambles with nobody at home but Alan.

"His mother runs a boutique in High Street and his father has something to do with TV advertising. But Alan is almost certain to be there. He'll

"But why shouldn't yours be the same? Surely they want you to be happy?" Alan argued.

"Of course they do. But they're *not* the same, Alan. This will be something right out of the blue to them. I'm only nineteen—that's the first thing they'll remind me of."

"What do they expect you to do?"

"I've scarcely thought about that myself. What do art students usually do? There's teaching—no! Design, I suppose, textiles, wallpaper, pottery—after all, everything has to be designed."

"Everything," he agreed.

He had a look of Uncle Joe as he went up the porch steps.

The same blunt, good-humoured features, the square, strong set of his shoulders.

He was four years older than Mary, and that made a difference.

"Everything," he said again. "Even life."

COMPLETE STORY

WHAT MADE JULIA RUN?



At the age of 26, with the world at her feet, actress Julia Lockwood retired to a peasant cottage in the South of France and lived in seclusion for 18 months. Why?

YOU CAN READ THE FULL STORY IN THIS
MONTH'S INTEREST-PACKED

Annabel

NOW ON SALE

2s

HE unlocked the front door and they went in.

Windows had been left open and the house was fresh and clean.

Considering his age, Joe had kept in touch. The furniture was modern and the kitchen cheerful with plastic and chrome. It wasn't until Alan pushed open a door across the hall that Joe really emerged.

The room wasn't cluttered or even untidy, but undoubtedly it was his.

"He was a great fisherman," Alan said, glancing at the various rods.

"And he must have travelled a lot," Mary was kneeling against the bookshelves. "I've never seen so many maps."

Most of them were folded, sectional maps. But on the shelf above was a bigger one. She spread it on the table.

"Alan, look at this . . . Delston and Twenty Miles Round."

He came and stood close beside her. Richly coloured, the Downs with their shallow valleys and winding lanes spread out from Delston in every direction. She traced the river with her finger, and the northward curve of the London road.

"These lines, Alan . . . What do they mean?"

They spread over the map, an apparently meaningless pattern of fine, pen-drawn threads.

"He was a bit of an eccentric, you know," Alan said, looking self-conscious. "It was a sort of game we played."

She looked up at him, waiting.

"He used to talk about Fate, and the way one person's line of life would cross someone else's. Then they would curve away from each other, maybe for years, then cross again.

"I suppose it all seems pretty childish to you, but I was about ten, remember."

"You must show me some time."

"It was quite simple. He would make me a map on thin paper and I'd plot my own movements, very conscientiously! Then after a week or two I'd put my map on top of his and we'd see where the lines had crossed.

"Thursday when he'd meet me out of school, Saturday when he'd taken me fishing—it seemed great fun!"

He looked at her accusingly. "You don't have to laugh, Mary!"

"I'm not laughing, darling. I'm envious, that's all! If only I'd had an uncle who invented games like that. Though I'm not sure about Fate."

SHE bent over the map, her hair sweeping the yellowing paper.

"It's quite old, and it must cover a long time."

He pointed to a green patch. "Beacon Hill—look how often he went there."

"And to this place. What is it—Embley? See all the lines, close together."

"It's a village, twelve or fifteen miles from here," he said.

"I wonder what the attraction was? Look, he drew a ring round it in red ink."

Alan shook his head. "He used to take me all over the place when I was a boy, but I don't remember that he even

mentioned Embley. There's a river, of course, and rivers always fascinated him. It could have been that."

He looked along the shelves; small things, remembrances of Joe, but his thoughts were far away.

"We've thirteen days," he said, turning suddenly. "We *could* be married a week next Friday."

"You make it sound so simple, Alan!"

"Isn't it simple? Why are you hesitating? Is it because you're not sure?"

"Of course I'm sure. But a week ago I hadn't even met you. Now everything's changed."

"That's what I said. You're not sure."

"Don't keep saying that!"

He had never seen her angry before.

"Suppose you did come home with me? Can't you imagine what they'd say? 'Wait a little while—why rush?'"

He felt baffled and unhappy. Everything she said was quite reasonable, but those three years stretched into eternity.

He wanted her now and every day of those years, and to leave her here was unthinkable.

There were no problems where he was concerned. He didn't have to consider parents. They would accept the idea with enthusiasm.

He closed the shallow drawers in which Uncle Joe had kept his fishing flies.

He glanced for the last time at the map with its criss-cross of lines before putting it back on the shelf.

"Let's forget it," he said.

"We can't do that." Mary was looking

across the garden. "We can't forget it now."

"For an hour or two, anyway. Let's go to Embley."

"But why?"

"I'd like to know why Joe went there so often."

NEITHER of them had much to say as Alan drove through the golden afternoon towards the Downs.

In a deep fold of the hills they came to Embley; a few cottages clustering around a low-towered church.

It was too early yet for the pub to be open and the car park was deserted.

They stopped, and walked towards the old stone bridge.

Looking across the river was a cottage almost *too* cosy and neat, as though waiting to be photographed.

Under the thatched roof, roses splashed the walls with colour. A board in the garden had TEAS painted in brown letters.

"It seems a long time since lunch," Alan said.

They crossed the strip of garden and went in. The front room was rather old-fashioned with small tables and wall-bracket lights.

A spotless kitchen showed through a half-open door.

A woman came through, greeting them with a smile.

She was tall and slim, with softly greying hair and a pleasant face that was still attractive though she was no longer young.

She was surprisingly efficient, too. They had only minutes to wait, and their salad was delicious.

They were the only people in that little room, and the village seemed asleep.

Through one of the windows they could see swans on the river and cattle on the farther bank.

When the woman came again to take away the plates, Mary said how delightful it was.

"Yes, it's an attractive village. Very quiet, of course." She had a low, carefully-controlled voice. "You haven't been here before?"

"I have," Alan said. "Not often, though."

He glanced at Mary, then took the plunge.

"We came round this way today because my uncle used to spend a lot of time here. I wondered why . . ."

She put the plates on a tray. "What was your uncle's name?"

"Taylor," Alan said. "Joe Taylor."

A fork slid off the tray and she stooped to pick it up.

"A tall, well-built man," he went on. "The outdoor type."

"I remember him," she said. "Joe Taylor—yes."

It was not surprising, he told himself. Uncle Joe would know everybody in a village like Embley after half a dozen visits.

She glanced through the window at

the river. "It was the fishing he came for, mostly."

"I thought of that. Did you know him well?"

She re-arranged the plates on the tray.

"Quite well. I read in the paper a few weeks ago that he had died. So he was your uncle!"

"My father's brother."

"He used to speak about a young nephew. It's many years since he came here. Did he—did he ever mention my name? Elaine Scott."

"I don't think so. Or if he did, I must have forgotten."

She suddenly became brisk and matter-of-fact.

"Let me take these things out of your way! I'll bring some cakes."

SHE closed the kitchen door. Alan was drumming his fingers on the table.

"I wonder how well he knew her?" he said thoughtfully.

"You can't expect to find that out. It has nothing to do with us," Mary told him.

"You don't think I'd probe? But I fancied that underneath it all she was upset—"

He broke off as she came back.

She set a silver dish of cakes on the table and turned away, but then she said, unexpectedly, "I remember the first time he came in. He wasn't a man for tea and cakes. He always smiled and

R.L.'s Reply Service

Q. Could you please tell me where I could obtain information on coins which are of value?—M. Logan.

A. We ask any readers who wish information on coins to first check with their local library as to the value of the coins. If they ARE of some value, send THE COINS to either B. A. Seaby, 59/65 Great Portland Street, London, W1N 5DN, or A. D. Hamilton, 54/56 Bridge Street, Glasgow, C.5.

WHAT? WHY? WHERE? HOW?

Q. Can you please tell me if the Bill has been made law for the age of consent to be eighteen? As I do not live with my parents I would like to get married next year when I shall be eighteen, but unfortunately they would never give their consent. —Miss M. P. A. The Bill came into force 1st January, 1970.

Dear Worried—The best person to explain the grounds necessary for divorce would be a lawyer, or your friend could make an appointment to see a Marriage Guidance Counsellor, who will help him to come to a decision regarding his future.

SPECIALS

COWBOYS 'N' INDIANS

To make a game of draughts more interesting for children try substituting toy cowboys and Indians for the usual counters.

—Mrs E. Shreeve, Frinton.

PEGGED OUT

If you have run out of pegs and still have a few small items to hang out to dry, use your spring-type hair-setting clips. They're ideal for stockings, scarves, gloves, hankies, etc.

—Mrs F. R., Glasgow.

NEW LACES

When the children pull the tags off their shoelaces, just dip the ends in clear nail varnish, then twist quickly into a point. The points will dry hard and will not unravel again.

—Mrs J. Taylor, Poole.

SEND your letter to Specials and win a wonderful prize if we print it. You can choose from — Pearl Necklaces; Wallets; Earrings; Guinea Postal Orders.

Please mention which story or serial you liked best this week.

Our address is:—Specials, Red Letter, 18a Hollingsworth Street, London, N.7.

All letters sent must be original.

PAPER PATTERNS

Save the backing paper from self-adhesive plastic sheeting. It's ruled into inch squares, and can be useful for cutting out toy or dress pattern pieces.

—Miss Edmunds, Northampton.



spoke when he passed the door, but he liked the pub better."

She pulled out another chair. "Do you mind?"

Mary shook her head.

"That day he'd slipped down the bank. He was wet through, from the waist down.

"I can see him now—pipe between his teeth, an old cloth hat pulled well down. He told me what had happened and asked for some strong, hot tea.

"It was quite cold and I remember saying that he couldn't stand around like that, waiting for a bus. I gave him some clothes that belonged to my father and told him to dry off and make himself comfortable."

She smiled at the memory.

"Next Sunday he brought back the clothes. After that he came quite often. He was a fine man, your uncle."

"I always thought so," Alan said. "I wonder why he never brought me?"

"I don't know. Unless it was a kind of refuge for him and he wanted to keep it that way. He would sit over there in the corner, reading the Sunday papers."

Mary was looking intently at Elaine Scott.

"I wonder," she said, "why he never married?"

The woman slowly shook her head.

"My father was alive then," she said, as if Mary had asked why *she* had never married Joe.

In some confusion, she looked from one to the other.

"I'm sorry! You can't possibly be interested in things that happened so long ago."

"Don't go!" Alan said. "Not yet. I'm not just being curious. But what difference did that make? Your father being alive, I mean?"

"He was an invalid and he had no one else to take care of him. We moved out here to Embley and I thought I could make enough to live on. Things were just beginning to go the right way; I couldn't give everything up. And I couldn't leave him."

"I can't imagine Joe wanting you to."

"He didn't. He said there was room in his house at Delston for us all, and he could take care of us. But I couldn't let him do that."

Across the river, church bells began to ring.

"It was one of those things. We talked and talked about it. He tried so very hard to persuade me! Every Sunday he would come, but it was too much. I couldn't let Joe carry so much on his shoulders."

"Maybe you talked about it too often," Alan said, and she gave him an understanding glance.

"Oh, yes! Nothing lasts unless you cherish it. Then the years slip away and we say, 'Ah, well, it's probably better this way!' But we know that isn't true."

The tea had gone cold and the cakes were still untouched.

"When my father died, Joe was older and so was I. He had his fishing, his

hobbies. And I was doing very well here. You see?"

A CAR stopped outside and the door opened. A man and woman came in with two children. Elaine Scott crossed to their table.

"So you're not sure about Fate," Alan said in a low voice. "Neither am I. But it seems odd that we came this way round."

Mary was looking at Elaine Scott's straight, slender back, bent over the other table as she talked to the new arrivals.

She didn't speak.

"Shall we be going?" he said.

Elaine Scott stopped beside them on her way to the kitchen. "Come again some day," she suggested, and he nodded.

"We will. I hope so, anyway."

"But not for three years," Mary said.

Elaine Scott gave her a puzzled look. "That's quite a long time."

"It won't seem long."

She put her hand on Alan's arm, and he felt as if a small light had been lit in a dark place.

"Will it, Alan?"

She turned to Elaine. "We're getting married a week on Friday and flying to Canada the next day. We'll be there for three years."

"How wonderful for you!"

Alan gave Elaine Scott a grateful smile.

"Yes," he said, "how wonderful for us!"

THE END.

BRUSH UP YOUR HAIR



IF you want to have beautiful hair, brush it often. Grandma's routine — 100 strokes nightly — is still the best one to follow if you want hair to have glistening highlights.

But brushing does a great deal more than supply lustre. It encourages the growth of hair and improves the condi-

tion of your scalp by stimulating circulation. It also gives hair more body and texture and makes it look fluffier, thicker, and more becoming.

Brushing comes to the rescue, too, when your hair-do isn't up to par. Brush it vigorously and you'll find you can arrange it more attrac-

tively, giving it more becoming lines.

If hair is oily, you may assume that brushing only intensifies the condition. This isn't true, although it seems so. When you brush oily hair, the oil is distributed down to the end of each shaft instead of being allowed to collect and clog the scalp. In the long run, brushing helps clear up an oily condition.

Brushing is good for all kinds of hair, except, in some cases, hair that is thinning or falling out at an alarming rate. (Note: This does not mean the usual fall-out that occurs for short periods from time to time, but a steady fall-out that literally thins the hair. If you have such a condition, consult a doctor. Don't try to treat it on your own.)

By
JEANNE D'ARCY