

Breezy Stories

DEC.

20c

IT'S LOVE
ALONE

★
A WOMAN'S
PLACE

★
BRIDAL EYE

★
MARRIAGE
ISN'T ALL

★
COVERS
FOR
TWO

★
DEVIL'S
CAKE

Art by
Lorraine
1950

Gay Novelette

A LADY GROWS UP



If you want the truth, go to a child

LATELY, Jepson had felt himself slipping as a salesman. He couldn't seem to land the big orders; and he was too proud to go after the little ones. He was discouraged and mystified.

Finally, one evening, he got the real truth from his little boy. You can always depend on a child to be outspoken on subjects that older people avoid.

* * *

You, yourself, rarely know when you have halitosis (unpleasant breath). That's the insidious thing about it. And even your closest friends won't tell you.

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'Set Servicing
Spare time set servicing pays many \$5, \$10, \$15 a week extra while learning. Full time servicing pays as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week.

Broadcasting Stations
Employ managers, engineers, operators, installation and maintenance men for fascinating jobs and pay up to \$5,000 a year.



Loud Speaker Systems
Building, installing, servicing and operating public address systems is another growing field for men well trained in Radio.



HERE'S PROOF THAT MY TRAINING PAYS



\$80 Monthly in Spare Time
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"I am making between \$50 and \$60 a week after all expenses are paid, and I am getting all the Radio work I can take care of, thanks to N. R. I."—**H. W. SPANGLER, 508 Walnut St., Knoxville, Tenn.**



Operates Public Address System
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Do you want to make more money? Radio offers you many opportunities for well-paying spare time and full time jobs. And you don't have to give up your present job or leave home and spend a lot of money to become a Radio Expert.

Many Radio Experts Make \$30, \$50, \$75 a Week
Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to \$5,000 a year. Spare time Radio set servicing pays as much as \$200 to \$500 a year—full time jobs with Radio jobbers, manufacturers and dealers as much as \$30, \$50, \$75 a week. Many Radio Experts operate their own full time or part time Radio sales and service businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, paying up to \$8,000 a year. Radio operators on ships get good pay and see the world besides. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio, and loud speaker systems are newer fields offering good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises to open many good jobs soon. Men I have trained are holding good jobs in these branches of Radio. Read their statements. Mail the coupon.

There's a Real Future in Radio for Well Trained Men
Radio already gives jobs to more than 300,000 people. In 1935 over \$300,000,000 worth of sets, tubes and parts were sold—an increase of 20% over 1934! Over 1,100,000 auto Radios were sold in 1935, 25% more than in 1934! 22,000,000 homes are today equipped with Radios, and every year millions of these sets go out of date and are replaced with newer models. Millions more need servicing, new tubes, repairs, etc. Broadcasting stations pay their employees (exclusive of artists) more than \$23,000,000 a year! And Radio is a new industry still growing fast! A few hundred \$30, \$50, \$75-a-week jobs have grown to thousands in less than 20 years!

Many Make \$5, \$10, \$15 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning
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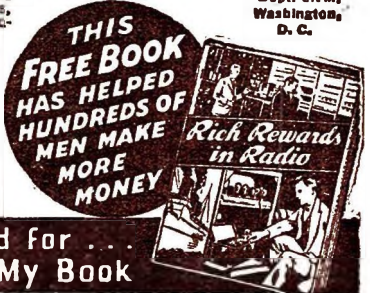
Extra Money Job Sheets. They show you how to do Radio repair jobs that you can cash in on quickly! Throughout your training I send you plans that made good spare time money—\$200 to \$500 a year—for hundreds of fellows. My training is famous as "the Course that pays for itself."

Give You Practical Experience
My Course is not all book training. I send you special Radio equipment and show you how to conduct experiments and build circuits which illustrate important principles used in modern Radio receivers, broadcast stations and loud speaker installations. I show you how to build testing apparatus for use in spare time work from this equipment. This 50-50 method of training makes learning at home interesting, fascinating, practical.

You Get a Money Back Agreement
I am so sure that I can train you successfully that I agree in writing to refund every penny you pay me if you are not satisfied with my Lessons and Instruction Service when you finish. I'll send you a copy of this agreement with my Free Book.

Find Out What Radio Offers You Act Today. Mail the coupon now for "Rich Rewards in Radio." It's free to any fellow over 16 years old. It describes Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my training in Radio and Television; shows you actual letters from men I have trained telling what they are doing and earning. Find out what Radio offers YOU! MAIL THE COUPON in an envelope, or paste on a postcard—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, Pres., National Radio Institute
Dept. 6N M,
Washington,
D. C.



This Coupon is Good for One FREE Copy of My Book

J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. 6N M, National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send "Rich Rewards in Radio," which points out the spare time and full time opportunities in Radio and explains your 50-50 method of training men at home in spare time to become Radio Experts. (Please Write Plainly.)

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AFTER**

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170." --T. K., N. Y.



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ATLAS**

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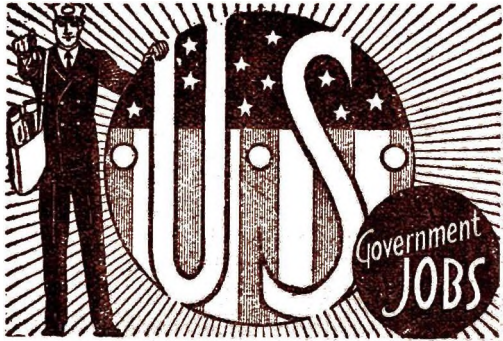
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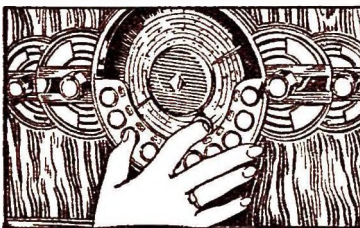
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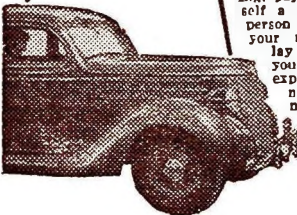


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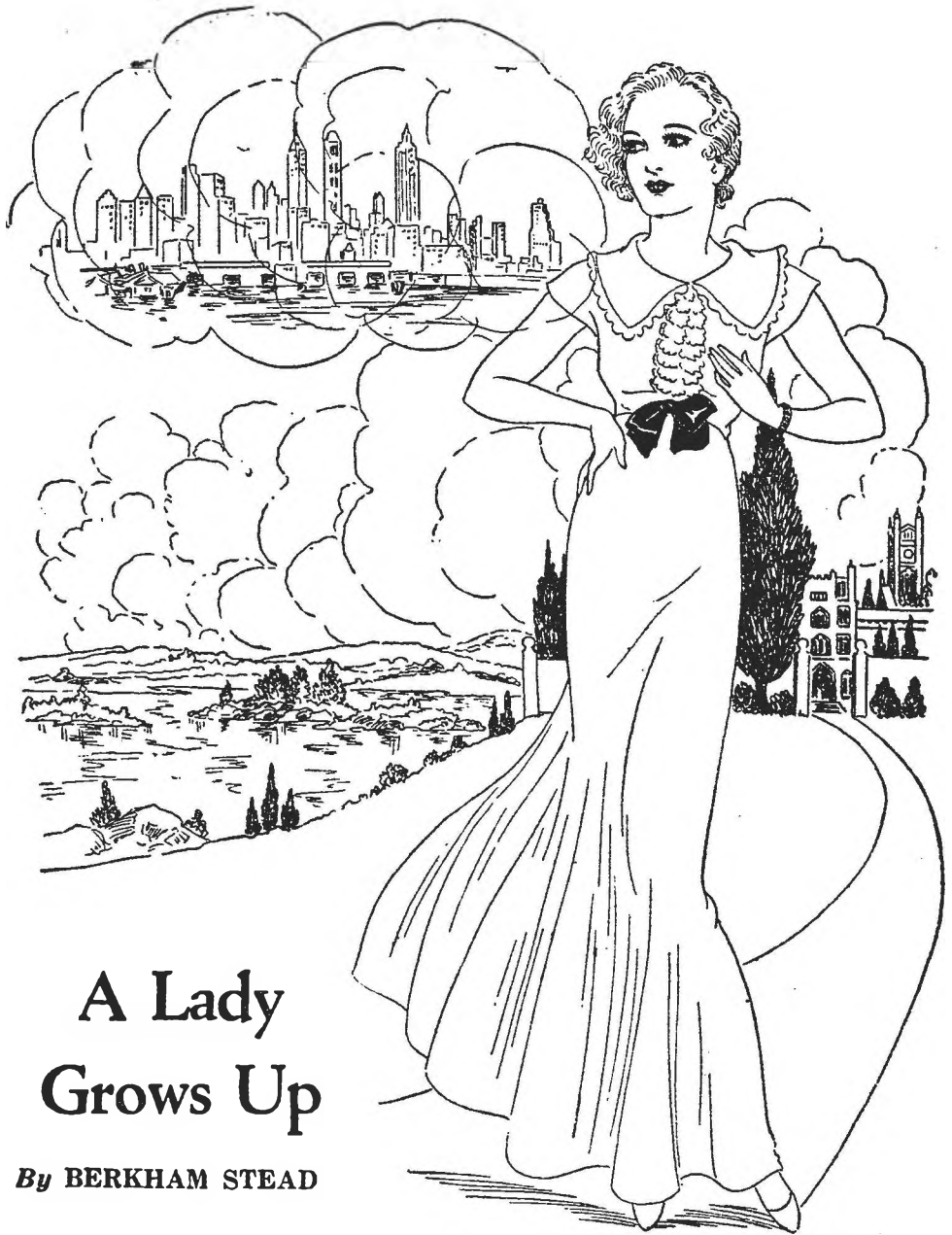
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A Lady Grows Up

By BERKHAM STEAD

WHEN the performance was over Julie Middleton did not join any of the groups that gathered to discuss not only the play but divers other things. She went down the steps of Dobbs into the cool dark of the campus where the elms stood tall and silently aloof.

The June night was filled with life, unseen but felt. There were vagrant puffs of perfume. From the dark area that was Pomfret House came the sound of voices. There would be a senior sing. But she didn't want to join her sorority sisters. She wanted to be alone until Jerry had

finished at the theatre. Until he had done with receiving congratulations.

Her common sense told her that "Wings" was not a good play. She wanted to believe that it was great. That it would strike the fancy of those godlike notables in far-off New York and make them dash for telephone and telegraph to sign up this new, this youthful star of the drama. But she knew it was not so. Jerry had it in him—it would come out later! Please God she would be there to help him!

The gravel turned under the soles of her thin slippers. The blue silk of her gown twined about her as the breeze stirred. She saw the dark figure detach itself from the railing in front of Porter and knew it was Carl. . . . Carl was rather stocky; a little taller than she. Broad-shouldered.

"How'd it go?" he asked.

"Swell," Julie said.

"Jerry's got it in him all right," Carl said. "He's nuts, but I guess a man has to be screwy in order to be a good playwright."

"Genius," Julie said, and smiled.

She saw Carl's head turn. "You really think so? I mean—I don't know anything about it at all. Much too damn highbrow and gnat-straining for me. But you're brainy too. Is Jerry really a genius?"

"I don't know," Julie said. "He's unsettled now. But he will do great things, Carl. I know it."

Carl was silent as they walked. He said at last:

"One more week and then this will be over."

Julie laughed, shaking her head. "It doesn't seem possible. So suddenly to come to the end of one world—and find another ahead. But it ought to be fun. Getting somewhere."

"Yes," Carl said. "Julie, I'm for New York. Brad's father is giving me a job. With Brad there I'll be

set." He stopped. "You know how I feel about you. I don't want to lose you. I've always been crazy about you. What about marrying me?"

"That's sweet of you, Carl," Julie said. "I do love you a lot. But not that way. I don't want to lose you either. I'm not going home. At least—not to stay. I'm going to be in New York this fall myself. To live there. We'll be together, the three of us."

"Jerry?" Carl said. He shrugged his shoulders. "Okay, old woman. If that word-slinger is the one you want, I guess I'll have to be satisfied." His hands reached to touch her shoulders. "But I'll always be nuts about you, Julie."

She reached up and kissed him lightly. "We'll have ever so much fun together. With one another to depend on, to trust, we'll never have to worry, will we?"

"No," Carl said. "No."

Julie's hand found his. "We're lucky," she said. "At least, I know that much. It's so seldom that one can have even one friend—one true friend—but two! It's unheard of."

"But we're different," Carl said. She felt his grin and laughed with him.

"But we are," she told him gravely, her eyes far away.

She heard the crunch of the gravel behind and stopped. She knew Jerry Slade's step. She had known it for almost four years. Carl stood beside her. When Jerry came up, tall, and somewhat stooped already, Julie turned, holding out her hands.

"It was grand, Jere."

"Rotten!" Jerry said. His voice was high pitched. His every action was eager, nervous. "They were as wooden as dolls. With decent actors! God,—I wonder if I'll ever be able to do anything—to get anywhere."

"You can't help it," Julie said. "With your talent. And we'll be with

you—beside you. Carl and you and me. The three of us!"

Carl said: "Sure. It'll be fun. We'll have some rare old times. But I'm not giving up hopes, Julie. I'll steal you if I can."

"And if you can I'll be willing," Julie laughed. Her hand was in Jerry's. They went across the campus to the Field. Sat on the wooden rail that overlooked the lake. Julie said musingly, "We've had four grand years here. We'll have many more outside. In New York. We'll go places together because we're different. We're not like other people. We won't let one another down."

"You bet," Carl said, and Jerry's thin head nodded. Carl got up. "I'll leave you two. See you tomorrow."

When he was gone Julie turned to face Jerry. His arms went about her and her lips pressed eagerly to his. She said:

"I can hardly wait for the outside, Jere."

Despite the dirtiness of the children, the drabness of the women, there was something clean-washed about Washington Square. Perhaps the clear red of the old buildings on the North, perhaps the arch and the trees. Julie said:

"It isn't the artistic tinge. That doesn't mean a thing. But it's still the cheapest place to live in, and it has an air. There's no other reason."

There was a coolness in the November air and the leaves were falling, one by one, to be swept up almost before they had touched the ground. The façades of the buildings were sharp etched. Walking up the Avenue in the long twilight was a delight. But all New York was a delight. Jerry and Carl were living in the Fraternity Club. Julie had taken the little two-room apartment in the drabest of ancient buildings. But the rooms were high-ceilinged; there was a garden to look down

into, with soot-stained pottery and an ailanthus tree. Her job at the bank was not arduous. She worked diligently and quietly. Her lovely oval face with its frame of ash-colored hair was serious from nine to four-thirty. After that, her slim hips swinging, she made for the subway and came uptown to the Village and did her shopping. There was always sure to be Jerry and Carl for dinner. Sometimes others of their classmates. A few of their new-found friends. Carl contributed, but Jerry had nothing to give. He'd had one or two jobs, but mostly he hung about the theatres, looking for a chance. He wasn't too optimistic about it.

"There are more college people looking for a chance in the theatre than stenogs looking for chances in the business world," he grumbled. His lean white profile was sharp. "But I've got to get the smell of backstage, I've got to get an in."

"You will!" Julie said. "Darling, you're young. It's only natural for you to be impatient, but nonetheless things won't come so slowly. You'll see,—gradually you'll find your chances. You'll have what you want—what we want!"

"And in the meantime?" His lips were bitter. "I want to write. Not the commercial muck—something different. And to do that I've got to have money—or at least a place to live and to eat. I can't work at a job and do what I want as well."

"I'll help you," Julie said. "Everything I have is yours. You know that, Jere."

"Yes." He got up in the middle of Julie's tiny living-room and followed her out to the kitchen and stood talking while she washed the dishes. Carl had gone off to play bridge and they were alone.

Julie's slim body swayed as she worked. The light fell on her bright hair; on the smoothness of her cheeks. She said nothing at all as

Jerry stood there, talking; but the half-smile, tender, was on her lips. She had heard it all before, yet she never grew tired of listening. When she had finished they went back into the sparsely furnished living-room and sat down on the somewhat dilapidated couch. Jerry lighted a cigarette and Julie leaned back against him. She said:

"It isn't so different from the old college is it? Except that there's no curfew and no chaperons."

"It makes a difference," Jerry said. He was silent. "Julie, what about us?"

She bent her head still further back to look up at him with bright, deep violet eyes.

"What about us?"

"We can't very well get married," Jerry said. "Somehow that wouldn't do, would it?"

"I suppose not," Julie said. "But if you want to——"

"No." Jerry shook his head. "It would be restraint. I'd feel it. I want to offer you more than just myself when marriage comes. Not just a scrabbly little ceremony. I want to be able to give you everything. That's how I've thought of our being married."

"It's sweet of you," Julie murmured.

Jerry's eyes brooded. He said: "But there's the rub. Being with you makes me want you. To touch you sets me on fire. I've either got to keep away from you altogether, or else—" He stopped.

Julie sat up. Her face was serious, her eyes unquiet. She turned to him.

"Don't you think I've felt that way too, Jere? You know I have. I guess I'm not very clever. I've thought things out, and all I can think is that I love you and that you love me. That's enough for me. I want to do what you wish. I put all my trust in you. I guess—" she swal-

lowed, "I guess I belong to you. I'm yours to do with as you wish."

"But other people—" Jerry began.

Julie shook her head. "There's only you and me—and perhaps Carl. He'll understand. We're adults. We're grown up. We're different than other people."

Jerry's fingers closed about hers. He said: "To be here. To be with you. Working hard in the daytime. All day. And then when you come home, having you. I'm sure I could work, Julie. I know I could."

"That's all I want then," Julie said. "Nothing else matters."

She turned her face to him, blindly, yet not in agitation. His lips were warm upon hers. All she knew, in this quiet joy that filled her, was that the fever of the experience they had shared so many times—the kisses, the embraces,—was now to be carried to its logical end. She loved Jerry and nothing else mattered. They were the two of them. In all the world no one else could bother them. When Jerry moved she rose with him and her fingers tightened about his. . . .

Jerry moved his bags in the next day. In a burst of love Julie went out and spent some more of her slender hoard on pyjamas and linen for him. When she came back from work that afternoon she found Jerry seated at the table. There was ink on his fingers and on his face, but the pile of manuscript about him was large. She didn't need to ask him how it had gone. He smiled at her and stretched.

"I'd call it a day's work," he said.

"So would I," Julie answered. "Get it together and after dinner you'll read me what you've done. I'll bet it's good."

"It is," Jerry said, and she laughed at his seriousness.

She thought that it was as she listened to him read. She was glad Carl had not been able to come. He

had gone to dine with Brad. But with her sewing in her lap Julie listened to the first scenes of Jerry's play. At the end, when he looked at her, she nodded:

"It's got what it takes, Jerry. Keep it up." She felt there were a few changes that could be made. But she knew Jerry. In the fever of composition he would resent suggestion. Let him go on with it. She got up and came to put her cheek to his. "We'll show them!" she said.

The days after that went quickly. Work and things to do in the evenings. Jerry was somewhat difficult, but Julie put that down to the nervousness created by his work. She had to humor him; to bear sometimes the cut of things he said. But she didn't mind too much.

Carl had seemed rather dense. At first he had frowned when he saw that Jerry was living in Julie's flat. He said:

"Of course, it's swell of you to let him work here, Julie. But not to stay here."

Julie had looked at him. "But, Carl, he has no other place. He's got to work. And I do love him, Carl."

"All right, but he ought to think of you. People will think that—that you're living together."

Julie touched his hand. Her violet eyes looked into his. She said:

"But we are, Carl. Do you think, caring for Jerry as I do that I wouldn't give him everything he wants? That I'd hold anything back."

Carl's eyes widened. Then his mouth hardened.

"It's pretty lousy of Jere," he said.

Julie's fingers tightened on his hand. "It isn't! It's what I want too, Carl. When Jerry has made his mark—when he's got a start—then we'll get married."

"I see," Carl said. He seemed upset. He didn't stay long. When Julie told Jerry he just shrugged.

But after staying away for a few days Carl came back. They resumed their old way of living. Of being happy with one another.

The play progressed. Winter came and spring. There was summer and Carl went off on his vacation and Julie's family wrote to ask when she was coming. But even when she got her vacation she did not leave. The play was finished in July and Julie retyped it for Jerry and made the five carbons. She also, as she worked, made the little changes she thought it needed. But it had something. She felt that indeed it had. When that was all over, her vacation was gone as well. Jerry went off with a friend to spend a week, but Julie had to stay and work. She didn't mind. The play had gone out. Copies to five producers. All they need do now was wait.

So the summer fled and September was upon them. The new shows began to open while yet the streets were ablaze with hot sunlight and on the little balconies, in the rear of the Village houses, pyjama-clad people still sat on colored chairs and drank gin and ginger.

For Julie life was centred in Jerry. He had his outside contacts, but she was bound up entirely in him. Even at the bank she hardly knew any one. Several of the men there, young men who had come in from other colleges, were anxious to know her better, but she kept aloof. It was impossible that her dark violet eyes, her corn-colored hair and the slim, rounded loveliness of her body should fail to attract men. But she had no eyes for them—no time for them. Only for Jerry. And Jerry was becoming bitter. Railing.

"Damn it to hell—you've got to have pull! You've got to lick feet and find the feet to lick. Doing something decent doesn't mean anything."

"Be patient, darling," Julie said.

"Plays have knocked around for years and then been smash hits."

Jerry swore and Carl, who was there, said: "If you'd be a little less temperamental and get out and find something to do."

Jerry flared at that and Julie had to quiet the storm. She felt that Carl didn't understand. That what would be perfectly right where another person was concerned, was not so with Jerry.

She it was who joined the little group and got them to put on Jerry's play. It was only in the studio of Nelson the painter; a show without settings and without unusual costumes. But Julie could see there were changes to be made. Acted, the play was different than when read. She took the leading part herself, and it was at Nelson's, some time later that she met Kent Morven.

To Julie, Kent was just another of the older men who always looked at her with interest, always strove to make dates with her. She had a deep contempt for them. Older people, even ten years older, were outside her world. She was bound up with her own generation. With Jerry and Carl and the others. Kent was tall and brown-haired. His dark eyes held a twinkle, but his face was quiet. He sat in a corner and looked at her.

"You're very lovely," he said. "Tell me about yourself."

"Why?" Julie asked.

Kent's mouth twisted. "You might be copy. A writer always looks on every one as possible copy."

"That doesn't interest me," Julie said.

"You're so transparent," Morven sighed. "A woman not interested means a woman in love." He looked around. "Who is it? The broad-shouldered lad? Not Nelson, certainly."

"I don't like old men," Julie said.

"That, I suppose," Kent murmured,

"means me! I'm thirty-five. You're something less than twenty-five. Ergo, I'm old." His eyes met hers. "You're in love, or you'd at least realize you're being decidedly rude. Only plain women can afford to be rude."

"I'm sorry," Julie said. "But I don't like talking personalities."

"There is nothing else," Kent said. "Life is a continuous touching of personalities, one upon the other. Even work is a matter of personality. Your work or some one else's." He nodded. "You have no work. Yours is some one else's."

Julie looked at him; at the faint smile on his quiet mouth. "I'd hate to be as cynical and disillusioned as you," she said.

"But I'm neither," Kent told her. "I'm merely grown up."

"And I'm not?"

He shook his head. "You're still as much of a child as when you first went to school. You're full of bushy ideas, and unless I'm mistaken you've been making a damned fool of yourself." He got up before she could speak and smiled down at her. "That ought to hold you, for rudeness, at least."

Julie would have forgotten all about Kent Morven except that Jerry did not let her. When they were home he paced up and down the living-room. "Peterson sent the play back. That's all five of them."

"We'll send it out again—to five other producers," Julie said. "It will click in time."

"It's pull." Jerry cursed, savagely. "It's an in." He stopped and looked at her. "That man tonight—Morven!"

"What of him?" Julie asked.

"He's a writer, probably no damned good, but he gets big money, and he knows people. Knows every one. He seemed to like you."

"Me," Julie said. "I didn't give him much reason."



"You swine!"

"If he wanted to," Jerry said, "he could get me an in. Get me to meet people." Julie looked at him. Jerry said, catching the glance: "Oh, Jule, don't you realize things? Merit isn't worth a damn. It's who you know that counts. You've got to use whatever advantage you can get. Use the people."

"I suppose so," Julie said.

Jerry nodded. "It isn't wrong! You've got to lose some of those idealistic thoughts. We're out in the

world now. We've got to do as others do. Fight with every weapon."

"All right," Julie said and smiled. "If you think Morven can help why not ask him?"

"He wouldn't do anything for me." Jerry's eyes narrowed. "Why should he? He doesn't even know me. No, you ask him to read the play. Ask him who to take it to." When Julie only stared at him, Jerry gestured. "It doesn't mean anything. Don't you see? You're a

girl, a pretty one. You can ask for a favor that a man couldn't ask for. Just to read the play. Morven could help a lot. I wish you would."

"I don't like it," Julie said. "But if you want me to,—all right."

"That's a good girl," Jerry said. His hand touched her shoulder. He said, "I'm going to bed."

As she lay, awake, in the dark, Julie felt as if she had been married for years. There was, she told herself, with a little rueful smile, nothing very startlingly attractive about living in sin. Being married couldn't be any different. Leaving out the way she felt about Jerry, it was all very dull. It was rather confined. . . . She wished she could afford another bed.

II

SHE could not force herself to swaylay Kent Morven. She rather hoped that Jerry had forgotten about the whole matter for he said nothing for several days. He spent his time uptown Julie knew, and he was irritable and savage. But she felt she understood. Carl frankly said he was fed up.

"If you'd do something, instead of just grumbling."

"I am doing something," Jerry jeered. "I'm working. Creating. How the hell can a lousy Wall Street runner know what that means?"

"I pay my way," Carl said stolidly.

"Artists shouldn't have to pay their way," Jerry flamed. "But when I get there, I'll more than pay my way. Just give me time."

It would have flared into an open quarrel several times if Julie had not always been there. She could see Carl's point of view, but she felt that he did not understand Jerry. Jerry was in the throes of the artist's struggle. He would be the bet-

ter for it, and she was sharing his travail, as she would share his reward.

But he had not forgotten Morven. At Nelson's one evening he brought up the subject.

"Doesn't Morven live in this building?"

Nelson nodded. "Got the duplex attic. Wish I had it. But he has the money."

"He's pretty well connected, isn't he?" Jerry asked. "In the theatre, I mean."

Nelson touched his graying mustache and looked indulgently at the horseplay going on at the other side of the studio.

"Yes. He doesn't do plays himself. But he's had two of his books dramatized. Successful too."

Jerry's eyes met Julie's. He said: "He's not coming in tonight, is he?"

"Probably not," Nelson said. "He drops in when he wants to." He got up and walked away and Julie looked at Jerry. He said:

"Will you, Julie? Will you ask him? You know what it means to me."

Julie drew a deep breath. "All right," she said.

She went out the open door and up the stairs. There was a brass nameplate on the door above and Morven's name. She knocked. From a distance Morven's voice, muffled, called:

"Come in!"

The door was unlocked. When Julie pushed it open she found herself in an alcove, arched with black beams that gave on to a huge room that extended two stories to the arched roof. On one side was the balcony, with tapestry hanging colorfully towards the waxed floor. Electric candles burned in tall wrought-iron sconces. A tiny fire burned in a brass bedecked fireplace and from the deep chair before it Kent Morven, in a wine-colored robe, arose.

He came towards her. His lips twisted.

"Well," he said. "Well." Then without another word he caught her in his arms. His mouth crushed down on her, purposeful. Julie's breath was swept away. There was something virile, grown, adult in the kiss. She could not struggle against him. As suddenly as he had caught her he released her. Julie's eyes flamed.

"You swine!" she said, gasping.

Morven did not move. He stood looking at her. There was a queer expression on his face. Then as she didn't say anything more, he nodded and walked back towards the fire. He turned.

"Don't be alarmed. I just wanted to make sure I was right. You came for something, what is it?" She did not answer. Morven pushed the other chair around. "Come and sit down. Don't be alarmed. I wasn't making love to you. I haven't any intention of making love to you. You don't interest me that much. Besides, I couldn't possibly be interested in a woman who wasn't interested in me." Silently Julie crossed and sat down. Her eyes met his and Morven smiled. "If you only realized what a child you are—and how transparent. You want something from me. That's why you're here. Now what is it? If I can help you, I will. If I can't I'll say so."

Julie told him and Kent Morven listened. Then he said: "I'll be glad to read the play. If it's good you can be sure I'll do everything I can to help it along. Not because you ask me to, either. Most writers and artists are more than glad to give a helping hand where it is deserved. We're not all jealous and fearful of other talent. In fact, it's usually the other way around." Julie tried to thank him, but Morven stopped her. There was a cutting lightness to his voice. "Some day you'll probably

grow up," he said. "I just can't think of you as a chronic state of arrested development. You're lovely, you've got possibilities, and yet—in the words of the day—you're a washout." He rose. "Send me the manuscript, and clear out now. I'm expecting a woman. A woman—not a silly, twisted, warped infant. Get!"

When Julie came into Nelson's again, she saw Jerry looking at her. She nodded. There was a queer feeling in the pit of her stomach. Kent Morven's kiss still burned on her lips. She felt unclean, as if she had done something sordid. Yet, even worse, there was an uncomfortable feeling in her heart that if she told Jerry he would think nothing of it. She could almost hear him say, "You've got to stand for lots of things you don't like in order to get where we're going. And what's a kiss?"

She was beginning to doubt. And she could trace her doubts to Kent Morven. To the look of his eyes, of his mouth. He made her doubt. But then, looking at Jerry again, she laughed secretly. They were different. They would never let one another down. Cynical people, world-weary, like Kent Morven and Nelson, but not young, healthy, clean-minded people like herself and Jerry and Carl. "Jealous," she murmured. "That's all. Jealous of our youth and our beliefs." She thought with Jerry, Why not use them? That's all they're good for. She felt a little thrill of power. Perhaps Kent Morven had been clever in kissing her. But when he had kissed her it had meant something. She was woman enough to know that.

In the morning she wrapped the manuscript and sent it to Morven's address. Two nights later the bell rang and when Julie went to the door she found Morven standing outside, a package under his arm that she recognized as the manuscript.

She stood back for him to enter. As he looked around she said:

"It isn't much."

He nodded. His eyes were frankly curious. "It isn't," he said. "It isn't at all what I'd expected. You live alone?"

"No!" Julie's cheeks pinkened. "Jerry Slade lives here with me." Her throaty voice was steady.

Kent Morven nodded, slowly. "That explains a lot of things. You're not married to him, are you?"

"No," Julie said.

His shrug was almost invisible. He threw the manuscript on the table. "I've read it. It has strength and more than an idea." He hesitated. "Since your relationship to this Jerry Slade is so close, perhaps I'd better not say more?"

"I love Jerry," she said. Her glance was steady. "I'm not infatuated. I criticize myself, even if not to him openly."

Morven smiled, although the smile did not banish the shadow in his brown eyes.

"Well, it isn't properly written. The touch of the amateur. It needs doctoring. With an old hand to touch it up I'm sure it will get presentation, and at that have more than a chance of making a success."

Julie's lips parted. "You really think so?"

"I don't talk for the pleasure of hearing my voice," Kent Morven said. "The point is—from experience I know what a budding playwright thinks of having his masterpiece doctored. Your Jerry will probably be the same. But when he comes around, tell him to take the play to George Kersten. I've spoken to George. Kersten likes the plot. He'll work on it with him. And you know—if Kersten touches a play it's bound to be good."

Julie drew a deep breath. "It's so very kind of you, Mr. Morven."

Kent's lips twisted. "I wonder," he

said. His face grew serious. He came and stood before her. He put his hands on her shoulders and looked down into her face. "I like you," he said. Then he laughed, "When you fall, like Humpty Dumpty, may I have the pieces?"

"When I fall," Julie said, "you may."

"You'd better not promise," Kent said. "I'm psychic. I can foresee the tumble."

"You can still have the pieces, if I do," Julie said.

"All right then, it's a promise!"

Julie's first doubts could have been dated from that night. She didn't go to bed. She couldn't while Jerry was still out. When he came she ran to him, babbling, in her desire to tell him. Jerry seemed unusually dense.

"But Kersten!" Julie cried. "Oh, darling, don't you see? If Kersten works on it with you—everything will be perfect."

"Perhaps!" Jerry said. "But I don't like it. These men with names. These old ducks. They're dry. All they can do is suck the brains of younger men."

"But Kent Morven said—" Julie began.

Jerry dismissed that with a scowl. "Oh, the hell with Morven! He knows I've done something good. Why shouldn't he want to get one of his friends in on it?" Julie just stared at him. Jerry lighted a cigarette and sat down. He nodded. "I'll see Kersten. I can't get along without him for this first play. But if he thinks he's going to do me out of my work, he's crazy."

"Why should he want to?" Julie asked, bewildered.

Jerry looked at her and laughed. "You don't know your New York," he said.

He began to talk, rambling. He hadn't had much to drink. Julie could tell that. And yet he spoke

as if he were alone, as if she did not exist. Julie became chilled with doubt. After she had gone to bed she lay staring up into the dark. There was more than her usual fervency in her prayers.

But it seemed as if her fears were without basis. From the moment Kent Morven had come to see her everything went right. Kersten not only liked "Rise Up, Children," but he put everything aside to work on it with Jerry.

It wasn't so much from Jerry that Julie found out how things were going. Jerry was truly busy with Kersten. Too busy to come home for dinner very often. And when he did come he would tell Julie the new lines he had made up. It was rather from Kent Morven that Julie learned. Kent would often take her, often with Carl as well, to dinner. And from Kent Julie learned how things were going.

"Kersten thinks your Jerry has the makings of a playwright—a real one! That is if he doesn't drown in his ego."

"He's got the stuff," Carl said loyally.

Kent smiled. But his smile was serious. "You've got to have more than the stuff in any game," he told them over the table at the Inn. "You've got to have control—discipline. The stuff itself is capable of ruining its possessor."

"Not Jerry!" Carl said, but Julie was silent.

Kent looked curiously at her. "With all this theatre stuff going on about you—how is it you're not enamoured of the stage, Julie?"

"I like it," Julie said. "I used to act at school. But then Jerry objected to my doing his leads. So I stopped."

"You've got the equipment of an actress," Kent said. "The voice, the movements, the looks and features. Why don't you try it?"

"No thanks," Julie said. "The theatre is for Jerry."

She wasn't sure how she felt about Morven. It wasn't that she liked or disliked him. She had read some of his work and admired it immensely. But what she felt was his interest in her. She knew that as a beautiful woman she intrigued him. She could feel that when he was with her. It gave her a sense of triumph that while he felt her appeal, on the other hand he made no appeal to her. She liked him. But as an outsider; some one beyond that circle where were people like herself and Jerry and Carl. Young people. Clean and decent. Not cynical and jaded like Kent Morven.

Suddenly that fall the play was swept into rehearsal. Sometimes Julie went to the theatre and sat in the darkened auditorium with Jerry and listened to the strange goings on. But Jerry it seemed was too perturbed to have her about. He muttered most the time; seemed ill at ease. Always crying about what they were doing to his play. It got wearing at times; but Julie was hopeful. It would be a success and Jerry would have his dream. A name and money. And then they would get married and lead a sane life and do the things they had talked about doing in those years, so long ago, at college.

Rehearsals seemed interminable. Then there was the tryout on the road. Julie did not go. It was Kent Morven who sent her the wire that read, "Hartford likes play. Have an idea New York will be as provincial in expressing approval. Jerry still coherent."

She was grateful to Kent. She excused Jerry. She knew he was busy and distraught. But she was disappointed when the opening night for the New York run came. The dress rehearsal had been dismal. The old-timers perked up about that. They

said a bad dress rehearsal meant a huge success. But Jerry would not be with her. He gave her the tickets, for herself and Carl.

"Even if I was able to I couldn't sit in the audience. I'd go mad, Julie. I'll see you after the show. If not at the theatre, then at home." He was pale and drawn. "Gosh, I hope it goes."

"It will," Julie said. Her eyes were tender. She could understand what he was going through. "It will be a huge success, darling. Everything you've hoped for."

"It'll be time," Jerry said.

So, on that opening night Julie went to the theatre by herself. She wore orchids, but they were from Kent Morven. They had come with just his card, while she was dressing. Carl could not meet her. He would be at the theatre. She went up in the bus and walked west. She couldn't afford a cab.

She felt a strange sense of foreboding as she seated herself. People were streaming in, gay, well-dressed. The critics' seats were ostentatiously empty. Every one was there. The grapevine had noised about the fact that a new play was opening and that it had something.

She sat there, happy and yet fearful. This was what she and Jerry had been waiting for. What they had looked forward to for so long. Carl slipped into the seat beside her. Her hot hand crept into his. She shivered. Carl said:

"It'll be all right, Julie." The theatre darkened and the curtain went up silently.

It was so very strange to Julie, to hear the lines she knew by heart spoken by the actors. But there wasn't much doubting. Even as she sat there, Julie could hear and feel Kersten's touch. Jerry's situations, his lines were surer—keener. She could understand what it was that Kersten had brought to the play.

When the first act curtain went down there was silence. Then a buzz of talk. Kent Morven, tall and distinguished in his tails, came down the aisle, stopping continually to acknowledge greetings and paused to speak to her.

"It's in, Julie," he said. "You've got what you wanted for Jerry."

"Have you seen him?" Julie said. Then, remembering, she touched the orchids. "Thank you so much for these."

Kent gestured. "You'll have bales of them, I'm sure. I haven't seen Jerry. He's probably being traditional and getting tight."

The lights darkened again and Kent left. Julie's eyes were glued to the stage. When the play was finally over the audience got to its feet and cheered. But their calls for the author went unanswered. Carl touched her.

"It's over, Julie."

She got up. Many men looked at her as she made her way through the crowd. Carl was beside her, stocky and fair. He said:

"What about going somewhere and dancing?"

Julie shook her head. "Home," she said. "Jerry may be there. We'll sit up and wait for the papers. We've planned so on doing that—oh, hundreds of times!"

"Sure!" Carl said.

Kent Morven made his way towards them. "I was right," he said to them both. "Are you off to celebrate?"

Carl said, "Julie wants to go home and wait for Jerry."

Kent's brown eyes widened. Then he said gently: "I'll come along, if you don't mind, Julie."

"I'll be glad to have you," Julie said. "Maybe Jerry will be late."

"Yes. He may," Kent said. It was he who ordered the champagne. They drank it in Julie's living-room. Kent said, over his glass: "Here's



"No one would ever know!"

to you, Julie! To all good things for you." But Julie said: "No. To Jerry. Who has waited so long for success."

Carl said, "All of which he owes to you." But Julie only shook her head.

The time passed slowly. Kent and

Carl spoke of many things and often Julie found Kent's dark gaze on her. But her ears were attuned to Jerry's coming. It was Kent who went out to go uptown and returned with the first of the late editions. The *Times*, the *Herald-Tribune*, the *News* and *American*. They were all unanimous. "Rise Up, Children" was undoubtedly something that would be spoken of for a long time. A play with power and punch. At three o'clock Jerry had still not come in. Kent and Carl left Julie. Carl was ungracious in what he had to say about Jerry, but Kent Morven only looked at her and his eyes were sad.

III

JERRY did not turn up until the next afternoon and then Julie only knew he had been there by the fact that some of his clothes had been disturbed. She didn't go out that night. She stayed indoors. The autumn rain beat on the windows. It was lonely and she felt strangely uneasy. She whose trust in Jerry had been victorious over everything. He came in before eleven. His eyes were bright.

"Well, I did it, didn't I?" he demanded. "It's a success, Julie. The brokers have bought us up for six weeks." He sat down, lighting a cigarette with fingers that shook. "It will run all season. A success!"

Julie sat there looking at him. She felt tongue-tied. There were so many things she wanted to say and yet she could say nothing. It was not for her to speak. It was for Jerry. She had done her part; had stood behind him, giving! Now it was up to him. She ached, waiting for him to say something, but when he did her heart froze. Jerry said:

"I'm going to be hellishly busy. There's a new play I've got in mind. I won't need Kersten. I've sold an

option on it already. I'll have to work. I may go away—Bermuda or some place like that. But in the meantime, before I do, I'll get a place uptown. A place where it's quiet. I can afford it now."

Julie's red mouth trembled. She swallowed. "Yes. You can."

Jerry got to his feet. "I've got to dress. Mason's giving a party for me." He gestured, self-consciously. "It's a bore, but it seems a man has to do these things." He talked as he moved about, dressing. But Julie did not say anything. She couldn't. Even when he came and kissed her, she did not speak. He said, "I may not be back. So don't expect me. I'll see you tomorrow. Or I'll call you if I'm too busy."

Somehow Julie saw the next few days pass. The bank seemed unreal. The typewriter. She walked in a daze. She told herself that when the excitement wore off, Jerry would be himself again. He would see how the way he was acting was affecting her.

Carl came and took her to dinner; but Kent Morven did not even call her. That in itself made her even more uneasy. Kent, she felt, was very wise, very knowing. His silence said more than anything else. . . .

It was when Jerry took her uptown and showed her his new rooms on Park Avenue that Julie could no longer keep still. Seated on the brocaded sofa she looked at him. Her eyes were wistful:

"It's very nice, Jerry," she said. "And what about us?"

Jerry stared at her over the cigarette in the jade holder. "What about us?" he asked.

"That's what I want to know," Julie said, keeping the quiver from her husky voice. Her violet eyes were shadowy. "Success has come, Jere. What we worked for and hoped for. Are we to be married?"

Jerry's face darkened. He said:

"Marriage isn't for the artist. You know that, Julie."

"All right," Julie said with a pathetic gesture. "It's unimportant. Am I to come here then? Is this my home as well?"

"You know that wouldn't work," Jerry said. "I've got to have freedom and quiet. I can't have talk about me—about us. It would hurt me."

"It didn't downtown," Julie said. Her hands trembled, and she clasped her fingers. "I want to know where I stand, Jerry. What am I?"

His eyes met hers, angrily. "Oh, God, are you going to be like all women? You've had all of me. What more do you want?" For a moment Julie stared at him, incredulous. She couldn't believe what was plain, even though everything declared it. It was impossible for her to conceive. Jerry said: "I'll see you. We'll go away when I can spare the time. We'll have our fun still. You won't lose me."

Julie got up. Her voice was quiet. "How silly," she said. "I should have understood when you always went out and never took me with you. I'm just the girl you've been living with, aren't I?" When he did not answer she repeated. "Aren't I?"

"Well, we have been living together, haven't we?" Jerry asked. "People are pretty touchy about being social in cases like that. But it needn't interfere. And I'll help you. All you want. I owe you a lot of money. I'll give you more than a fair allowance."

Julie drew a deep, sighing breath. She shook her head. "We've come so far in less than two years," she said. She started toward the door. Jerry said:

"I'll come down and see you this week. I'll call you first."

"No," Julie said, "don't do that." Her voice was still. "I don't ever want to see you again."

The smoke rose from Jerry's cigarette. She could hear the shrug in his voice:

"Well, when you see things sensibly, call me. I'll be here. Or if I'm away, it won't be for long."

She didn't answer. She went down the stairs and her legs were numb. When she got home she made herself some soup and ate it. Then she got out her sewing and sat over it, the needle idle, her face blank.

It called for a whole readjustment of her ideas, of her life. Everything had been pointed towards Jerry's success. That had been the promised land. Now it was at hand—behind—passed! And she was as far from it as ever. Worse, she had no part in it. She could not get herself to envisage it, to encompass it.

But the only thing she could cling to was her belief that they had not worked from a wrong premise. That their dreams and promises in college had not been false. That she and Jerry and Carl knew better than people like—like Kent Morven. They couldn't be right, those older, cynical ones.

There remained only Carl to help her—to help her self-respect, her faith in what she believed. And Carl did not remain long. She had seen him a lot. But she had said nothing. She knew he would eventually know, but she did not want to tell him. When he came one night she was aware that he knew. He was terribly angry. He cursed Jerry. Julie stopped him.

"What's the use, Carl? It—it's like madness, I guess. He can't help himself."

"Oh, no," Carl sneered. "The sneaking louse! Getting everything he could out of you. Living with you, eating up your money, sleeping in your apartment. And then running out on you!"

Julie's corn-rich hair glimmered on her bent head.

"It's finished," she said.

"It's lousy," Carl said, and took her hand.

"It's past," Julie said. "What now? Take one away and two remain. You and me, Carl."

"Sure," Carl said. But he looked embarrassed. "Julie, I—I'm still as crazy about you as ever."

"I'm glad, Carl." Julie smiled wanly.

Carl said, "But I've got to tell you something, Julie. I want you to understand. I'm going to be married." He nodded, as she raised her head. "It's Brad's sister, Eloise. I don't love her, Julie. I like her. And she can bring me everything I need. Brad's tickled and so is his father. I'll be in the firm. It makes my future secure. You see that, don't you?"

"Yes," Julie said. "I'm glad, Carl. But—but surely you love her!"

"No," Carl said. "I'll never be crazy about any one but you. But every one knows about you and Jerry. Eloise knows; so does Brad. I can't take you among them, Julie. But I don't want to lose you. I want to see you still."

"I understand," Julie said. "I don't want to lose you either, Carl. You're all I've got left."

Carl's grasp tightened. He said:

"This is a lousy place. Let me get you a better place uptown, Julie. We can be together then. I'll arrange it."

Julie looked at him. Her eyes widened. She said, half-doubting, "Carl?"

His face tightened. He said, "Oh, Julie, don't be a chump. I'm crazy about you. You know that. But you've finished yourself for anything but—"

Julie raised her hand. She was silent. Then she nodded, "You're right," she said. "I'm a girl who's lived with one man; all the future holds for me is life with another

man on the same 'terms.'" She drew a deep breath. "But not with you, Carl. You can see that, can't you? You belong to the time when you and I and Jerry were the only people on earth who counted. When we were equal in every way. Not you, Carl."

Carl said, "Julie!"

She got up. "No, Carl." She kissed him, gently. "You'd better not see me any more."

His arms tightened about her. He held her close and kissed her feverishly. Julie did not resist. She lay passive in his arms. Then she freed herself:

"I wish I could," she said, "but I can't! Not you, Carl." She went to the door. "Go along now. I hope you get everything of the best. And I won't be here, so don't worry about me, Carl."

"What will you do?" Carl asked.

Julie shrugged. "I haven't begun to think about that yet," she said. . . .

But she did think. She had to! And whichever way her thoughts went they only brought her back to the vision of herself in the eyes of the world. A girl who had been living with Jerry Slade, the playwright. Slade's mistress. She was labeled. . . .

That brought her, finally, to Kent Morven's door. When she walked in she wore a simple blue dress under her brown cloth coat. The hat shaded her violet eyes, the pallor of her creamy face under the corn-colored hair. She stood in the greatness of the big room and faced Kent Morven. He was silent, tall and lean-faced, serious eyed. The gray hairs glinted at his temples. Julie said:

"Humpty Dumpty has had her fall. She's all in pieces. Do you want them?"

Her shoulders drooped. She felt old and haggard and fearful. That most of all. There was fright in

every breath she drew. She was afraid even of Kent Morven, standing looking at her, his expression was gentle, his eyes smiling.

When he moved it was to come to her. He helped her off with her coat, took her hat. He brought her a tiny glass of golden cordial. It was sweet and strong and it sent a glow through her veins. Then he took her by the elbow and led her down the room into another room. A tall mirror fronted her. Kent's voice said:

"What do you see?"

Julie's eyes steadily looked at her reflection, objectively.

"A woman!"

"A girl. Twenty—what?"

"Twenty-four."

"That's young, isn't it?" Kent asked.

"Is it?"

"Yes." His voice was low. "Would you say she was lovely?"

There was no inflection in Julie's voice. "She'd pass."

"Youth and beauty," Kent said.

"That's a great deal. You ask if I want the pieces. Do you offer them unconditionally?"

Julie's face turned. She said: "I've found out. There's only one thing that's certain. I've been one man's mistress. All I can hope for is to be another man's. The pieces are yours."

"All right." Kent went to a writing-table. He sat down and took up a pen. Getting up, he folded the paper, put it in an envelope. Then he took a match and sealing wax. The wax dropped, smoking, on the envelope. He sealed it with his ring. Then he brought the envelope to her. "It's addressed to you," he said. "But you aren't to read it now. Not until I give it to you." He took it back. Opened a drawer in the desk and dropped it in. His eyes met hers as he turned. "Some day you'll read it, Julie."

She felt no interest. She said: "All right." Her eyes went around the room. Took in the dark amber draperies, the huge dark four-posted bed. She said, "My bags are outside, in the hall. I've moved out of my place for good. Am I to stay here?" At last, she looked at him.

"Yes," Kent said, "for tonight. Tomorrow we move on. Places."

Julie just nodded.

She felt no interest. There was a little shrinking within her at the thought of what lay ahead—just ahead, Kent's mouth and his embraces and his passion. But she could close her eyes to that; make even her body ignore his demands; give in without giving.

It was, however, warm and heartening in the big place. Outside the November wind was chill and insistently whispering at the sills. But inside was warmth, the glow of the fire in the black marble fireplace. The smell of smoke; a man's smell, was faint, yet pleasant.

Julie bathed, lying relaxed and weary in the deeps of the green and black sunken bath. The sound of symphonic music, soft and soothing, came from a distance. She got out of the tub and dried herself. In the mirror-walls of the bathroom her body was thrown back at her, insistently, warm and ivory-pink, again and again, from every angle. It was, she found herself admitting, a lovely body. It showed nothing of what had befallen her. She reflected, cynically, that kisses did not show by their own effect, nor embraces either. But then the thought of Jerry came. Her heart sank and tears stung her eyes. She plied the rough towel angrily and got into her robe.

In the dressing-room she brushed her thick hair and coiled it on top of her head; applied her make-up skillfully. She drew on the thin stockings, got into her best silk un-

derwear. I might as well do it properly, she thought. This time I'm going into it knowing just what I am doing. Then she slipped the blue, iridescent silk of the gown over her head. She took one look at herself in the tall mirror and nodded. "No one would ever know, Julie," she said. "The pieces don't show at all." But her lips were bitter.

Kent Morven was waiting for her in front of the fire. The table had been set there. Its china and glass reflected the bright of the flames. They gleamed on the white of Kent Morven's shirt front. His Japanese man brought the glasses of pale golden sherry. They ate in silence. Then sat close beside the fire, sipping their coffee and liqueurs while Sanso deftly cleared away and finally hissed a "Good night, sank you," and was gone.

Kent rose once to refix the electric phonograph. Two suites of Haydn's chamber music. The softly muted strings lulled her. Her mind was in a torpor. She tried hard not to think, for thinking left her shivering, fearful. At last Kent said:

"Is it music and light and dancing you want, Julie?"

She shook her head. Her eyes were closed. "No, I don't want to go out. What time is it?"

"Almost eleven."

Julie got up. "I'll go to bed." Her eyes met his. "It won't take me long to get ready."

Kent said nothing. Julie went into the big bedroom and slowly undressed. She got in between the cool sheets.

The dim lights of the river hung just below the big window. She heard Kent moving about. Then the door opened and he came into the darkness. He did not turn on the light. Julie shivered and drew a quivering breath. Then was still. He sat down beside her. She could smell the faintness of tobacco smoke.

"Asleep?" he asked.

"No."

His hand found hers. He said, "That's what you need, Julie, sleep. Don't try not to think. But remember, it will grow easier, at least to think about, as time goes on. And you won't be here." His fingers were warm and dry. "Tomorrow we're off for the Bahamas. Bermuda is too cold at this time of the year. But in Nassau the sun is hot and bright. You'll swim and lie in the sun and rest. Then, after a time, you'll stop writhing and begin to think constructively. She did not answer, and Kent went on. "You'll have a bit of shopping to do. In a hurry. So be up early. Don't bother me. I like to sleep late. It's a reward of my profession."

Julie said, "I can't sleep. I try and try."

His voice was low and full, soothing. Somewhere there was a half-rueful laugh in it.

"Don't try. Trying too hard is always awful." His fingers touched her temples, lightly. He drew a deep breath. "Once upon a time—" he began.

Julie listened, surprised, half-scornful. A fairy-tale. A familiar one. The Little Match Girl, Hans Andersen, Christmas and home! She didn't want to go home; there would be no peace there. And yet it had once been peace. If only she didn't hurt so inside.

Kent's voice went on, low and interested, as if he loved the story. She knew, suddenly, with a quick relaxing of all of her, that he had no intention of staying there with her. His fingers soothed. Once when he stopped their slow movement, she stirred and said, her voice plaintive, like a child's:

"No. More, please."

His low laugh. "You should be asleep by now. I'm losing my spell, Julie. But sleep. Tomorrow ships

and clothes and new things. New life, Julie!"

That was when she slept.

IV

THE Indies were blue and turquoise water; bicycles and quaint people. Colored ones who spoke lovely English. Shops and white roads. Warm, clear waters and the cottage. . . . The cottage was thatched, low-eaved, with leaded dormer windows. Mrs. Eglantine, very colored and very British in accent, ran the place beautifully, arriving every morning in a white starched apron, accompanied by her equally dark granddaughter.

Julie's fair skin darkened under the bright sun. Her body took on a golden tan. Kent Morven worked at his desk every morning and came down to the white sands before lunch for his swim, and to gravely accompany Julie home for lunch.

It was a lazy yet active life. Days of golden sunlight and long evenings. White things and British garrison officers. Planter's punches and dancing under the moon, and Kent, as quiet, as genial, as wise as ever.

Julie had stopped wondering when he would claim her. Her fear had given away to a desire to forget. To forget everything and yet her native honesty would not let her forget, not only the obligation, but the offer and its acceptance. When she had paid her debt, in the only way it could be paid, then she would be free and she could look ahead. So far she had not; dared not. It was an empty, fearsome void.

But at the end of the month she acted. She had to. Time was making things easier and youth was once more in full flow. She must get things behind her; all clear. . . .

Mrs. Eglantine had gone. The moon was golden when she came out on to the porch. Kent, in his white jacket, was smoking his pipe. He turned his head as Julie came towards him, her creamy frock molding the lines of her young body. He said:

"Lovely night, isn't it, Julie?"

"Yes." She accepted the cigarette and light he offered. In the dark her face was nebulous. She said: "When are you going to want me, Kent?" He did not answer. Julie said: "I owe you a great deal. There is only one way I can pay. And the only way I can feel that I have paid. That I owe nothing."

Kent turned. "You do feel that?" he asked. His voice was low.

"Yes," Julie said. "Yes."

His shoulders moved. "All right, Julie." He went down the steps. "I'm going for a walk. I'll see you —later."

She was in bed when he came. A faint shaft of moonlight touched the white oak of the flooring. The door opened and Kent came in. She said: "I'm not asleep."

He did not answer. The smell of jasmine was heavy on the warm night air. His hand touched her hair, gently; went to her cheek. He said, almost inaudibly, "Julie." Then his lips touched hers.

She was conscious, with an amazing vividness, of nothing but a deep feeling of gratitude. She could never have imagined that at such a time one could be free of every emotion but one that seemed to have nothing to do with the occasion. She felt a desire to be kind to Kent; to be everything to him that he wanted her to be. That, and nothing more. She felt, as she raised her arms, the soft silk of her jacket sliding back against her round shoulders, that she was acting, that he could never tell, would not be able to tell that she did not mean everything that she did. Her mouth returned his kiss.

When his arms went about her she strained to him. Yet suddenly the tears stung her eyes, and with her mouth against his she thought, in shame and bitterness, of Jerry. . . .

She woke before Kent did. The sun was unseen, but slanting rays of vivid light meshed in the white curtains. She felt calm and very clear of mind. She raised on her elbow and looked down at him. His brown hair curled. The white strands at the temples were clear and singular. She thought that she had never really looked at him before; never really seen him and from under long lashes she studied his face. It was kindly and quiet and wise, even in sleep. Boyish too.

There was a sort of wonderment in her. His love-making had been so different from what she had thought. With Jerry she had never been conscious of anything but a wildness of intent, a longing to be a part of Jerry. It had been a fever that when exhausted left her only spent, yet as hungry as before. Wanting something that seemed never to be hers. Yet now, looking down at Kent there was a sensation of fullness, of peace.

But too there was the sense of something finished; something put behind. Another few weeks, if he wished, and then she must go ahead. Where, she did not know. But the urge would not let her rest. A debt paid—in her mind and her estimation—that was enough!

But Kent did not come to her that evening. He said good night to her on the porch.

"I'll walk up to the hill. I'm going to work. I've another three or four days to the end. Then I'll talk to you, Julie."

"Shall I wait up for you?" she said.

His eyes met hers, steadily. "No. You've paid, Julie. You wanted to. I knew that. Otherwise I'd never

have accepted. You've paid. You owe me nothing now."

"Nothing—" Julie began.

Kent's fingers touched her lips. "Please, Julie. I'll never finish my work if we start to talk about things."

She bowed her head and went inside. . . .

His manner did not change. He was as kindly as ever. But immersed in his work. He had never asked her to read his work; to give an opinion. Jerry had always wanted her to read his stuff and always been furious if she gave any but an ecstatic opinion. But when Julie picked up some of Kent's manuscript and began to read he looked at her, and then went on with what he was doing.

Julie read, fascinated. She could not help comparison. This, she could feel, was finished—the work of the professional; while Jerry's was that of the amateur. She could see now that just an idea, just plot was not enough. Artistry was needed. And that was experience and feeling and understanding; suffering too. She wondered about Kent.

After that she read what he had done. The morning he finished the book, he had worked the whole night. Julie rose to find him still bent over the typewriter. She said:

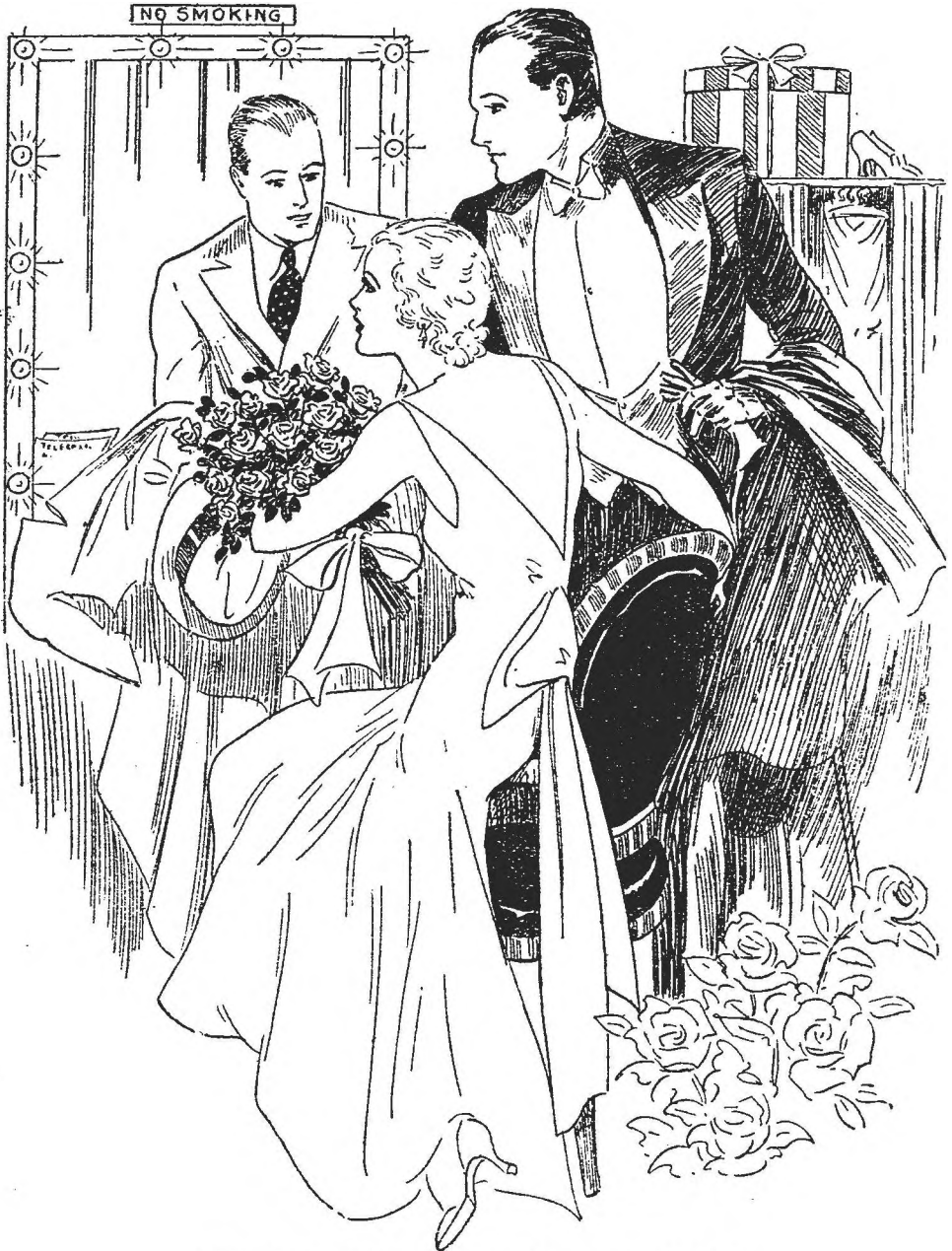
"Kent, that's silly." But when he raised his face to her it was as if he did not see her. There was a look on it she had never seen before.

"I've finished," he said. "I'm going to turn in. Will you gather the sheets for me?"

He slept well into the afternoon and by that time Julie had finished reading. When he came out she went up to him, flushed, glowing.

"Kent, it's marvelous. Oh, it is good!"

"Is it really, Julie?" His eyes were wistful. "I rather felt it was, but one never can be sure."



"You're looking lovelier than ever, Julie!"

"It is. It's splendid," Julie said. "Not only the story. No, it—it's something more—something in the way it's written. Oh, I wish I could explain what I mean."

His smile was grateful. "You have. I'm ever so pleased, Julie. Get your

sapphire-blue frock on. We're going to celebrate." He was quite gay—gayer than she'd ever seen him.

It was when they returned with two officer friends waving them good night that they sat on the porch for a last drink and Kent said: "We're

pushing off tomorrow. For New York. Then to England."

"I don't know, Kent," Julie said. "I've got to think of what I'm to do."

His voice was gentle. "I've thought of that. That's why we're going." He leaned forward. "Julie, listen: I know you haven't forgotten Jerry. Perhaps not so much your love, as what he has done to it. I haven't forgotten either. The thought of him, of any one, looking down at you angers me. I want you up. Acknowledged. In your own right. I want you to be able to look every one in the face. Get more back than just your self-respect. That's what you want? That's what you must have!"

"Yes," Julie said. "Oh, yes!" Her fingers twisted.

Kent leaned back. His voice was quiet. "You've the makings of a grand actress in you, Julie. You've beauty—and features. You've a voice and a mobility of expression. I'm taking you to England because you're not known there. I've arranged for you to study with a man I consider a master. You'll tour the provinces; battle British audiences. You'll be on your own for at least a year. Maybe two. I shall be on a trip around the world. I'm tired. Fagged."

Julie swallowed. "If you want me to go with you, Kent——"

"No," he said. "No, I don't want you to. What I want you to do is put everything you have into it. Make a success of it. Make yourself good so that you can go back as some one. It's in you. I can't help you further. I've wanted to see you win right along. I'll hate it like hell if you don't."

Julie's voice was low. "Is that why—why——" She stopped. He did not help her. She said: "I'm copy, aren't I?"

"If you like," Kent said and his voice was cool. "You're my friend

too. I want you to go ahead and win."

"All right," Julie said. "All right."

Time is only events along the path of weeks and months and years. But things happened so quickly and so often, Julie never knew where the months went.

Most of the time she was too tired; too distraught. She wept often that first year. England was strange to her and the provinces even worse than London. The audiences were exacting, but Barry Welland more so. Small, almost insignificant. But once on the stage he seemed to fill it. Gray and lean-faced. Quiet-voiced but a martinet.

He had looked at her in his office in the Savoy when she had come in after seeing Kent off. A Kent who held her hand, said, "Good luck, Julie," and departed. She felt angry with him, for leaving her alone like that. But when she had faced Welland she had forgot everything but his keen blue gaze.

"You will have to work, Miss Middleton. I can't discharge you. I gave Kent Morven my promise. But I'll make it hell for you if you don't work. If there's anything in you it's got to come out and be developed. If not, then at least I'll make you adaptable enough so that a motion picture director will be able to use your looks and figure. Report tomorrow. At ten."

That began it. It seemed she knew nothing; none of the things she had always thought she knew. How to walk, how to speak, how to breathe. But she learned. At first what she said was nothing but lines to her. Then when the lines became thoughts and feelings she went the other way, from wooden to too febrile. Welland told her:

"The art of acting is to appear to live the part, yet always to be actu-

ally aloof. What in writing is known as being objective."

She could understand that. Six months saw her getting an occasional nod from Welland. A year saw her acquainted with every city from Liverpool to Leeds, from Manchester to Edinburgh, and it saw her taking leading parts. Not perhaps to Welland's satisfaction, but she seemed to please her audiences.

It was strange to feel power. To know that every motion she made, seemingly so natural and unpremeditated, had been thought out, calculated.

There had been offers from London, but Barry Welland would not let her take them. "Time enough for that." Then amazingly he let her take a small part in a revival. She was surprised, but Barry Welland said dryly, "There's only one reason. You are going to play with perhaps three of the greatest actors on the stage: Reilen, Sir George Vesting, and Maudie Croft. You'll probably be numb after seeing them work. But don't let it discourage you. You can approach them—in time."

That helped, for when Julie saw and watched the great ones at close hand she could only marvel and despair. But she learned too. Welland said as much when she rejoined the company in Nottingham. "You have learned, Julie. There's a new play they want you for. In another two months you'll start rehearsing. I think you're ready." He shook his head as she began to speak. "And your name is to be Judith Malden. You're no longer Julie Middleton."

Julie wrote Kent about that. He was somewhere in the South Seas. She told him she hoped he would be in London for her opening night.

But he wasn't. Only Barry Welland, dry and cold, was there. He gave her, not support, but rather the crack of the whip. When that first night was over and the audience yet

lingered after "God Save the King" had been played, he said to her:

"They'll rave about you. Don't let it go to your head. You're good, Julie. Someday you may be great, if you want to be."

"Yes," Julie breathed. "Yes!"

"Then work," Welland said. "Work!"

And work she did. Slowly she grew to understand that she was some one in England. The invitations from notables. The social standing of leading actors and actresses were high.

She heard now and then from Kent. Quiet, chatty letters. He knew what she was doing. He told her he was glad. That he knew she could do it.

Late that summer Julie's play closed and she went to a cottage near Henley to rest. It was very jolly. Invitations from the people about. She could be as gay or as quiet as she wished. Barry Welland came to see her. Managers came as well, but Welland shook his head.

"No new engagements," he said. "We're waiting for something."

Then Kent came back and at the same time the "something" turned up. Julie was unaffectedly glad to see Kent. Anxious for his praise. He was lean and brown.

"You've done well, Julie," he said, and it was the best praise she had received.

He came for tea one afternoon with Welland. The older man went to walk by the Thames and Kent sat down to talk to her.

"Julie, I thought I'd best tell you. Barry thinks so as well. We've got the new play for you. They jumped at the chance."

"What is it?" Julie asked.

Kent's eyes rested on her. She knew she had changed. She could feel it in many ways. Kent said:

"You've grown, Julie. Not that you're lovelier. You are—it's more

than that. It's in you. We've the bid for the lead for you in a New York production. A new drama by—" he hesitated, "by Jerry Slade!"

Julie stared at him. Then she drew a deep breath and nodded.

"Yes," she said. "Yes. You would think of that, wouldn't you, Kent?"

"I would," he told her. "Perhaps the desire to be the *deus ex machina*. But it's my idea of a fitting triumph—and it will be a triumph! We've no fears of that. As to the rest—" he shrugged. "I feel that whatever you want will come to pass."

V

IT was like coming to a strange, even though familiar country. New York seemed somehow different after two years. And the magnificence of the hotel. The reporters clustering at Quarantine. Barry Welland had not let them photograph her. The reporters spoke of "the English star's beauty and the timbre of her voice." They compared her voice to Katherine Cornell's.

Jerry Slade was still on the Coast. He would be east for the premiere. He would fly in. The publicity went fast and the tickets for the opening even faster.

Julie worked hard. The part was splendid. She wondered somewhat at the way the other actors and actresses looked up to her. She could only tell in that way how good they thought her. She saw Kent now and then; a quick bite between rehearsals. It was work and sleep when she could. But she thought of Jerry—looked forward with mingled feelings to meeting him.

Then, on a night in October, clear and cool, the play opened. The dressing-room was filled with flowers. One basket was from Jerry Slade. "*To Miss Judith Malden, from the author.*" Folsbee, the manager, told

her Slade's plane had been delayed. He would be there for the play at any rate.

Back-stage all was confusion. The murmur of the gathering audience began to make itself heard. Then as Julie sat in her dressing-room, all ready, Kent's flowers came. A simple mass of gardenias. Just the flowers and his card. And with it the call-boy's knock. His "five minutes, Miss Malden."

Suddenly the curtain was up and she was on the stage, nervous, shaking, apprehensive; as is the way with all great actors. She began to speak and the sound of her voice calmed her. The play moved on—just another part. She was aware of Welland in the wings, of the other people on the stage. Her voice flowed, her body moved easily. She felt serene, secure.

After the first act she didn't have to be told she had scored a success, it was obvious. It flowed to her across the footlights. She had them in her hand. She could tell it in every way. And yet she was conscious of a feeling of emptiness, even as the certainty grew.

When the curtain went down, after a dozen risings, she walked back to her dressing-room, surrounded by people. There were other people in the dressing-room. Kent was there, tall and quiet. He said, as she turned to him:

"Well done, Julie," and stepped aside so that the others could get to her. And then some one said:

"Well, Julie. It couldn't be and yet it is, Julie!" Julie raised her eyes. It was Jerry. A Jerry turned sleek and prosperous. His hair was beginning to retreat. His clothes were faultless. Perhaps too much so. He took her hands in his. "Julie, what a sell! But you were magnificent. God, you were! I might have written the part for you. I must have, unconsciously."

She heard her voice saying, "Jerry! How nice to see you."

"And you. You're lovelier than ever, Julie. I always had good taste, didn't I?"

She looked at him. The moment had come. There was in his eyes nothing but admiration and, she could see, a sudden realization of her beauty. She could tell that. A little pulse beat in her throat. She turned her head to look for Kent. He was not there.

Jerry said: "Julie, I've got to talk to you. There's so much I want to know. Look here, duck this, will you? Let's be alone."

"I'll try," Julie said.

But it was much later, after the supper party at the Ambassador, that she left with him. Went up in the gold-encrusted lift. Her maid was waiting.

"A package came for you, Miss Malden." Julie took it. A thick envelope. She put it on the table.

"You can go to bed, Annie." Then she nodded to Jerry: "There's whiskey. I'll be out soon."

In her dressing-room she could not think. She was once more back at school and Jerry waiting for her. And yet, it was not the same. She wanted to call up all the bitterness that she had felt, and could not. But she could not call up anything else—any other feeling.

The lavender velvet clung to her long limbs. Jerry rose and came to her.

"Julie! Oh, it's good! Good. I couldn't have asked for anything better. There aren't any people like us, are there?"

"No," Julie said. "I've seen Carl. He's married."

"I know," Jerry said. "His wife falls all over a fellow. You too, I suppose?"

"Me," Julie said.

He laughed and threw out his arms and caught her to him. Julie did

not resist. But his kiss left her cold. Jerry said:

"You'll be coming out to the Coast. I'll show you what's what, Julie. We're going to have our same old times again. Be the same sweet-hearts we were." Julie released herself. Her eyes widened. He did not seem to know that anything had happened; that she was any different; that she had any cause for grievance. Jerry nodded. "If you like, we'll get married. It doesn't mean anything, but maybe it would be better. But we'll live our lives together. Help each other. Me—the playwright! You, the famous actress." He moved about the room. "I've got some new ideas. I'll tell you about them. They're good. You'll play the leads. I'll write you more and better plays." He stopped. Came to her. Took her in his arms. "Julie, I'm fagged. I can stay here, can't I? Or d'you want to come over to my place?"

His very calmness was like an icy shower. Julie looked at him. She said:

"No, Jerry. It's been good to see you. I'll see you again. But that's over. It never was."

Jerry's eyes bulged. His face got red. He said:

"You can't do that to me, Julie. You were my girl—and you still are! The first man who'd ever even kissed you. You're still in love with me. You always will be."

"I'm not," Julie said. "I'd be glad if I were. I'd feel triumphant. All I feel now is empty. I've had a very big day. I wish you'd run along, Jerry." From red his face turned to white. Julie thought he was going to hit her. She moved to the phone, picked up the instrument. "I'd hate to have them assist your leaving, Jerry."

For a moment Jerry glared. Then he swore at her, obscenely. Julie said:

"The Hollywood influence, or just you, Jerry? Anyhow, good-by."

The door slammed behind him. Julie stood in the room staring at the door. There was an emptiness in her. Then her eyes fell on the envelope. She took it up and recognized Kent's handwriting. She opened the envelope. There was a sheet of paper and another, smaller envelope inside.

She read the scrawl, Kent's scrawl: "*Julie, if I had any sense I suppose I'd have torn up the enclosed long ago. But I can't. No matter what happens, I'm afraid I want you to know, now that you are everything you could wish to be. Read it. Beyond that—nothing.*"

Julie looked at the closed envelope. There was a blob of sealing wax on the reverse and suddenly she remembered. That first night when she had gone to Kent—to give herself to him! There was no doubt of it. Quickly she broke the seal and drew out the enclosure. She noted the date, two years before. She read:

"I can't say this to you now. You're broken—your self-respect gone. You wouldn't believe me. Wouldn't want to hear me. But, Julie Middleton, I admire you above all women. I love you. I've loved you since that night at Nelson's when you were so damned rude. To me, your relations with Slade mean nothing. They're part of growth. If I could, I'd marry you tomorrow and cherish you for always and think myself the most fortunate man alive. Some day I hope you will attain a place where I can let you read this—so that you will know, then, how I feel now. I hope to heaven that day will come!

"Kent."

With a deep, shuddering breath Julie folded the paper and put it back

in its envelope. Her violet eyes shone. She turned and went inside and got her mink coat. Slipping it over her *négligé* she went out and down to the street. The cabman nodded as she spoke. The cab sped down Park Avenue.

Sanso, sleepy-eyed came to the door. "Missy," he hissed, and stepped aside. Julie threw her coat on to a bench and went swiftly down the great room. There was cool darkness. From it Kent's voice called: "What is it, Sanso?"

She did not speak. She reached him and found his mouth in the dark. His arms went up to grasp her. He sat up.

"Julie!"

Julie laughed, her cheeks wet. "Oh, darling, why didn't you tell me? I thought—I thought——"

"You couldn't have," Kent said. "Any one with half a brain would have known I was in love with you." His voice changed: "In love! That doesn't half express it. I worship you, Julie!"

"You might have said so," Julie told him. Her hands fondled his cheeks.

He said, "And Slade?"

"Him!" Julie said. "He hasn't changed. Was he always an impossible, selfish, egotistic ass with a little talent?"

"More than a little talent I'd say. But otherwise——"

"Let's forget him," Julie said. Her arms tightened about him. Her cheeks were hot in the dark. She said: "Darling, I thought it was because I worked so hard that I couldn't ever be interested in any man—all that time in England. But it wasn't. It was because I couldn't forget Nassau—and that night!" Her mouth pressed against his cheeks, her lips moved at his ear. "Darling, I'm grown up at last. Please, may I stay with you—tonight? And always?"

Love Goes On Forever

By OLIVER SCOTT

“YOU ask me why I haven’t married,” Cissy was saying matter-of-factly, “but I can’t honestly explain just why I haven’t. I might say it’s because I’ve never loved any one. That would be the proper thing to say, wouldn’t it? But candidly, I’ve never given much thought to love. I don’t even know what love is! I don’t know that if I did, or had loved, that it is what I want. In college the girls talk a lot about love—love and passion! The trouble with me was that I couldn’t talk about those things because I had never met a man who gave me a thrill. And thrills, I gather from what was said, is what constitutes love!” She smiled gayly.

Mimi Pearson liked that smile. While Cissy was talking her godmother had eyed the girl with interest and a bit of curiosity. She had not seen Cissy Manning for four years and four years is a long time. Four years ago Cissy had been a rather shy kid, not given to words. No beauty, Cissy, Mimi thought, but she had something that would attract men. Mimi liked the girl’s candid hazel eyes, her sweet cool mouth, her frank pleasure in being alive. Life to Cissy was to be a great adventure—going to work was a part of it; Mimi could see that. She sighed as she hoped that the girl would find it worth while. Mimi was forty-five, and at forty-five the gloss has worn thin and one had lost the zest for living, for adventure. At least she had. Women do—men hardly ever. She thought of Wilfred and sighed again. He hadn’t lost his love of ad-

venture. At the moment he was somewhere in Africa big-game hunting with a camera, while she was lunching at the Colony Club, eyeing her godchild with something like envy, because the girl was young and full of enthusiasm, starting out to make her own way in this sorry old world. And what was before her? . . . But Cissy was going on happily:

“You see, Mimi, I’ve got to take care of myself. Because Emily married a millionaire is no reason that I should do likewise, nor is there any reason why my brother-in-law should support me. He’s a dear and thinks me quite mad. He’s taking care of mother, you know. That’s enough.”

“How about the estate?” Mimi asked.

“Washed up! We’re virtually paupers,” Cissy told her almost gayly. “Fortunately, we managed to sell ‘Fairlawn’ for a song—just enough to pay off the debts. Railroad securities, on which father pinned his faith, have gone to a new low. Poor old darling, he’d turn over in his grave if he knew? And that is the answer to why I’m going to work.”

“I think you’re wonderful, Cissy. But, honestly, as I wrote you, you don’t have to! Come with me on a trip around the world. We’ll pick up Wil somewhere and drag him along,” Mimi told her.

Cissy laughed. “You’re a sweet, Mimi. But the answer is thank you and no! I’m already signed up! But the job I’ve finally landed isn’t what I want. But I had to have something. Imagine me, Mimi darling, a

social secretary! Sounds swell, but it's not, really. I'll write letters—meet people, keep them from annoying my boss. You know the stuff!" She sighed. "I've been interviewed—accepted! The beauty of my employer all but floored me! I'm going to be the gorgeous Sheila Hamilton's right hand—or so she told me."

"Sheila Hamilton!" Mimi exclaimed. "You're right, she is gorgeous. Only I don't think that her husband has such a pleasant life. Sheila's too lovely, too avid for admiration. There are too many men hanging about her."

"I didn't meet friend husband—there was another man there though."

"Noel Brooks!" Mimi interrupted. "He's always there. Handsome devil! Women say he's a wonderful lover and fall for him in quite a lost sort of way. Sheila has—or so they say. She's a reckless sort of a fool!"

"But so lovely!" Cissy sighed. "Almost too lovely!"

"Lovely, yes; but Sheila has few scruples!"

"Isn't that asking too much from such a marvelous creature? You can't have everything," Cissy said cynically.

"Possibly her husband might ask more," Mimi told her. "But her beauty doesn't do Tom much good—she's too generous with her charms. And he isn't the one to take it either! Tom's had his own way all his life—has had too much money. Women have always thrown themselves at him and he hated it. He swore he'd never marry! But then he met Sheila Townsend and she swept him off his feet. He forgot all about his money—fooled himself into believing that she loved him for himself alone! She didn't because she couldn't! She couldn't love any one but herself! She doesn't even want to. I've known Sheila for years and I know just what she is. She knows that and she hates me for it!"

"But what about this—this Noel Brooks?" Cissy asked.

"You too!" Mimi frowned. "Don't you get interested in him," she said, almost anxiously. "All I know is that he's English, a younger son, small income that goes far enough to support a swanky cottage at old Westbury and two ponies, and he goes in for polo; a number-one man. I suppose he can't help it that women fall over themselves to get him on their string, but I do wish he'd lay off Sheila. Not that I care about her, but I am fond of Tom—and Tom loves her. He's really a strange character, intense, one never could be quite sure what he'll do."...

The day that Cissy Manning went down to the Hamilton's place on the Sound was not an auspicious one. Rain fell in a deadly monotonous way, and the heavy leaden sky seemed about ready to fall of its own weight. Low ceiling, Cissy thought. But she was gay; starting out to make one's own way in the world is exciting. She looked smart, too, in her neat brown tweeds, her white blouse, and the sport hat that matched her suit. A town car had been sent for her and all the long way she thought of Sheila Hamilton—and Noel Brooks.

It was still raining when they drew up under the porte-cochère of "Shore Acres" and Cissy was glad to get out. She was so excited that her heart was beating fast. As she entered the great hall a tall, dark young man got up from his easy-chair beside the fire, for it was damp enough to make a fire agreeable and cheerful, with a huge doberman pincer at his heels, and came toward her. He held out his hand and his smile was warm and friendly.

"Miss Manning," he said, "I'm Tom Hamilton. Welcome indeed. I've just had a letter from Mimi Pearson telling me all about you. So now we're friends." She smiled at him and stooped to pat the dog, as he

went on: "Nasty day—you must have a drink."

"I don't drink," Cissy told him. "Not that I'm against it—"

"Ah," he interrupted, "seeing that you're not against it, I must insist. You've had a long drive and you look cold, and no wonder for it is so damp. We can't have you ill, you know."

While he was talking Cissy looked at him curiously; this easy-mannered young man who had more money than any one man should have in this world of so much poverty, so much need! She liked what she saw. He was ugly, just as Mimi had told her; his nose too big, as was his mouth. But she liked the candor of his eyes, the tenderness of his smile. But it wasn't the face of a happy man. In those candid eyes was misery too!

Then he said: "Mrs. Hamilton is upstairs. It's been a trying day, such mean weather, and she has developed a headache. So I'm going to send you up to her." When she got up and turned to follow the servant he had summoned, he said gravely: "I hope that you will be happy here, Miss Manning."

All the way up the broad stairs she was thinking, not of what was before her, but of the man beside the fireplace. He was nice, she decided, and Sheila Hamilton the most fortunate of women. A rich husband, a nice husband! What more could a woman want? But when she was ushered into the huge lovely room that Sheila called her boudoir, Cissy was again filled with amazement at the ravishing beauty of the woman who greeted her.

In her soft, flowing *négligé*, Sheila Hamilton was like a gorgeous, tropical flower. Her golden head that she carried with such grace, the warm white skin, the blue of her lovely eyes! They were bluer than anything Cissy could think of, except,

perhaps, the sky over Venice on a summer day. She was charming too! Cissy thought it was no wonder that men were quite crazy about her. Cissy wasn't greatly surprised, nor was she shocked that Noel Brooks was there in that luxuriant room with Sheila, while a tall young man sat downstairs before the fire alone, save for a huge dog. . . .

As he arose and was introduced to her, in that brief moment, Cissy acknowledged to herself that the man was interesting, fascinating. He was handsome in a tall, British sort of way, and she admired the reddish glow of his brown hair, his gray eyes that were lightly touched with black shadows, his quite impressive manners. He smiled down at her and she noticed how his eyes sparkled, how gay they were, almost mischievous. He had humor and charm, charm with a capital C, she decided, and at that moment she couldn't blame Sheila Hamilton for liking him. He was a man to thrill one. She smiled inwardly as she thought how the girls in college used that word.

As for Noel Brooks, he was thinking too! What a charming girl, lovely, naive! And Cissy did look charming—charming and young. The dampness had made a row of curls about her forehead that softened the young ardent face. Against the exotic beauty of Sheila Hamilton, Cissy looked almost childish and sweet, and yet, somehow quite sensible. . . .

It was a strange household in which Cissy Manning found herself. A lovely, luxuriant home, full of servants, with a beautiful and indifferent mistress, a young and unhappy master. And Tom Hamilton was unhappy, there could be no doubt of that. He adored his beautiful wife and she only tolerated him; that, too, was plain. Always there were men, admiring, paying compliments. Cissy

wondered what Sheila Hamilton would do without admiration, without compliments?

She found that she was not only a social secretary, but a companion. Sheila, caring little about women, had few friends. So days found Cissy going about with Sheila—a sort of chaperon. Cissy smiled at that. As though Sheila needed a chaperon! But it did look better to have another woman along when there were always so many men. Naturally, Cissy often found herself paired off with Noel Brooks, who was always there. She liked that for no one could play so delightfully as Brooks. . . .

It was Mimi Pearson who first discovered that Cissy was really in love with Noel Brooks. It was Mimi Pearson who gave Cissy the knowledge of what had happened to her heart. Of course, Cissy knew that she thought Brooks the most interesting man she had even known, the handsomest, but love—Why, she never dreamed of such a thing! . . .

Sheila and Tom Hamilton had gone to *Pride's Crossing* for a wedding of one of Tom's cousins, leaving Cissy alone at the great house.

She had gone to New York to meet Mimi, who had come up from Southampton for shopping. When they were close to the end of their lunch, Mimi, looking up, had seen Noel Brooks coming toward them.

"Why," she said, "here's Noel Brooks! Whatever is he doing in town on such a hot day?" Then she happened to look across at Cissy and saw the flush on her cheeks, the sudden glow in the hazel eyes. Why, she thought, Cissy is in love with him! Mimi was the anxious, nervous type and it worried her. She loved Cissy and she didn't want her young life ruined. But before she could say anything Brooks was standing beside them, greeting Mimi with the usual platitudes and smiling down at Cissy.

"I hoped I'd find you here," he

said gayly. "I'm going to drive you back to 'Shore Acres.'"

"How nice," Mimi found herself saying; but she didn't think it nice at all.

When they went to the dressing-room Mimi couldn't help but say, although she knew it was not in the least diplomatic:

"I do hope that you're not in love with Noel Brooks! He's a fascinating feller, but bad medicine for young 'uns."

Cissy flushed, that lovely soft blush that made her look so sweet, but she laughed easily.

"Love!" she scoffed. "I don't know what love is," she assured Mimi. "Noel is thrilling, of course, but Sheila has first claim—or thinks she has."

"Don't be thrilled, baby," Mimi said anxiously. "He really has a bad reputation as a heart-breaker! Surely you don't want him—and he's not the marrying kind. He doesn't approve of marriage, at least, not for himself, although his specialty is married women."

"I know," Cissy said hurriedly. "If he were—why, perhaps— But don't fear, Mimi, I'll not get burnt, if that's what you are suggesting."

But Mimi's words had done things to Cissy; had given her knowledge. I can say that, she thought, but it's not true! I do love him! How could I help loving him? . . . But she wasn't happy about this secret love of hers, when they returned to the table where Brooks was waiting, her eyes avoided the gayety in his, the something that thrilled her.

It was when Mimi returned to Southampton that she told her husband of her fears.

"Cissy's in love with Noel Brooks," she told him. "She doesn't know it yet, but when she finds out!"

"It won't do her a bit of good—and she has plenty of company," Wil told her. "You don't have to worry

because Brooks won't marry any of 'em!"

"We've got to get her away from the Hamiltons," Mimi said. "We'll take a trip around the world and take Cissy!"

"Too many engagements," Wilfred told her. "And don't forget those two weeks at 'Shore Acres.'" He laughed. "You promised, so don't blame me!" . . .

September came and the Pearsons went down to "Shore Acres," although Mimi wasn't at all happy about it. She didn't know why she felt that way about it, but there it was. It was not the usual large house-party that usually made for gayety at the Hamiltons. Sheila loved a crowd. Besides the Pearsons, there were the Chet Townsends, Sheila's cousins, young Bill Otis, and, of course, Noel Brooks.

It was gorgeous weather, September at its loveliest; cool nights, pleasant warm days. The Sound lay stretched out before them a placid blue. Only there was something electric in the air, and in the hearts of the people gathered at this perfect home with its green lawns, its ornamental shrubbery, the gay flowers that already flaunted their gay autumnal colors. . . .

Mimi Pearson was uneasy; frightened at what she read in Cissy's hazel eyes—in Noel Brooks too, for that matter. What would Sheila do?

Cissy Manning had something like fear in her heart. At last she knew what love was, what it meant, what it could do to life! She feared the end of summer—would it mean the end of love?

Sheila Hamilton, always restless, was more unstable than usual. She felt that somehow Noel Brooks was escaping the net in which she was so certain she had enmeshed him. She didn't intend he should. Not ever! She wanted him more than any man she had ever met. Passion swayed her

—and he was the only man who had laughed at her desires. Love! She knew it wasn't love!

Tom Hamilton hating his life—loving his wife with a mad passion, yet almost hating her because he loved her so!

These were some of the cross-currents that moved these people who rode and golfed, and met each day on the tennis courts, played cards, dancing most of the nights away; laughing recklessly, yet feeling somehow that something was going to happen. Mimi spoke of it to Emmy Townsend, and Emmy told Chet, and Chet told the men sitting at a stiff game of poker.

"Emmy says something is going to happen—says she feels it in her bones. Isn't that a laugh? What could happen to us here? The world coming to an end—as in Spain, for instance? We, the moneyed crowd—I wish to God they could see my bank balance—getting our throats cut! But Emmy feels something, and when Emmy feels like that, well, something does happen!" He laughed. "She says Mimi feels it too! Has she said anything about it to you, Wil?"

Pearson looked up from his cards and laughed with Chet.

"Mimi is romantic," he said. "What Mimi feels is going to happen is nothing serious, like the cutting of throats, it's love!"

The entrance of the butler with the drinks stopped any more discussion of what might happen; but it was that very night that Sheila went into Tom's room. It surprised him, for it was long since his wife had sought him out. She was never more lovely, never more glamorous, and her coming made his heart beat and his face flush.

She herself was so nervous that she couldn't use diplomacy.

"I want a divorce, Tom," she said bluntly. "I'm tired of this—I want

something different! You're all right. I'm saying nothing about you, but I want to be free!"

"You want a divorce—want to be free!" He stared at her. Then he laughed suddenly; it made a discordant sound in that quiet room. "On what grounds?"

"Oh, any old grounds," she said flippantly. "I'm fed up!"

"Fed up, eh?" he said easily, although his eyes were hard. "Getting married again?"

She shrugged her lovely shoulders. "Oh, it's not that, necessarily. As I said I want to be free—and then I could marry again, couldn't I?" Her eyes were insolent.

He was quite calm, smiling down at her, although his eyes were not gay. They were hard, like steel.

"And you would like a big settlement, I suppose?"

"Well, I saw you listed among the richest men in America. Twenty millions and more! You could spare me one of those millions, couldn't you?"

"So all you want is a million! As little as that!" There was something in his voice that made her stare at him. She didn't like the look in his eyes, but she persisted.

"I want a divorce, with a settlement! That's what I want!"

Then he laughed suddenly, and without warning he took her in his arms, holding her tight, covering her face and neck with kisses, tearing the lace that covered her breast. She struggled and beat at him with her hands.

"Let me go!" she cried. "You beast! I hate you!"

"Damn you!" he said almost quietly, holding her so that he could look deep into her eyes. "I'll not let you get a divorce and I'll not give you a cent! Not a penny. And just you try it on! I'll drag you through the mud! Do you think for one moment that you've fooled me? Liar—cheat!

Do you think I believe that you've been true to me? I don't! You couldn't be! You're just a plain—" he hesitated and did not go on. Then he let her go, as he said, and there was bitterness in his voice: "And to think that I love you!" . . .

The next day dawned fair and clear, although they heard there were storm warnings up along the Florida coast. Cissy found Sheila hard to handle. She was impatient, cross; nothing pleased her. Cissy wondered what had happened.

It was during the late afternoon, while Sheila and some of the others were playing contract that Noel Brooks asked Cissy to go for a motor trip on the Sound.

"May blow up," Wilfred Pearson said. "Better not stay too long—the wind's shifting.

"We won't," Noel promised.

They started off gayly; to Cissy the water never looked so blue, the sky so heavenly. She was almost recklessly happy. To be alone with the man she adored. Suddenly Noel said quietly, as he slipped his arm about her waist.

"You must know I love you, Cissy."

She stared at him, her heart throbbing; she couldn't believe her own ears.

"No, I didn't know it, Noel. I didn't dream of it!" she said quietly.

"But I do, tremendously. I never thought I could love any one—not enough to marry. But oh, my dear, I do love you!" He bent his head and kissed her gently on her lips. "You're sweet! So sweet, so good, so gentle! I'm not much, darling, but I do want your love."

She moved away from him and looked him in the eyes:

"I love you, Noel, but I'm afraid of loving you! There's been so many women—" she stopped abruptly.

"I know," he told her. "I'm ashamed of it now. But, dear, I

never asked one of them to marry me. You see I didn't want marriage."

"And there's Sheila," she said.

"Sheila!" he smiled at her. "What has Sheila to do with us—with our love? She's nothing to me, but a lovely woman. She is lovely and I adore beauty. But there's nothing beyond that beauty. I want more than mere beauty. I have ideals—I want my loved one to have them! Besides, Sheila is married to a darn nice chap. I have had nothing from Sheila—I never have wanted anything!"

"She will not let you go," Cissy said. "I feel that! She loves you!"

"Love!" he laughed. "She doesn't know the meaning of love! Passion is what she wants—what she understands. I had no passion to give her."

Cissy sighed. "I'm afraid of Sheila," she said.

"You don't have to be. I love you—I want you! Will you marry me—make me as fine as you are? I could be, with you, darling."

"I love you, Noel! Let us think of love—not marriage now!" . . .

So engrossed were they with love and youth and being together that they did not notice how menacing the heavy clouds, how they scudded before the high wind, how high the waves, until Noel lifted his head.

"We must get back," he said. "We've come farther than I thought. I'm afraid we won't make it before the storm breaks."

As he struggled to keep the boat riding the waves in the high wind, the rain suddenly swept over them. He took off his coat and forced her to put it about her.

"Oh, Noel," she said, "we're being swept out to sea!" She tried to keep her voice calm.

"All we can do is run before it," he told her.

Then she said: "Noel darling, I love you! I've loved you from the

first moment I saw you! That's true!"

"Thank God for that!" he said, his eyes serious. Had he found love only to have it swept away from him by the storm?

They looked long into each other's eyes, then she leaned over and kissed him long and passionately.

"Darling!" she said.

Then, it was almost like a miracle, the wind veered.

"See, Cissy," he cried, "the wind's shifted! It's blowing us straight on to Plum Island! We'll make it!"

He was glad that Cissy sat quietly. If she was afraid she showed no sign. He hated hysterical women! But Cissy only sat there steady and calm. . . .

The wind blew an eighty mile gale and there was a terrific rain all that night and at "Shore Acres" there was something near to panic in the hearts of those who waited breathlessly for some words from the missing. At three o'clock in the morning there came a lull in the storm and hope sprang anew.

"They'll be here soon," Chet Townsend insisted, and Mimi prayed it might be so.

Tom felt certain that Noel and Cissy had sought shelter somewhere from the gale, and so they again settled down to wait.

"I'll send out the launch as soon as day breaks," he said.

Sheila was nervous and excited and showed it by getting into a rage. Mimi decided that she had drank too much.

"Fools!" she stormed. "You'd think they'd had more sense." She went on and on until Tom raged:

"Keep quiet," he said. "You'll drive us mad!" . . .

But the sun was high before they finally arrived home. The boat had been wrecked on landing at Plum Island and fishermen had taken them off when daylight came. They were tired, spent, after the long night

when they clung together, drenched by the rain. Yet Mimi, looking into Cissy's eyes saw something near to heaven there. It was Sheila, herself again after the long strain, who said in her cool, utterly cynical way:

"What will people say! You two together all night!"

"It won't matter what they say," Noel said, "for Cissy and I discovered that we loved each other! We're going to be married."

Mimi had her eyes on Sheila when he said that and saw something terrible flash in those blue eyes. She held her breath as Sheila answered:

"As bad as that?" she sneered.

Every one held their breath.

"As lovely and as sweet as that," Noel told her, his voice strangely gentle. "You see, Sheila," he went on, "every one knows how fine Cissy is, and I—well, I'm not an impatient chap."

Strange things were happening in Sheila's heart. She had wanted this man more than any man she had ever met! And he had chosen this stupid girl. She hated him! She'd make him pay. She turned to Cissy:

"So—" she said, "you are willing to marry my discarded lover!"

Then Cissy answered her quietly: "That's not true! Noel never was your lover! Never! I don't believe it!"

Noel started to speak, but before he could, Sheila cried:

"It's the truth! He was my lover!"

As she said it Tom Hamilton, who had been down to the boathouse, getting out the launch all this while, stood in the doorway. His face was terrible, his eyes staring. It was as though he had received his death blow. Noel Brooks went to him, holding out his hand:

"Tom," he said, there was something like agony in his voice, "it's not true! I never betrayed your friendship. Never!"

Sheila said nothing, only stood

shaking, her face terrible, her hands shaking. She knew she had been a fool.

"I believe you, Noel," Tom said quietly. "Sheila is crazy—or drunk."

Then Sheila cried out: "Oh, I hate you! I hate you all!" and she ran out of the sun parlor where they were.

The sun parlor's broad windows looked out on the front of the house and they saw her rush out the door and into Tom's car that had stood there waiting all night, if any message had come to them. She started off with a roar and Chet cried:

"Oh, my God, she'll kill herself!"

It was hardly more than a minute, as they still stood there, that they heard a terrific crash.

"She's hit the stone piling at the gate," Tom cried. . . .

Like that, in a flash, and Sheila Hamilton's gorgeous beauty was wiped out, gone forever! A gash across the cheek distorted one blue eye, destroying the sight. Her leg was broken. . . .

It was almost a year later that Mimi told Cissy, who was on a visit from England where she now made her home with Noel:

"It's the best thing that could have happened to Sheila," Mimi said earnestly. "I mean it! She found herself—found love! Tom has been so good to her; how could she help it? She's still beautiful to him—and he loves her more than ever. But what a shame—all that glamorous beauty lost."

"How frail a thing beauty is," sighed Cissy.

"I'm not so sure of that," Mimi told her. "Mere beauty is, of course. But nothing can destroy the loveliness that comes from beauty of the soul!"

But Cissy wasn't thinking of beauty or of Sheila. She was thinking of Tom Hamilton and of love that goes on forever!

Illusion

By DORIS DRAKE

LYDIA CLARKE was dead. White and still she lay on the narrow bed in the drab little room. Up four flights you had to toil to reach the pathetic little hole in the wall which she had called home. Such a bare little room and such a pretty child, thought the police captain, his eyes taking in the scene.

The young police doctor was bending over the body, that of a young girl, pale in death but with a blonde beauty.

"Well, Doc?" questioned the captain.

"Suicide, all right," replied the doctor gruffly. "Drank enough of the stuff to kill six people, I guess."

The captain picked up the empty bottle. "Poor kid," he said. . . .

The girls in the office were excited. They clustered around the paper.

"Wonder why she did it?" queried Belle Halliday, a smartly dressed blonde.

"Some man, of course," replied Madge Santley, the old maid who had always been willing to take a chance on matrimony, but whose chance had never come. "Why else do girls commit suicide?"

"Yes, and guess who." This from Eunice Grace, a pert young miss who always knew the latest scandal.

"Oh, not Stainer," said Belle.

"That would be too ridiculous. She was only playing him for a sucker."

"Oh, yeah?" said Eunice.

The girl was sitting on the edge of the bed. She looked very young and very sweet in her pink silk pyjamas.

Her hair was blonde and bobbed, her face a beautiful oval with carmine lips and wide blue eyes. Her companion stood near her smoking a cigarette, as he watched her with the eyes of desire. He was a tall man with a refined sensitive face, slightly gray at the temples. He also was wearing pyjamas.

She looked up at him and smiled, raising her face provocatively to his.

"It won't be long now," she said.

"Lydia, dear," he said as he stooped towards her, "it seems almost real—just as if you and I—"

Her soft, white arm in its silken covering stole around his neck.

"I know," she said, as she kissed him passionately on the lips.

Came the sound of heavy footsteps outside the door. The handle rattled. Some one banged on the panels heavily.

"Open the door," bawled a rough voice.

"Go to hell!" shouted the man sitting on the bed and holding Lydia in a tight embrace.

A hurried conference outside. A key in the lock.

Two men and a stylishly dressed woman appeared in the room.

"So, we have caught you at last," said the woman as she took in the scene. "Who is this hussy?"

"Never mind who she is. Nobody has to know that. You have your evidence; now go ahead."

"Yeah, we have the evidence, all right," said the bigger of the two men.

* * * * *

The second marriage of John Stainer, actor-manager and man of many affairs, created quite a sensation in New York. As soon as he was legally free to do so, he had taken to himself his second wife and the nuptials had been celebrated with pomp and circumstance.

A splendid match in every way, people said. Stainer had brains and plenty of money, whilst the bride's family traced their ancestry back to the *Mayflower*.

John Stainer was reading the accounts of the wedding, in a beautiful suite in the Grand Canadian Hotel in Montreal, where the newlyweds were honeymooning, he eagerly scanned the glowing newspaper stories of the most brilliant social event of the season.

He was a striking figure in his well-cut clothes, tall and broad. His fine, expressive face glowed with satisfaction as he read and re-read the fulsome flattery of the press. *John Stainer, master-mind of the theatre, weds. John Stainer, theatrical genius, marries into New York highest society.* So ran the captions, with yards and yards of description and photographs. How pleased Mary Ellen, still sleeping in the adjoining room, would be when she read these accounts of their wedding, he thought. Such a detailed description of her gown and a full list of all the notables present, from the Grand Duke Alexander right down to that young DePeyster boy.

He grew a little sad, though, as he looked at the photograph of Mary Ellen and himself leaving the church. Surely she was beautiful, but he missed something in that exquisitely proud face. Another vision floated before his eyes. An oval face, big blue eyes, blonde bobbed hair, carmine lips raised as if for the lover's kiss.

Vacantly his eyes wandered and fixed themselves on a tiny paragraph

at the bottom of the page. At first he stared uncomprehendingly, lost in his reveries, but gradually the words took shape and sank themselves into his brain. *Young New York Girl Takes Life. Lydia Clarke Found Dead in Bed.* His face was deathly white, and, with trembling hands and knees, he read the short account of a sordid little tragedy in a drab little room. He could see her lying there white and still. The soft white arms, which had embraced him so lovingly, forever still; the beautiful blue eyes, which had gazed into his own so tenderly, closed by the grisly hand of death; the full red lips, which had brought him so much joy, bloodless and lifeless.

"Lydia," he cried in his anguish, "why did you do it? I never realized, I never thought, that you loved me really. I believed you were only playing my game, helping me to divorce my wife as we had planned. I thought the rest was just amusement for you. And all the while you really cared. You *must* have cared!"

Again the vision of her, in all her loveliness, floated before his swimming eyes.

"Yes, I cared," he heard her voice. "Nobody loved you as I did."

He staggered to his feet. He must have air. His throat was so constricted he felt he was choking. His breath came in quick, sobbing gasps. Somehow he reached the window and opened it. The roar of the street came up to him from below, far below. How small the people and vehicles looked. What a long way down.

He leaned far out, sobbing brokenly. Before his vision those deep blue, trustful eyes, that rosebud mouth, that appealing beautiful face. "Lydia—Lydia!" he cried. Stretching out his arms as if to imprison that vision, he lurched through the window and fell to the pavement many floors below.



A Woman's Place

By JERROLD BEIM

IT was six o'clock. Philip Weston stood behind his desk, a tall, lean figure, wearing a perfectly tailored double-breasted suit, the deep crimson carnation in his button-hole just beginning to wilt. He had strong features, and the touch of gray that winged his hair added a distinguished note to his good looks. He stood there, his brows puckered, his deep set eyes puzzled, as he fin-

gered the telephone on his desk, trying to decide whom to call, Madeleine or Thelma.

Certainly he knew other men in just such a position. Men who, when their day's work was done, had to make this decision. He wondered if they went through such emotional conflict, trying to divide their loyalty between two women.

He could visualize Madeleine at

home now. She was probably resting on the *chaise longue* in her room before dressing. She would be wearing something utterly feminine, a soft, flowing *négligé* perhaps girded with a bright sash. Her dark head would be resting among the lace and satin pillows. She would be napping, in all probability, her long, silky lashes gracing her cheeks, her mouth bright, perfect, curved into a faint suggestion of a smile. He had come upon her in just such a position many times. He would lean over then, kiss those lips. The lashes would flicker, the smile deepen, and she would open her eyes, holding her hands out to him, glad that he had come home to her.

But he could visualize Thelma now too. Thelma would be in the little apartment he had set up for her. Bathing perhaps, just stepping out of the tub and powdering her slim, white body. She was so different from Madeleine. White, shining, while Madeleine was of a dark, more lustrous beauty. Thelma's hair was gleaming gold, her eyes deep blue, petalled by golden lashes, her features delicate, fragile. Thelma would be putting on some attractive, cool frock, walking about the apartment, straightening things, getting dinner ready, in hopes that Philip was coming to her tonight. . . .

Two women waiting for him! One of them Madeleine, unaware of the other's existence. Thelma knew of Madeleine, of course. Knew of her with a jealous hate. Knew of her as Philip's wife. Knew that if it weren't for Madeleine, Philip would be hers completely. She resented having to share him with Madeleine, yet she never expressed her resentment to Philip. She felt that if she waited, was patient, Philip would realize that she meant more to him than his wife ever could. Then he would divorce Madeleine and marry her.

Philip had considered divorcing Madeleine. He had lain beside his wife in bed, unable to sleep, staring into the infinite darkness, thinking of Thelma alone in the apartment, wanting him as much as he wanted her. He would look at the beautiful, dark woman beside him. She meant nothing to him now, nothing, he tried to tell himself. Once he had loved her. Yes, there was no denying the truth. Once she had meant everything in life to him. He remembered their first meeting, so many years back. He had been a young lawyer then, working for her father, John Farrar. He had come to her home to do some work there with his employer when Madeleine had come into the room. Their eyes had met, and in that moment something had ignited between them, sparks pouring into their very souls. Mr. Farrar had introduced his daughter to the young lawyer and then had been called away, leaving them alone for a few moments. They had talked—about nothing: the weather, a play they had both seen, a book they had read, but they were ever aware of the current between them, a current that would carry them together to one ultimate end. Two months later he had married Madeleine Farrar. Some friends laughingly accused him of deliberately setting out to make a good match. But, truthfully, he had married her because he loved her. That her father made him an equal partner and then on his death left him everything, had nothing to do with his love for Madeleine.

That love had survived through many years—until he had met Thelma Pearson! Then he realized that it had not been much of a love at all. He met Thelma, casually, at a party, had discovered that she worked in his building, was a stenographer for the insurance firm on the floor above. He had asked her

to lunch and she accepted the invitation. He asked her again and again, and then came the day when he called Madeleine for the first time saying that he would not be home that night.

Philip and Thelma drove out to the shore for dinner. Later, they rode in his car, speeding along the curve of the sea. He parked on some high cliff. The waves beat on the shore below them. He stared at the girl beside him. The moon was shining on her hair, making it look more radiantly golden than ever. His arms wound about her, pressing her to him.

"I love you, Thelma," he said. "I never knew what love meant until I met you. I want you, Thelma—want you—"

"I love you too, Philip," she replied simply, lifting her long lashes to him.

He pressed his lips on hers. She clung to him, seeming so small in his hold, a little creature, so soft, so sweet, so lovely! He could feel her heart pounding against his, as if she were frightened. . . . They stayed overnight at a funny little seaside hotel, the moon streaming into the room as if lighting their love with a celestial glow.

"I'm late for work," Thelma exclaimed in the morning. "I'll lose my job."

Philip laughed. The poor child looked so worried and upset about it. His arms encircled her as he drew her down to him.

"Don't you worry," he said. "You don't have to work again. I'll get you an apartment in town, and give you a regular allowance, and—"

His lips sought hers with a sudden fierceness. She clung to him madly, in breathless ecstasy.

"Oh, Philip—I love you so! I'll do whatever you say." . . .

So his life, his time was now divided. Two women, Thelma and

Madeleine, both waiting for him, but he could only go to one. He had not seen Madeleine for two nights. He would have to go home this evening. Yet when he came to dial the number, he called Madeleine. He felt he could not spend an evening alone with her, wanting Thelma so, knowing that she wanted him too.

"Hello—" Madeleine's voice came to him, soft, husky.

"Hello, darling, this is Philip. I called to tell you that I'm swamped with work again. I'll probably have to stay in town."

"Oh—" For a moment he felt a pang of conscience at the disappointment in her voice. "You'll surely be home tomorrow then, dear. I'm planning a dinner party."

"I'll surely be home tomorrow night. Good-by, darling."

"Good-by, Philip."

He hung up quickly, afraid that he might change his mind and go home. He stood there for a few moments. How long would Madeleine be satisfied with his excuses, his staying away? Some men divided their lives between two women this way forever. He wondered if he would be able to, wanted to. . . .

Thelma greeted him, fresh, radiant, more beautiful than ever. He took her in his arms, the sweet scent of her hair wafting to him, her body melting to his.

"Darling—" she broke away. "I've just put the chops on. I'd better see to them." . . .

He and Thelma had dinner, a delicious meal, and then, leaving the dishes for the maid, they went into the living-room. He stretched out on the sofa, his head on Thelma's lap. She ran her fingers through the dark tangle of his hair, smiling down at him.

"I was so afraid—that you might not come tonight. And I did want you so."

He smiled up at her. "I belong

here, Thelma," he said. "This is really my home. I'm going to ask Madeleine for a divorce." The words just came out, but he realized later that he would have had to come to this decision sooner or later. He could not go on this way. He wanted Thelma for all time, his forever!

"I—I'm so glad, darling," Thelma said. She tried not to reveal the excitement in her voice, the terrific pounding of her heart. Now she was happy that she had waited, had not made the suggestion herself.

"We'll marry as soon as we can, darling—stay right on here. Then, then I'll be able to spend every night with you."

He took her in his arms, his lips brushing her hair. She smiled as he saw her eyes glisten with tears. He kissed the tears away.

"I'm such a baby," she said. "Crying—when I'm so happy!" . . .

The next night he went home to Madeleine's. On the drive out he remembered the dinner party. He would go through with that first, then tell Madeleine, then ask for the divorce.

"Darling—it's been such an age!" She was waiting for him, stretched out on the *chaise longue*. He sat beside her, kissing her. Strange, how she left him so unmoved now, meant so little to him after Thelma.

"You look tired," she put her hand to his face. "I'm sorry I'm having a party tonight. I'd love to call it off, so we could be alone."

He smiled wanly rising. "I'd better dress!"

He went to his room, closing the door behind him. It would be hard telling her. Yet he had to. He could not let matters go on this way. Tonight, right after the party, when the last guest had departed, he would go to her, speak to her, be honest with her.

Much to his surprise he enjoyed himself at the party. But then he

remembered that Madeleine's parties were always successes. She mixed the right people together, always had some one of particular interest, so that the conversation was witty, entertaining. He watched her as she presided at the table, smiling, gracious, undeniably beautiful, in a gown of glowing satin. He saw Howard Gordon, one of the young men, staring at her with frank admiration. Perhaps she would marry again, find happiness too.

"I'm so tired," Madeleine smiled at him as the last guest departed. She slipped her arm through his and they started upstairs. They passed a mirror on the landing and he saw their reflections. Madeleine and himself. It was a familiar reflection, he had often seen themselves together this way in the mirror. They made a striking couple, people always said.

He went to her room later, wearing a brocaded dressing-gown. She was standing as he entered, having just slipped into her nightgown. It was of soft, peach-color silk, clinging to her supple figure. She smiled a soft welcoming smile, thinking he had come to her.

"Madeleine—" he hesitated.

"Yes, Philip?" she looked at him, her eyes meeting his with a firm gaze.

"Madeleine—I want a divorce!"

She did not answer him at once. Her lips parted, her eyes widened, not quite believing she had heard rightly.

"A divorce—?" she repeated the words in a hollow voice.

"Yes, Madeleine, a divorce. You see, I—I love some one else."

She blinked her eyes, her lips trembled for a moment, her fingers curled into tight fists.

"Another girl, Philip," her voice was tense, strained. "Who is she?"

"Thelma Pearson," he answered.

"How—how long has this been going on, Philip?" She faced him.

"A few months." Somehow he had to avoid her eyes, looking at a book on the table, a pattern of the rug, anywhere but at her.

"A few months—then all this work you've been telling me about—it wasn't true—you just wanted to stay away." He did not answer her, could not think of what to say. "And what do you expect me to do?" she asked him quietly.

"I—I'd like you to get a divorce, Madeleine, in Reno. I don't want Thelma's name dragged into this."

"Of course," she smiled wanly. "I won't cause you a scandal, you know me better than that. But Philip, are you sure you want to marry her? Perhaps this will all pass, perhaps she really doesn't mean more to you than—"

"She means everything to me, Madeleine." His eyes met hers then. She bit her lip, nodding, tears welling in her eyes.

"I see, Philip. I'm sorry. I love you!"

"I'm sorry too, Madeleine. But—it has to be this way." He turned then, and left. He did not stay at the house any longer, but packed a bag, drove to town, and to Thelma that night.

The wire came to his office. He stood reading it, staring at it. "Divorce granted this morning. Good luck. Madeleine." Divorced, free, free to marry Thelma! Madeleine out of his life forever. He went to the apartment immediately. Thelma was waiting for him.

He showed her the wire, for they had been expecting it that day.

"It was splendid of her, wasn't it?" Thelma said, holding the yellow slip of paper in her hand. "Yes, she was a brick," Philip said. "But, well, she's out of our lives now. Are you ready, darling? This is our wedding-day."

They were married at the City Hall and then left for a trip to a

southern beach. The days that followed were glorious. They bathed in the sea, stretched out in the sand, toasting in the sun. Thelma looked ravishing, more beautiful than ever, in a yellow slip of a suit, her skin a golden hue. Evenings they danced, drove about the country, visited a gambling casino, and even won a little money. Two weeks, certainly the most wonderful weeks in his life, sped by. Finally they had to return home, Philip back to his office. . . .

Six o'clock! No excuse to think of these days, no mental anxiety as to whom to call. He went straight to the apartment where Thelma awaited him! He no longer had to divide his time. Theirs was a perfect marriage, he felt sure of that, loving Thelma more every day, finding her sweeter, dearer all the time. They formed a circle of a few friends, but still preferred to be alone a good deal, still fresh to each other, still finding new things in each other to delight them.

One day he saw Madeleine's picture in the paper. It was almost a year after their divorce. Those dark eyes stared out at him. He had hurt her, he knew that, and he was sorry. She had left for Europe immediately after the divorce and this article stated that she was now returning. She had always wanted to go abroad, even in the early days of their marriage, but he had never been able to get away from the office long enough to make the trip worth while. How well things turned out for both of them! . . .

"Philip!"

He had been walking down the street a few days later when the voice hailed him. A familiar voice—he stopped short. He looked at the woman at his side. It was Madeleine! Dark—those same dark eyes staring at him in that same intent manner.

"Why, Madeleine!" He could feel the color rising to his face as if he were embarrassed at meeting her. "I did not know you were in town."

"I just got in Philip. I actually flew on the *Hindenburg*." She stared at him with unabashed frankness and delight. She seemed so poised and assured, without a trace of embarrassment.

"You—you look simply marvelous, Madeleine," he said. She did, too. Something seemed changed about her, she seemed to be filled with a new vitality. She laughed, a deep, husky laugh. He had forgotten about that laugh, it was one of the things about her that had first intrigued him.

"It's the clothes," she said. "I'm afraid I've spent most of your generous settlement on them. But I had a marvelous time!"

"I'm glad of that. I'd like to hear about it. Have you had lunch yet. I—I'm on my way to mine now. Can't we get together?" He did not know what prompted him to ask her, but the words were out before he realized it.

"No—" she hesitated.

"Come, then, we'll lunch together and you can tell me all about it."

Funny how a man could forget about a woman. Had Madeleine always been so lovely? He sat opposite her at the table, staring at her as though she might have been a stranger, some woman to whom he had just been introduced. Noticing things about her that he had never noticed before. Were her eyes always set so far apart, giving her such a piquant appearance? Had her lips always curved so voluptuously, glistening so temptingly? Of course, as she said, it might have been the clothes, but she had always dressed smartly, always had a flare for the right thing. He'd like to see Thelma in a hat like that. Though the color would never do for Thelma's pale,

blonde hair. He wondered if he really preferred blondes.

"Just think," Madeleine said, "It's been over a year since we last saw each other. I hope it has been a happy year for you—and Thelma."

"Oh, yes, very happy," he said.

But suddenly he seemed to see the past year in retrospect. Outside of the first few months of ecstatic joy, had it been so different than his life with Madeleine had been? They spent few evenings alone together these days, always going about, playing cards, Thelma having developed a sudden liking for bridge. He could not honestly say he was as happy and content as he had hoped to be.

"My goodness," Madeleine exclaimed, "just look at the time! I really must be going. I have a business appointment. You see, I may develop into a business woman."

"Really, Madeleine. What's up?"

"I may put what is left of the settlement into a dress shop. The Gorman Shop, perhaps you've heard of it."

"Yes," Philip said, nodding his head. "I believe they are supposed to be a very good firm."

"I'm tired of traveling," Madeleine smiled. "I need something to keep me busy—and I always did like clothes."

"I certainly wish you luck, Madeleine." They arose from the table and went out to the street.

"Remember me to Thelma," Madeleine said, giving Philip a gloved hand. "And it was splendid to see you again."

He held her hand, staring at her, until she withdrew it from his hold.

"Good-by," she said, with a quiet smile.

"Good-by." He watched her as she walked down the street. He turned then, on his way back to the office. Funny, meeting her, lunching with her again. He had really enjoyed himself, enjoyed her company. Made-

leine was certainly a beautiful woman.

He did not mention his meeting with Madeleine to Thelma. He forgot about it until several days later and then thought it would be peculiar to tell of it so much later. Yet he found himself thinking of Madeleine with annoying frequency. After all, why should he be so concerned about her? Actually worrying about her. Wondering how she was getting along in her shop, if she had enough money, if she were working too hard.

He was walking down the street on his way home from the office when he found himself passing the Gorman Shop. This was the shop Madeleine had spoken of. He paused at the entrance as if glancing in the window, and he saw Madeleine inside, waiting on a customer, smiling, gracious, charming. He appeared to be occupying himself with the array of gowns displayed in the window until the customer left, and then he went inside.

"Philip!" Madeleine came toward him, hand outstretched. "This is a surprise."

"I wanted to see how you are getting on," he glanced about the shop. "Nice place, isn't it?" He noticed the softly draped walls, the attractive arrangement of furniture and merchandise.

"A little too nice, I'm afraid," Madeleine laughed. "Scares the customers away, business hasn't been very good."

"I'm sorry to hear that." He saw the salesgirl putting white cloths over the racks. "Closing up?"

"Yes,—it's after six."

"So it is," he hesitated a moment. "You look a little tired, Madeleine."

She smiled, brushing a wisp of hair from her forehead. "I've been working hard."

"I—" the words came without forethought. "How about having din-

ner with me tonight? I'm staying in town, anyway."

She did not reply for a moment, but looked at him peculiarly, "Why,—all right, Philip. I'd love to! Wait until I get my things."

She came out, looking ravishing in a black coat and a black off-the-face hat that accentuated the depths of her eyes. They went to a quiet restaurant, a place they had frequented years ago. He phoned Thelma from there.

"—I was on my way home, darling, when I ran into an old friend," he said. "I'm having dinner with him. Do you mind, darling? It may mean my staying in town overnight."

"All right, dear. I'll go over to Edna Wilson's—she called me for a game."

He hung up, feeling ashamed of himself for a moment. He might have told the truth, said he met Madeleine, and was having dinner with her. Surely there was nothing wrong about that. They were, more or less, just old friends. But Thelma might not understand—wives were funny.

After dinner, he went with Madeleine to her apartment. The place reflected her exquisite taste. He recognized some of the furnishing from their old home. He sank into a chair, a big lounge chair that he had always been fond of.

"I'm glad you like it, Philip," she smiled. She sat opposite him, after changing into a *négligé*, one of the lacy things she always wore, and she looked beautiful, its creamy tones blending with her skin, its scarlet girdle matching the brilliant color of her lips. "I don't know if I will be able to keep this apartment up, though," she said. "Not if business continues as it has been."

"Madeleine," Philip leaned forward, his eyes serious, "you must let me help you. Perhaps alimony would have been wiser than the set-

tlement. I hate to see you have to work as you do."

She smiled wanly, opened an onyx box, took a cigarette from it.

"That's awfully nice of you Philip, but I couldn't accept anything more—"

He flicked his lighter and held the flame to her. "Your rent, then, Madeleine, at least, let me pay your rent."

"We'll see." She laughed, that low, intriguing laugh. "Let's not argue about it now, perhaps business will take a turn for the better."

At twelve he decided to go. He was going to stay over at a hotel. Madeleine went to the door with him.

"Good night, Philip."

"Good night, Madeleine. I—I enjoyed myself so much." He was so very close to her. The scent of her hair wafted to him, a lost, familiar scent. He glanced down at her, the rising swell of her breast, the soft curves of her body, familiar, yet strange to him, it had been so long—"Madeleine—" he had not meant to do it, but his arms wound about her. He crushed her to him, claiming her again, kissing her. Madeleine! He had forgotten how lovely she was, how soft her lips, how warm and dear her body pressed against his. His hat fell from his hand to the floor. He did not pick it up until on his way out the next morning. . . .

Then Philip began staying in town several nights each week. He was helping Madeleine with the books in her shop, trying to straighten out her affairs, trying to help her run things more efficiently. He even put some money into the shop. When he phoned Thelma that he was working he did not feel so guilty. After all, it was work. Several times he called her from Madeleine's apartment. He did not see the slow smile that would creep over Madeleine's face as she listened to him. Listened to him

offer the same excuses he had once offered her. . . .

"Madeleine, do you know your hair has an almost purplish glint in this light?" he said one evening as they sat opposite each other. "It's lovely!"

"I thought you admired blondes, Philip," she said, unable to resist the remark, but smiling as she spoke.

Philip smiled back, lowering his eyes for a moment, then looking up, he said:

"I guess it was all a mistake for us to get a divorce, Madeleine. I love you, always have and always will, I realize that now. I'll tell Thelma. We'll re-marry. Other couples have done it—"

Madeleine arose then, walking toward the window. He watched her as she stood there, tall, stately, lovely, silhouetted against the pane, her fingers clutching at the shade cord. She turned to him suddenly, leaning against the sill.

"Philip, I love you, but I don't want to marry you. I don't want to be your wife."

"But why—?"

She smiled again. "I like my freedom, I guess. My work—my few hours with you. Let's not talk about it any more." She laughed coming toward him, standing before him and his arms encircling her. She ruffled his hair. "You're such a silly boy, Philip," she said half aloud, half to herself. . . .

She watched him from the window as he left the apartment the next morning. Philip, tall, good-looking, dear to her. He looked up, smiled at her, waved his hand. Perhaps she would give up the business shortly. It was so tiring. And let him pay the rent and give her an allowance. But not marry him again. She was much happier this way than she had ever been before. She would so much rather hear him telephone those six o'clock calls, than be the one to receive them.

It's Love Alone

By LOUISE LANE



IT WAS the sort of boat that took almost ten days to get across the ocean, that was not in the least interested in speed records or even in strict adherence to schedule. It ambled along pleasantly as if it had all the time in the world and was in no particular hurry to get to its destination. It was a small boat and a sturdy one, comfortably if not luxuriously appointed, and the people who traveled it were mostly the sort who loved the sea and who had

leisure to appreciate the bracing advantages of a long voyage.

Enid would have hated it, Bryce Langdon thought, grinning a little as he leaned against the rail so close above the water and watched the gray waves go past. Enid traveled on super liners, in expensive suites that were furnished more like hotel apartments than ship staterooms, with passenger lists that read like pages from the *Social Register* or the *Almanac de Gotha*. Enid trav-

eled luxuriously, fashionably always, and the way that she traveled was typical of her progress through life.

Floating palaces were all very well in their place, but little ships like this, smelling faintly of their cargo and strongly of the sea, brought back to Bryce Langdon, New England born and bred, nostalgic remembrance of boyhood summers spent happily along the coast of Maine and old fishing vessels riding at anchor in the harbor with nets hung out to dry in the strong summer sunlight.

Smoking comfortably now, savoring the keen salt air, Bryce congratulated himself anew on the circumstances that had made it possible for him to travel this slow way home.

He had crossed swiftly and smoothly on the *Normandie* two weeks ago, and had flown by chartered plane from Southampton to London for conferences with various British bankers. His business with them had consumed less time than he had anticipated, and he had found himself with almost a week of unaccustomed leisure at his disposal.

He was tired, he'd realized suddenly, sitting alone in his London hotel. Those long sessions of matching his shrewd Yankee wits against the solid astuteness of the Britishers had taken more out of him than he'd known at the time. He needed a rest and a change, and here, unexpectedly, was the chance to take them. Somehow, the thought of idling away his time at some fashionable English watering resort did not appeal to him in the least, was, in fact, violently distasteful. It was then that the idea had come to him of taking a slow boat home.

The prospect of long, lazy days at sea, informal dress, informal manners, had appealed to him enormously. On an impulse he had canceled his return passage reservation made for the following week on one

of the big fast liners and booked on this small cabin boat instead.

He had not had so much leisure in years in which to take stock of himself, as it were, Bryce thought, puffing reflectively upon his pipe. It was a good thing for a man to take time out occasionally in order to evaluate his pattern for living. His wasn't much of a pattern, he knew, and he wondered now, not for the first time, why it was that life had somehow gone stale to his taste.

He was not a romanticist. He was a matter-of-fact, American business man, some years past first youth; and yet, sometimes of late, looking about him at those of his contemporaries who seemed most happily settled in lives less prosperous, less crowded than his own, he had wondered a little wistfully just what it was precisely that he was missing, and what contentment really meant. Certainly his parents had known it, and there had been nothing in the least dramatic about the pattern of their lives.

He had been born in a little Massachusetts town and he had become a Wall Street banker whose judgments were deferred to and whose word was quoted internationally. He was considered brilliant. He was forty-two years old and he had lived a man's full, well-rounded life. He had gone to Harvard, he had married, he had fought for his country in France, he had fathered a child, he had worked hard, and, finally, he had achieved a success far more spectacular than he had ever dreamed of achieving in his frugal New England boyhood. . . . All the sought after, the costly things of life were his. Strange that he valued them so little.

He thought of his enormous Long Island estate with its sunken gardens, its swimming-pool, its terraces and its great formal house; and he thought of the brittle, fashionable society in which he and Enid moved,

and he thought of Enid, as she was and as she used to be, and of how he and she had lost each other somehow down the way of the hurrying years.

Enid had been a pretty blonde girl with a complexion of rose and cream, wide, wondering blue eyes, a curved red mouth, and a soft, hesitant way of speaking. She was a pretty woman still, with smartly cropped, carefully tinted golden hair, a red mouth that time had hardened faintly, a voice that had grown just a little petulant, and eyes that were as vividly blue as they had been on that June day in Nineteen-eighteen when he and she had walked down an aisle of drawn swords, past rows of tall delphinium and pink Madonna lilies, to be married in the sunlight of a New England garden. War wedding, Nineteen-eighteen—blend on sentiment and patriotism and hysteria. There were a good many of them in those days.

He remembered the olive drab of his groomsmen's uniforms, the sun glinting on their shoulder bars and on their shining new swords, the pretty pastel frocks worn by Enid's excited bridesmaids, and Enid herself, white veiled and mysteriously lovely, beside him. But he could no more evoke the bright felicity of that far June day than he could evoke the warmth, the high-hearted hopes of his own lost youth.

He and Enid had shared some pleasant years after his return from France. That they had drifted so far apart eventually was perhaps as much his fault as hers. He had not tried hard enough to make her happy. Business had engrossed him, prosperity had absorbed both his time and his interests.

There had been one year in the beginning of their estrangement when he had been actively unhappy. He had asked Enid tentatively then if she would not like a divorce. They

were still young with long lives to be lived before them, it might be possible to rectify their mistakes and build anew on sounder ground in other, happier marriages, he had offered. The custody of the child could be shared between them. Carol had been three then, an amusing, malleable little lump of babyhood.

Enid had been horrified, indignant at the suggestion. She had said primly that she did not believe in divorce, that marriage was a sacred contract not to be broken lightly. He had not pressed the issue. It had not seemed particularly important at the time. It had mattered less and less as the years went by. Enid was a charming blonde woman who presided over his home, entertained his friends, made the conventional wifely gestures toward him in public, and to whom he had nothing of the least importance to say in the last twelve years they had shared.

She was emotionally cold to him, but then she had always been so. She was not of a passionate nature. In the beginning, he had attributed her lack of response to a certain maidenly modesty and had tried as best he knew to teach her differently. Later, when he had ceased to care for her, he had simply shrugged and moved out of her room to one of his own. She had been greatly relieved, he knew, by the change. He was virile and human, though, and there had, of course, been occasional women with whom he had had trivial affairs of brief duration. But there had been no one who had stirred him very deeply, or who had made the struggle for freedom seem worthwhile.

He knew that Enid was vain and shallow and flirtatious, but he did not believe that she had ever been actually unfaithful to her marriage vows. Still, he did not know. A man never could tell about a woman. He would no more dream of asking her

than he would dream of trying to sleep with her again. What she did was of no moment to him as long as she did not disgrace his name. He had no special affection for her nowadays. It amused him a little to think that he had ever had.

Carol, his daughter, was the only person in the world now who was of tremendous importance to him. And, suddenly, her little lovely, laughing face with its frame of short, dark hair, her eager, happy little voice were vivid in his memory. Carol was growing up—she had been born the year after his return from France. Why, Carol was grown up! That thought startled him a little, made his own approaching middle age seem so definite. Carol was the pride of his heart. She had always seemed so much more his child than Enid's. Fearless and direct, good at games and sports, pretty, engaging and sweet, she was the kind of daughter all men dream of having.

Carol would like this boat, he decided. She had warmth and enthusiasm and a genuine liking for people. She made friends easily, and she would have fraternized with her fellow passengers with whole-hearted enjoyment.

They were not a particularly exciting lot on the whole, as Bryce recalled them from last night's dinner. Homeward-bound school teachers, most of them, returning from hard-earned vacations, he supposed—a few professorial-looking men, and one rather extraordinarily good-looking woman whom he had not been able to catalogue exactly. He had caught only a glimpse of her across the width of the dining-room the night before. She had dined alone at a table for two, and had left the room long before he had finished his meal. She had not appeared at breakfast. He wondered with fleeting curiosity what she was doing on a boat like this. She looked worldly

and expensive, and as if her tastes might run to more luxurious appointments than this ship had to offer.

At this moment in his reflection, he looked up suddenly and saw her coming toward him down the deck. She was walking with light and swaying grace, and her face was lifted to the wind as though she loved its salty freshness. She was, Bryce thought swiftly, without doubt the best-dressed and the best-looking woman on board. Her brown tweed coat, collared with some light-colored fur, was indubitably correct and chic, and the brown felt hat with its upsweeping brim was certainly a great deal more than just another hat. As she drew nearer, he saw that she was a white-skinned brunette and that her eyes were dark gray and beautiful. There was about her that look of unmistakable authenticity which goes with rank and good breeding.

She paused a few feet away from him and leaned her arms against the rail. Her profile, he saw, was lovely, and her expression completely tranquil, although there was a hint of sadness about her mouth. On an impulse, he spoke to her.

"Nothing like a tug like this for the real feel of the sea, is there?"

She turned. Her smile was friendly without being in the least provocative. She said:

"I don't know. I've never traveled on a ship like this before."

Her voice was low and beautifully modulated. It was a warm, rich voice whose nationality he could not quite identify. It had none of the crisp inflections of an Englishwoman's voice, and yet it was not wholly American. He thought possibly that she might be Australian. He said, moving toward her: "May I offer you a cigarette and introduce myself at the same time? I'm Bryce Langdon of New York."

"Thank you very much." She accepted a cigarette from his case. After a moment's hesitation, she said almost diffidently: "I am Mrs. Denton."

He bowed. "I noticed you last night at dinner."

"Did you?" She smiled a little.

He said: "You wore a black frock and you dined alone. You left the dining-saloon much too soon!"

She lifted her shoulders a little. "How observant you are!" Her voice was languid.

He felt pleased and amused and interested—the way a man feels at the beginning of a new flirtation. After all, there was a whole week at sea ahead of him, and she was of his own world and spoke his language, besides being an extremely pretty woman. He regarded her more intently, and said wrinkling his forehead a little:

"At the risk of being considered bromidic, may I tell you that your face is most hauntingly familiar to me? I'm sure we've met somewhere—either in London or in New York!"

Something like a shadow moving across the sun, clouded her serene face briefly, but her voice when she spoke again was calm and unhurried:

"Perhaps,—it's not unlikely. We may have met in London or in the country,—never in New York. I've lived in England fifteen years. Now I am coming home!"

"Then you're an American expatriate!" he exclaimed triumphantly. "That explains your voice!"

She said quietly: "I was born in Boston, but I have traveled a great deal."

He was delighted. The fact that she, too, was New England born gave him an unexpected footing. He said, smiling:

"Then we're fellow citizens. Massachusetts was my birthplace."

He began to talk to her then with warm enthusiasm of elm-shaded

streets in little New England towns, of green New England summers and white New England winters; and she listened with the hunger that is peculiar to all those New England born whose hearts, no matter how far they may roam, are forever rooted in its soil.

Intimacy flowers swifter on ship-board than on land. Time is measured by other yardsticks. Years are bridged as lightly as the passing of a moon. By the third day out, Bryce Langdon and Janice Denton were calling each other by their first names. They were together constantly, tramping the windy decks, exploring the ship from bow to stern, shunning cheerfully the companionship of their fellow passengers who regarded them with mingled disapproval and interest.

"They suspect a romance," Bryce said once gayly.

He had told her in the beginning that he was married. He had spoken warmly of Carol and briefly of Enid. Janice Denton had seemed politely interested in his confidences but not unduly curious, which was, he thought, merely another evidence of her excellent breeding.

Of Janice herself he learned little other than that she was a widow, alone in the world. She had distant cousins in America, she had told him, but no one to whom she was bound closely by any ties of blood or friendship.

Bryce thought her charming. She was a woman of poise and grace and intelligent sophistication. She was a woman to whom a man could talk freely and succinctly. He liked the quickness of her wit, the swiftness of her comprehension; and yet there was never a moment that he was not physically aware of her as a woman, slim, fragrant and desirable. Had she been a soft-eyed, light-hearted blonde, he would have welcomed an affair with her; but Janice

Denton was not the type of woman to whom a man proposes an illicit relationship. She was too finely constituted, too valuable an individual for anything less than the best that a man had to offer. That he would fall seriously in love with her was a possibility that had not occurred to Bryce, attracted as he was to her beauty and her charm.

Night after night, wrapped in heavy coats they sat together on an upper deck while the ship ploughed steadily through dark waters and above them tranquil stars shone palely. In her presence, he knew a sense of well-being, of stimulation and of deep, good peace; but not until their last night aboard ship did he recognize the true state of his feelings about her. It was almost midnight, and the deck where they sat was completely deserted. Bryce said out of his deep content:

"It's been a swell trip. I'm sorry we're landing in the morning."

"I'm sorry, too," Janice said lightly. "But most things come to an end, sooner or later, like voyages and shipboard friendships and all such trivial things!"

In the darkness, he leaned over and put his hand on hers lying on the arm of her chair.

"But our friendship isn't coming to an end! Of course, we're seeing each other again—and often, I hope!" His voice was serious.

The hand beneath his moved a little, but her voice was even and quiet when she answered him:

"I—think not, Bryce."

"But in God's name, why not, Janice?" he protested, half angrily. "We're not children. We're two adult people who know our way about, who like and respect each other enormously. What possible harm can come from our seeing each other whenever we want to?"

"It's better to say good-by tomorrow," she said steadily.

"Why?" His voice was sharp with query.

"Because— A woman's reason, perhaps! Can it whatever you like!" Her own voice strove for lightness and failed somehow to achieve it.

He leaned nearer, said deliberately: "Is it because I happen to be married to some one else, Janice?"

He heard the light indrawn breath she took, felt the pulse throbbing in the palm of her hand.

"Not—entirely."

His hand tightened its hold. He bent over her. In the darkness, her face was a white blur lifted to his. He said slowly, almost as if he were thinking aloud:

"No matter what happens, I cannot wholly give you up!" and knew suddenly, clearly that this was so, knew in that moment that the thing that all men look for all their lives was his at last. His heart began to pound exultantly. Out of a badly jumbled world, he had found her—the woman meant for him since life began. He said: "Janice, Janice!" and put his arms around her tightly.

With both hands against his chest, with her head thrown back, she held him off, straining away from him.

"Don't, Bryce, not that!"

"It's because I love you!" he said tensely. "Don't you know that, my darling? Did you think it was anything else?"

"You mustn't!" she said desperately. "I neither wanted nor expected you to love me. I am nothing that you think I am. Everything about me is spurious—even the name I call myself. Oh, let me go, Bryce, let me go!"

But he said again, deeply, passionately: "I love you! That's all that matters!"

Out of some old bitter wisdom, she answered him sadly:

"If love were only all! But it isn't, Bryce."

And he, knowing full well that this

was so, was silent momentarily. Then she drew a long quivering breath. She said:

"I want to be honest with you, Bryce, but honesty is not always easy, so try and be patient with me until I have finished."

"Tell me nothing unless you want to, my dearest," he said quickly. "The past is done."

"I want to tell you," she insisted quietly. "Listen, Bryce. There is scandal behind me and disgrace, through no fault of mine, true, but still they are linked irrevocably with the name I bear. For weeks, months, wherever I went in England, I was stared at, pointed out. I could not bear it. That's why I am going back to America, traveling on a boat like this under a different name to escape attention. Denton was my mother's maiden name, but I am Janice Colfield of the famous Colfield murder case!"

In a flash, he understood. Six months ago, the papers had been full of the Colfield trial. Reginald Colfield had been a wealthy British barrister who was found murdered in his London flat. The finger of suspicion had pointed at his wife with whom he was known to have quarreled violently on the day of his death. She it was who had summoned the police, claiming to have discovered the body upon her return at midnight from an evening at the theatre. The world in general had believed her guilty.

There had been a sensational trial, and then, on the eve before the case was to go to the jury, Colfield's cast-off mistress had shot herself, leaving behind her a complete confession of her own guilt and a set of startling revelations. Due to the fact that Colfield's accused widow had been American born, the New York press had featured the story, and Janice Colfield's lovely, sad face had been pictured time and again on the front

pages of morning papers. Bryce knew now why it was that her face had been so hauntingly familiar to him from the beginning.

Pity and compassion moved him deeply. That a woman of her fine sensibilities, her sheltered background, and her innate worth should have been subjected to the ordeal of a murder trial with all its attendant glaring publicity, its cheapness and its sensationalism, struck him as an ironic injustice of fate. It stirred his protective instincts toward her as a woman most cruelly wronged, and his deepest tenderness toward her as a beloved person unfairly hurt. His arms went swiftly around her again, his cheek was pressed into hers.

"My darling, my darling!" he murmured huskily, and held her as though he would shelter her forever from all the harshness and the whip-lashes of an unfeeling world. She rested quietly against him while he stroked her hair with little murmurs of endearment. After a long moment, he said, tilting her face to his: "All that matters on earth to me is that you and I belong. This is real. A man knows when he's found the truth. I love you, Janice,—not lightly, not for just an hour or a night or a week, but for all my life to come!"

Tears were wet upon the white face lifted to his in the dim darkness.

"And I love you, Bryce, in that way, too! With all my heart!"

His mouth found hers then, claimed it hungrily. There was all of a man's deep tenderness for the woman he honors above all others in that first kiss of his upon her lips, and there was yearning, too. He said when he let her go:

"I'll never give you up now that I've found you. I'll get free somehow, and we'll be married, go on together always!"

She said slowly then, but with quiet insistence:

"What of your obligations, Bryce? What of your daughter?"

Like cold rain falling on the warm light of a campfire, her words put out the glow. He thought of Carol whom he loved so dearly, and of his obligations as a parent. He thought of Enid, entrenched in her vanity and her selfishness, smug in her rank and security. Enid, who had not loved him for years, who had probably never loved him for an instant as this quiet woman beside him loved him now, but who would most certainly not willingly let him go, disrupt her pleasant social life, suffer in pride and prestige for the sake of anything so trivial in her estimation as his own personal happiness. He ran his fingers through his thick dark hair. He said miserably:

"God, I don't know, darling! It isn't as easy as it sounds, of course, to get free. There's Carol, who's an important, valuable individual and who mustn't be hurt. She's such a swell kid! You'd like Carol!"

"I'm sure I would," said Janice.

He went on with a kind of musing bitterness: "If I had tried to get a divorce and Enid fought it, there'd be hell to pay!"

She was silent, and he thought, against his will, but with sharply perceptive clarity, of the scandal behind her, innocent victim of circumstances though she had been. Enid, small souled, vicious in her revenge, would not, he knew, hesitate to drag out all the evidence she could find against the woman he had chosen in her place to bolster her own self-esteem. For himself and Janice, he was not afraid. They were strong, adult, self-sufficient. For them, the end would more than justify the means. But there was Carol, the core of his heart and his jealous pride. Carol who bore his name and

whose young life must not be ever so lightly smirched by any act of his, no matter how deep might run desire. Almost as if she had read his thoughts, Janice said:

"If things were different, if we had only ourselves to consider, but you have a child, Bryce,—a hostage to fortune! For her sake, you cannot afford a scandal. I cannot let you risk it!"

But at the thought of losing her, his arms tightened possessively. He said almost fiercely:

"There must be some way! I'll talk to Enid, offer her anything and everything to get a divorce. Our marriage has been a farce for years. Carol is old enough now to understand, to be shared between us. Will you wait for me, darling, until I am really free?"

Janice said, as if in dedication. "I'll wait forever. I feel tonight as if this were the only important thing that's ever happened to me, as if all the past were trivial! I love you, Bryce!"

Against her lips, he said huskily, deeply shaken: "No woman was ever so fine, so sweet! Oh, Janice, Janice!"

All about them, wind and darkness and water. Above them, the soft black canopy of skies and the tranquility of starlight. They sat with hands close clasped, wrapped in closeness of communion, now silent, now talking, while the ship ploughed steadily on through the night.

It was long past midnight when he took her in his arms at the door of her stateroom to say good night. She said with her hands upon his shoulders:

"This is our real farewell, Bryce. In the morning, I shall say good-by to you before a dozen or so people, say that it's been exceedingly nice to have known you and wish you a pleasant winter. I think, darling, that it's best that we don't try to see

each other in New York until you are more certain of your course. I shall be waiting. You can always reach me at my hotel, but until you are free, let's don't be furtive and cheap and evasive about anything as lovely as our feeling for each other. Let's just say *au revoir* until we meet again, shall we?"

He put his cheek down against her hair. He said unsteadily:

"I know now what the French mean when they say that partings are little deaths in life. Oh, sweet, how can I leave you even for a little while?"

She said softly: "For only a little while," and lifted her face to his.

He kissed her, and the thought came to him aching of the evanescence of life, the swift moving finger of time. Tonight, she was here, warm, close held in his arms. Tomorrow, they would be parted; and all at once, realization of the imminence of a long separation, the uncertainty of their future, struck him like a blow over the heart. He held her closer, kissed her with passion, with deepening longing.

She stood, trembling a little, beautiful, unresisting and unafraid. He felt the fluttering of her breasts, and, suddenly, desire rose in him like a flame rising in a night wind—a clear high flame, burning bright and fierce and true—and he said her name over and over, brokenly, yearningly, pleadingly. Her lips answered him, warm, ardent, quick beneath his own. Her arms tightened around his neck, until he knew with singing exultation that they were not to say good-by tonight, that she was not to leave him now beyond the portals of this door.

Gray light streaked a path across the room. The air blowing in through an open porthole was fresh with dawn and salty of the sea. Soon the sun would rise to color the skies

and water with its crimson glory. It would be a splendid morning. He bent his head once more and laid his lips upon the hollow of her throat. He said:

"I know now why I was born—to live this one night through!"

Her gray eyes were tender on his face. Her hand stroked his cheek. She smiled, a smile, so trusting, so sure, that, seeing, his heart slipped a little sideways in his chest.

"I must leave you now, dearest," he told her. "It's almost morning."

She pulled his head down and kissed him. "Good-by, darling."

He said quickly: "Not good-by! I shall see you on deck, of course."

And she said: "Of course!"

When he left her, she was smiling still. Her dark hair was spread fanlike across the pillow. The dawn light fell full across her face. She looked beautiful and serene and curiously untouched. Like a very young girl, he thought with a kind of aching tenderness.

He stepped quietly out into the empty corridor and made his way down to his own stateroom a few doors distant. Sleep was impossible, he knew. His whole body was singing, quickened, vitalized. His brain felt keener, cooler, nimbler. Without bothering to undress, he flung himself across the bed, arms above his head, and let remembrance surge over him.

She had been so warm, so live in his arms. She had brought him felicity beyond all imagining, and ecstasy and peace he had never known. She was all that he had ever wanted in a woman and never hoped to find. For her, a man might scale the heights, touch the skies. She was a woman in a thousand, and she was his. His! He said it over fiercely to himself.

The woman who bore his name and who was the mother of his daughter had long since forfeited her claim

on his heart. For years, he and she had lived warily upon the fringes of each other's life, sharing only the roof above their heads and the food upon their table—nothing else that mattered. Their souls and minds were worlds apart. They could never meet again.

Life with Janice would be full and satisfying. Life with Enid was empty and meaningless. Now that he knew the difference, that emptiness would be intensified a thousandfold. But Enid was his wife, and Enid was selfish and ambitious. He had no grounds for divorce, and the law was on her side. . . . The gray light grew stronger. Bryce groaned a little, and turned over on his side to shut out its brightness.

A few hours later, he stood beside her at the rail as the ship nosed its way into the harbor. She was pale, but he thought she had never been more lovely. She wore a coat he had not seen before, a beautiful, urban sort of coat—black, collared with Persian lamb. There was a close fitting turban of the fur to match, and beneath it the wings of her hair lay smooth and dark against the pallor of her cheeks.

The skyline of New York drew nearer. Sunlight shimmered dazzlingly over oily, churning waters. He put his hand over the slender gloved one that rested upon the rail. She turned and smiled up into his eyes. She said, very low:

"I am not sorry, Bryce. I shall never be sorry, even if what we've had of each other is all we are ever to have!"

"Only it isn't all, darling. We've years ahead!" He said it quickly, protestingly, against the rising tide of doubt in his own heavy heart.

Beyond the harbor, business, obligations, commitments of his own making, were waiting to absorb him. That they might eventually separate him from this woman he loved was

a possibility he could neither deny nor reject in the cool, secret recesses of his mind. It was as if his heart and his brain stood apart, warring angrily against each other. His heart cried out fiercely for the warmth, the joy that she had brought him, while the cold, hard logic of his brain denied her right to be.

Faces of people lined up along the pier were distinguishable now. Gay, excited greetings were tossed across the narrowing stretch of water. The journey was almost ended.

Bryce Langdon's mouth tightened into a hard line. Janice's beautiful, rouged mouth trembled a little, but her face had lost none of its calm.

No one met him. He had not expected to be met. It had been years since Enid had bothered to come down to either a ship's dock or a railroad station to greet him upon his return from trips; but stepping off the gangplank now on to an American pier, he was assailed by a curious remembrance of Enid's pretty, young-girl face, framed in fluffy furs, lifted in eager welcome on that day years ago when he had come home from the war. Half angrily, he put the memory from him, labelling it coldly, "Enid-as-she-used-to-be," and brought his mind back to immediacy. Janice was saying quietly:

"I have some things to declare. I don't imagine it will take long. Will you wait, or shall we say good-by now?"

"I'll wait, of course!" he said tensely. "I'll put you in a cab."

He attended to his own luggage summarily. Customs formalities were disposed of briefly. Presently, she joined him, followed by a porter with her bags. They moved through the sheds with the crowd.

It was almost over. A shipboard idyll approaching its end. He put her into a taxi, gave the driver

curtly the address of her hotel. He leaned into the window and stared at her numbly. She was an exquisitely groomed, dark-haired woman with a brave, smiling mouth and gray eyes that were as deep as mountain pools and as tender as the dawn. Last night, she had lain warm and quivering in his arms. Today, she was some one beautiful and remote whom he was seeing off to a destiny that might be forever separate from his.

He found no words to say in this last poignant moment. He felt frozen, inarticulate. The taxi driver waited impatiently. Bryce said hoarsely:

"Janice!" and put his hand out blindly in search of hers.

She said simply: "Good-by, my dear," and gently withdrew her hand.

He stepped back. The motor started noisily. The taxi slid away from the curb. She was gone!

Driving uptown to his club, Bryce Langdon stared, unseeing, out at the rush of traffic going past. Heaviness of heart, depression of spirit weighted him dully. He could not think, he could not plan ahead. There seemed no future, no past—only this present, suspended in pain.

There was a stack of mail waiting for him at the club desk. Going up in the elevator to his room, he thumbed through it swiftly and recognized Enid's fashionable, slanting handwriting upon a creamy envelope. He wondered indifferently why she was writing him now, and put the letter in his pocket, apart from the rest.

The boy put down his bags and departed. Bryce sank down in an easy chair beside a window to read his mail. From long habit, not because of any particular curiosity, he opened Enid's letter first. He read it through once incredulously, and then went back to its beginning to pore over it intently, word by word.

"My dear Bryce:

"What I have to say to you may come as a surprise and a shock. A good many years ago, you asked me half heartedly to divorce you. I refused, because I saw no reason to dissolve a marriage that was pleasant, if not particularly exciting for either of us. There was no one else whom I cared for, and, as you admitted then, there was no one who mattered greatly to you. Now, things have changed. There is some one for me—Huntley Morgan, whom I believe you have met, and I want very much to marry him as soon as I am free. Believe me, Bryce, this is not done on impulse. I have had weeks and months in which to consider it. I want to leave for Reno as soon as possible. I assume that you will not contest the divorce. Of course, we will share Carol. She understands the situation thoroughly.

"I am writing instead of waiting to discuss this with you in person, because for years, speech has been difficult and stilted between us.

"Sincerely,

"Enid."

Bryce Langdon, matter-of-fact adult, sitting there in the decorous quiet of his club bedroom with autumn sunlight pouring in warmly across a strip of carpet, felt absurdly like a small boy who had just been given a pony for Christmas, or like a prisoner set free from his bonds. He wanted to whoop, he wanted to shout. Instead, he reached out swiftly for the telephone book, and thumbed through it with fingers that trembled with eagerness for the number of a certain hotel in the Fifties. Only when the call was put through and he heard Janice's clear, quiet voice, did full realization of what had happened come to him, and with it came steadiness and the deep, singing peace of a heart that's found its home.

Marriage Isn't All

By ROBERTA M. YATES

ELVIRA WAITE saw the strange man through smoke ribbons and the shining bars of indirect lights; across a melange of lifted cocktails and smooth white backs and dinner coats—the usual melange at one of Don Macumber's cocktail parties. There sat the strange man, quite out of place in his neat blue suit and dark tie, ignored, alone, and somewhat ill at ease, on a barbaric tiger skin cubistic couch. From his pink face popped blue eyes, fixed in humble eagerness on the shifting pattern of girls and men who lounged, danced, shrilled greetings.

Elvira thought: But it isn't he who is strange. It's this mad mob. All of them were distinguished for something: money or books or beauty, or perhaps merely for going haywire in an amusing manner. But he's typical. Don would photograph him against a crazy, modern background and label him "Average Man."

Suddenly she was angry at the fun Don would make of him. She didn't know quite why.

He's the sort of man I might have married if I'd stayed in Dorchester, she thought, and a throb snatched her heart, as it always did when she remembered Dorchester, where the Waites had lived for a hundred years—honest citizens, proud of their healthy children and their virtuous women.

She made her way through the crowd to a chorus of greetings.

"Vi, you're too, too marvelous in that new champagne ad."

"Thanks for the really decent cocktails, Vi."

"Thank Don," she said. "He picked the Bacardi."

"Vi, if ever you decide to give a photographer the air and pose for a real artist—"

"I'll remember you," with a smile for the gruff, conceited artist who said it.

She arrived beside the lonely, average man.

"My name's Elvira Waite," she said, and held out her hand.

He jumped up and took the hand.

"Mine's Jim Peters. Won't you sit down? I'll see if I can get you a cocktail."

"There'll be a butler around with one soon," she said.

She thought: He doesn't know me or about me and I'm glad!

But she saw that he was almost awe stricken at the silvery slim length of her in her cocktail jacket suit, at her eyes darkly slanted, and her hair sleeked back so demurely that it was exotic. She wished perversely that she was wearing white muslin with pink roses.

"I suppose introducing yourself is the only way to meet at this place," he said nervously. "I've been here an hour and I haven't even met my host or hostess."

Elvira felt a flush mount along her throat. How could she tell him that she was his hostess—in a way? Don Macumber's unmoral, illegal hostess, feeling her New England conscience turn over in its grave, as she looked at Jim Peters' homely, honest face.

"Is that Macumber, over there by the piano?"

"Yes, that's he."

She looked at Don's head, raised above the crowd. His hair that would never stay put; the faunish mirth in his handsome face. She received, for a moment, his secret smile that made her want to draw him into her arms and cradle him there, with all his stormy moods and wild dreams. That smile had throttled her heritage from the moral Waites.

"He's about the best photographer in the world, isn't he? I mean arty, as well as advertising."

"He is indeed," said Elvira loyally. How Don would laugh at that naïve remark, and suddenly she was sick of Don's laughter at all things naïve, or innocent, or wholesome. She turned back to Jim Peters. "How did you happen to come?" she asked.

"Fellow named Random brought me. His father's in shoes and so am I."

"And so am I," she said, puzzled, staring at her silver sandals.

Jim Peters laughed in big ho-ho's, slapping his knee.

"That's a good one! I mean he makes shoes. That's what I do. I have a shoe factory in Chicago. I guess that seems funny to you. A plain business man in this arty crowd."

"My father ran a brad nail factory in Dorchester," Elvira said. "I remember he was very proud of making good nails."

"That's the stuff," Jim Peters told her. "And I'm proud of making good shoes too. Peters' shoes? Ever hear of them?" he asked anxiously. "Maybe you wouldn't," looking at the silly silver sandals. "They're common-sense shoes and they wear. My factory has stood up when other businesses went sour, too. I haven't lost a nickel in the last few years. Fact is, I've made a lot. Last year

I cleaned up around fifty thousand. People have to have shoes, and they want shoes that wear."

He was a small boy, proud of his success.

"That's marvelous," Elvira encouraged.

"I only get to New York once a year. That factory keeps me on the job."

Elvira turned down three invitations to dance, four cocktails, and went on encouraging him and listening.

"I was wondering—" he stammered. "Maybe you'll think I'm fresh, just meeting you, but when this is over, may I see you home?"

She wanted to wail: "This is my home, all I have. A long time ago I lived in a big, old house that was really a home in Dorchester, but now I live in this fantastic penthouse, and every one save you, knows what I am."

She said: "I'm sorry, but I've an escort somewhere about."

"Could you have luncheon tomorrow with me?"

"Yes, I'd love to lunch with you."

Afterward, when the mob had gone, she went into her own room and stood at the window, looking down at the river, with the lights of boats dancing crazily upon it, and the lights of cities glinting about it.

She heard the soft flap of Don's old slippers, smelled the tobacco aroma of his smoking jacket; but she did not look at him, although he stood beside her and slid an arm about her waist.

"The river's always beautiful at this hour," he said. "Black and white and gray undertones. Sometime I'll photograph them as they should be done."

She slid away from his arm.

"It isn't beautiful," she said; "it's oily and soiled."

"Sorry if the brawl got on your nerves," he said. "It did on mine

too. But brawls must be. There are always dowagers and writers with pipes in their mouths, and when they see me they recall that I, alone, can soft focus them enough to make them look interesting. Some day we'll chuck it, Vi. We'll go places and see things, and I'll take pictures only of you, all around the world."

"No thanks. I don't want to be pointed out internationally as Don Macumber's model-mistress."

"There go those Massachusetts morals again, darlin'. Every so often they break out in a rash. You should do something, like take aspirin."

"I hate it! I hate you!" she cried passionately. "The Waite women have always been married, not mistresses, and I've disgraced them."

He saw that she was in earnest; when he tried to comfort her with a kiss, she turned from him.

"Darlin', you're making a mountain out of a moral quibble," he argued. "Besides we've been over and over this. We live on the square like a true married pair. No one thinks the less of you for it. They admire your independence."

"Yes—the loose set! But you have invitations without me."

"An occasional old dodo, and I'd not accept save for business reasons. See here, Vi, you're hysterical over nothing. We've loved each other for three years now. We've been happy and free. If I married you, the chains would soon kill all we feel. I told you that when I first met you."

"Excuses! Selfishness!" she cried. "I haven't been happy. You think only of yourself, never caring that I feel soiled."

"Love can't soil you," Don said gravely.

She whirled on him.

"Oh, can't it? Well, I'm going away for a while—for a week or so. I'll tell you what I think when I come back."

"Out of town?"

"No, just to an apartment of my own. Away from you."

"Vi, you haven't done with loving me?"

His voice trembled a bit, as he strove again to catch her in his arms, but she dared not risk the pressure of his mouth on hers. It would weaken her with memories of a thousand nights drowned in ecstasy; she dared not even look into the thin, handsome face that pleaded with her.

"I haven't done loving you," she said, "but I propose to try."

"You're free, of course," he told her, stiffly. "That's always been our bargain. . . ."

A week later Jim Peters asked Elvira to marry him. During that week she had lunched with him, dined with him, danced with him, almost every night. He had told her more of the shoe factory, bragged boyishly of his million dollars, complained of his lonely life at a club. He longed for a home of his own, with a private beach, up the Chicago north shore. Elvira had told him something of the Bohemian life she had lived as a model. He had marveled at it, and she had said bitterly that it was empty of all save wit. They knew each other well, she thought. Yet Jim was shy, red faced, almost tongue-tied, as he made his proposal.

"Maybe you'll think I've got a nerve—a guy like me asking a girl as famous and beautiful as you—But will you marry me?"

She said quietly: "Before I answer I must tell you one thing. You know only that I was Macumber's model."

"Wasn't it funny, me not recognizing you, when I'd seen you in a million ads? And all I thought when I met you was that you were the prettiest girl in the world."

"I was Don Macumber's model,



"I used to be Macumber's model!"

and I was also his mistress," Elvira said flatly.

Jim flushed. Then he said as flatly as she: "I know that too. Random told me—the man that brought me to that party. Gosh, Elvira, I guess any girl could be excused for falling for a famous man like Macumber, and—and making a mistake."

Elvira did not tell him that Don had been far from famous when she fell for him. Only an humble commercial photographer, but with the charm of vision. It was she who had posed for the studies that had won him recognition in an exhibition of photographic art, and later for the commercials which had made him rich as well as famous. She did not

need to tell Jim those details, as long as he forgave her the past.

"Then the answer is yes," she said softly. "And we'll have a home on the north shore. And I'll try to make you happy, Jim. The Waite women have always been good wives."

For the first time in years her conscience was at rest. The security of right doing comforted her. She scarcely felt Jim's greedy kiss on her lips. She considered it the proper kiss of betrothal which would eventually bloom into calm, lasting love.

She must tell Don, of course. Explain to him, make a clean break. But she dared not go to the apartment. He would not argue there; he

would merely press her back against the tiger-skin couch, and put his lips on hers and say:

"Darlin', don't be a goose. You can't leave me. We love each other." And she would be chained again.

She telephoned Don and asked him to meet her at Tony's, naming three in the afternoon, an hour when they could find a booth alone. He arrived, with his hair awry, a smudge on one cheek, which showed he had been working. He grinned at her, impudently.

"I feel as though I were keeping a rendezvous with an unknown blonde," he said. "The time, the place, the private booth! Do end the moral vacation, darlin'. I need you, both industrially and emotionally. I'll tell you about the industry and we'll go into the emotion later. I've finished the background for the new ciggie ad, but what more can I do without the girl in front? Two long, chilly Scotch and sodas, waiter."

"Sherry for me," Elvira said.

"Reformation?" Don's brows went up in mockery.

"I'm sorry, but it seems so," she said. "In fact you'll have to find a new model and a new mistress."

He laughed, disbelieving. "I've missed you, darlin'. More than you'll believe or than I thought possible. You're as much my life as those art studies I dream of doing some day. You're part of all my dreams. Come back on your own terms, darlin'. We'll be married with bell, book and candle, although the Municipal Building would be easier."

"Do you think I want you—shanghaied into a marriage you resent? Do you?"

"I've thought it out. We're really married already, Vi. We've fought our way up from that dingy studio. Remember? We've worked together and loved and quarreled like any

married couple. So we might as well have the ceremony."

Elvira felt tears gather at that phrase. "We've worked together and loved and quarreled." So they had. Gray days when Don was discouraged. White nights when they had been wildly happy.

"It's too late," she said steadily.

"What do you mean too late?" he asked over the top of his drink.

"I've promised to marry a man named Jim Peters. He makes shoes in Chicago. We'll live in a house on the lake front."

"Are you crazy, Vi? A shoemaker from Chicago."

"He's a very fine man," said Elvira. "He knows about me—about you and me. He's willing to forget that."

"It's blasted noble of him, considering that he's getting the grandest girl in the world," Don said savagely. "But it's downright bigamy for you to marry any one save me, Vi. So run along and tell him you've changed your mind."

"But I won't. I keep my word. Don't rave at me, Don."

Of course he paid no heed to that. She had to walk out on his raving, lest she kiss away the hurt anger in that moody, temperamental soul of his. She had wanted to part friends. She walked out with tears in her eyes and determination in her heart.

Jim Peters was childishly excited over the marriage. He wanted a big church wedding and pictures in the papers and a honeymoon *de luxe* in Bermuda. Elvira smiled at his enthusiasm, but dissuaded him, and insisted on a quiet wedding and honeymoon in a small southern resort town. Then they settled in an apartment hotel on the lake front, until Elvira could find and furnish the house she desired. Jim spoke several times of inviting in "the gang,"

but she begged him to wait. She preferred to start her married social life in a home she had chosen, rather than in the gaudy, overfurnished hotel. Jim gave her full sway in the matter of the house.

"Make it as big and expensive as you want, baby," he said. "It and you together will knock the eyes out of the gang."

Elvira wanted nothing big or expensive. She found a rambling white house where the lake glistened through pines. She furnished it in her own taste, in soft grays and greens and Chippendale. Jim was disappointed.

"I kind of thought you'd pick something brighter—sort of like Macumber's penthouse," he said. "But this has got class. Yes, I guess it's got class. And I found something to brighten it up. Surprise for you. I'll hang it up to-night when the gang's here."

The "gang" of which Jim was so proud, turned out to be a dozen or so married couples, assorted from youth to middle age, but all out for a good time, as they explained loudly and often. Elvira soon discovered that the case of liquor she had thought would suffice, had vanished, and sent the chauffeur for another. Never, at the many cocktail parties she had attended, had she met heartier drinkers.

Even Jim's pink face was flushed tomato color. At midnight he thundered on a table for silence:

"I got a surprise for you people," he cried. "Want you to see what a beautiful wife I got me. Maybe you haven't noticed her because she's wearing a new fandangled high-necked, long-sleeved dress. But I'll show you how she really looks. I'll show you what old Jim Peters picked himself off in New York. Yes, little old Jim, the fast worker."

Elvira watched in amazement, while he drew a large flat package from a closet, tore off the wrappings and hoisted an enormous picture to the

mantel piece. Then she gasped. It was a gigantic enlargement of an advertisement for a southern cruise which Don and she had made a year before. It showed her in a Tahiti bathing-suit, red and white cotton, clasped too briefly round her bosom and waist. Neither Don nor she had liked it, but because the advertiser insisted, they had let it go.

"It makes even you look vulgar, darin'," Don had said.

Now, in large proportions, vulgarity was too mild a term. Legs and arms and the swelling of bosom, crude flesh sprawled loosely on a beach. She heard Jim's voice calling attention to her charms, while the men cheered him on and the women tittered. She turned and went out blindly, crept up to her room. No one would have noted that she neglected a hostess' farewells. They were all too drunk. She wept for a few moments, then pushed her tears away.

"He was only tight," she excused. "Just tight and proud of me. He didn't know he was being common."

Later she heard him come into the room.

"Passed out, baby?" he whispered.

She did not answer. He came to the bedside, fumbled away the lace on her shoulder, and kissed the smooth curve of her arm.

"Did Macumber ever kiss you here?" he mumbled, as his damp, greedy mouth traced a snail's course over her skin.

She drew back, pulling the flimsy lace about her.

"You don't know what you're saying, Jim," she pleaded. "It isn't right!"

"That picture was pretty good, wasn't it? But say, babe, did Macumber ever do you without the bathing-suit? You know what I mean."

She snapped on the bed-lamp. Jim's red face wore an avid grin.

"Yes, he did!" she cried defiantly.

"He did one lovely nude, posed against mist and clouds. But no one has ever seen it save Don and me. He would never exhibit it. He believed it was not for leering, prying eyes. Can you understand that?"

Jim's grin faded to blankness under her onslaught.

"Okay," he muttered. "Okay. I've a right to ask."

He crept off to his own bed and was soon snoring. Elvira lay awake a long time.

I mustn't judge him by what he did tonight, she thought. He was tight and didn't realize. And he worships me, he's given me his name, this lovely home. No, I must not be angry.

Yet, through the following months there ran, like an ugly undertone, Jim's prying curiosity about her relations with Don Macumber.

"Did he kiss better than I do? . . . Did he love you as much? . . ."

It's difficult enough for me to forget Don, without this persistent dragging him up, Elvira thought. Underneath, Jim's jealous. Eventually he'll forget. . . .

There were many days when Elvira wandered listlessly around the house she had furnished so hopefully. She found her greatest content in lying on the sand, tracing the shifting patterns of clouds above, until they fell into a perfect nuance of shaded white and gray and dark. How Don would like that! she thought. And then: There must be something wrong with me. I have all I wanted. A husband, a home; security, respectability. And yet—

Mr. and Mrs. Peters had been married almost a year when Jim decided on a business trip to New York. At first Elvira demurred about accompanying him, but he insisted.

"Two days of business and four nights of busting the town wide open," he laughed.

He took the most expensive suite

in the newest and smartest hotel.

"You can ask your old friends around," he said. "We'll throw a bang-up party. Ask Macumber. I don't care."

"Oh, no," Elvira said.

"Then ask the others."

"I can't ask them either, Jim. Don't you see?"

"What's wrong?" His face went sulky. "Are you ashamed of me?"

"Of course not!" She put a hand on his, trying to explain. "It's that— Well, when I married you I broke with my old life. I wanted to. I prefer you, our home, marriage. Perhaps I haven't made quite a go of it, but I'm trying, and meanwhile—"

He tittered. "Sometimes you sound cuckoo to me, baby, but have your own way. Anyhow, I'm giving a little stag party tonight. Poker and liquor and business on the side. Get a new dress and come in for a minute to give the boys a treat."

Obediently Elvira went shopping. She remembered her first fine frock. A shop had given it to her, because to clothe Don Macumber's model was an advertisement in itself. White taffeta with a scroll of gold flowers. She had paraded it proudly.

"You look like a renaissance virgin," Don had said. "If there were any in those days."

They had gone to an uptown restaurant that she might show off. She found no such thrill in the dresses she now examined. Nothing pleased her. Presently she had to admit that she was trying to hide behind those folds of satin and metal cloth and chiffon the thought of Don Macumber.

She must discover what had become of him. For months she had searched the popular magazines in vain for his advertisements; and the arty magazines for news of his serious work. Perhaps he had gone abroad for that long deferred vacation. She must know. .

When she came out of the last shop, the streets were haunted with autumn twilight. She walked toward the Park, and looked along the row of buildings lining the south side. There was the one where she had lived for two years; the penthouse was dark. She dared not go in and ask Ricci, the old superintendent, about Don, for Ricci was a friendly soul who would ask her too many questions in return. The same thing applied to all her friends. She did not want to answer their questions. But she must discover how Don was; where he was. Then she thought of Tony. If ever you are in need, you can depend on the tact, the discretion of a café proprietor. He knows all and asks nothing.

She hid herself in a booth, ordered a cocktail, and asked the waiter for Tony. Tony was ecstatic. It seemed that among all the millions of New York, he had been yearning for her alone. But, when it came to Don Macumber, he shrugged.

"That one had not been in for months. He go away perhaps, because every one of that same crowd come often—but not Macumber."

The answer must be that Don had gone abroad, Elvira thought. And suddenly New York was as empty as the stratosphere.

She dragged wearily back to the hotel. The sounds of Jim's stag party drifted to her room. She looked listlessly at the two frocks, already delivered. That was one advantage of being model size; you got the original, without alteration. She chose the orange one. She had bought it for Jim, who would revel in its flamboyance, and the clinging line of its bodice; but it washed her out, made her eyes seem dull.

I *am* dull! she thought. Something has gone from me forever.

She hesitated before the door, from which came a jumble of voices. Then, above the jumble, rose Jim's high tenor.

"Sure, that's my wife. She used to be Macumber's model. Yeah, I know what they say about models. It took me a week to get her away from him. Just one week for li'l old Jim."

Elvira opened the door and stepped into the reek of cigar smoke and liquor that was the stag party. She was scarcely conscious of half a dozen men sprawled around the room. Her eyes were on Jim, and, for the first time she saw that he bore a likeness to a greedy, pink pig.

"Yes, I used to be Macumber's model," she said. "He respected me. He was loyal and decent and——"

She broke off. Her eyes had followed Jim's eyes, which leered cunningly at something on the mantel. This time it was no gaudy, enlarged advertisement. It was an art photograph, graciously lovely in its revelation of a girl's body. Slim, straight legs rose to the curve of hips and above that lifted the warmer curve of arched breasts, clothed only in a swirl of clouds, and made magic by Don's camera. Her own body. Elvira saw it exposed there before the avid eyes of drunken men. The picture Don had sworn he would never sell!

"Don didn't sell that to you!" she cried.

Jim laughed. "Somebody must have, because I bought it today. Paid a thousand bucks too, but it's worth it. I've intended to get it ever since you told me about it."

She clung to a chair back, dizzy, nauseated. Not by Jim. She saw him now for what he was worth. A cheap man who had salved his petty vanity by getting her, a glamorous model, a famous man's mistress, for his wife. What sickened her was the thought that Don had sold the picture! Of course she was unreasonable to expect anything else. She had left him. But it was unlike Don to betray her. She looked through tears at the picture. Then, as she turned blindly to go, the corridor door erupted, without the preliminary of

a knock, as Elvira stared amazed.

Don Macumber strode into the room. Elvira had seen him angry many times, but never before had she seen the bleak rage which now warped his firm mouth, his dark brows. He flicked a glance at her.

"Which one of these gentlemen is your husband?" he asked, with a sarcastic inflection.

"You've got no right to bust in here," Jim blustered.

There was an ominous rumble, backing up Jim, from the men who were in shoes—and liquor.

"Calm down!" Don said, looking over Jim's head at the picture. "I'm not going to kill you. I came to get this. It wasn't for sale."

"I paid for it!" Jim shrieked.

"Here's your check."

Bits of paper fluttered to the floor. Don snatched the picture, jammed it into his pocket, creasing, ruining it. He was through the door before Elvira called:

"Wait, Don."

He was at the elevator before she caught up with him.

"I'm going with you," she panted.

He looked in contempt at the orange dress.

"Not in that," he said.

"Why not?"

"Because it's ugly and you'll catch cold."

"Then wait for me."

She knew he wouldn't. She snatched the first wrap she saw, a wisp of velvet, and caught him again in the lobby.

Then they were out on Park Avenue, with the misty night about them, and her arm through his, and the lights of Grand Central wavering before them. After a time she said:

"We're going the wrong way for the penthouse."

"I don't live there any more," he said. "That's how it happened."

"What happened?"

"When I got behind in the rent I had to go or else—I left a trunk,

full of pictures, with Ricci as a sort of security. You remember Ricci, the talkative janitor. Well, your—your hus—" He stuck on the word and went on. "He got to Ricci today and gave a thousand dollar check for that picture. Ricci telephoned me. He thought he'd made a big deal for me." Elvira sighed, and they walked on another block. "You tried somebody else and I tried somebody else," Don said to her.

"Did you really?" she cried in alarm.

"About eighteen models—and only as models, and all were flops. I threw away the cigarette ad job. I threw away a lot of other work. In fact I threw myself away, Vi."

"But we're back together again," she said softly. "We'll start where we did before."

He stopped and looked at her.

"Don't say that unless you mean it," he begged. "Don't kid me, Vi."

"I found out that marriage to the wrong man can be uglier than plain love with the right man," she said.

"Did he taunt you about me? I'll go back and sock him."

"No, he didn't taunt me," she laughed. "In fact, I think the reason he married me was partly you. You see, it made him feel big and important."

"Maybe we'd better go to Russia," Don said. "You can get a divorce there in two minutes, and marry me in one."

"I don't care whether you marry me or not," she told him.

"But maybe I do. I'll not leave you about loose for the next shoemaker to steal. I'll attend to your Massachusetts morals myself, this time."

"What I forgot was that the virtuous Waite women always married men they loved," Elvira said meekly.

Don kissed her then. Neither of them noted that they were in front of Tony's, until he came out and asked them in for a drink.

Emerald-Cut Diamond

By ASHFORD GRAINGE



IT was almost dusk as Harry Emmet snaked his roadster into the garage. Early at that for Harry to be getting home. Northport was not what you'd call easy

commuting from New York, but today he'd exceeded the speed limit. He wanted to share the good news and brag and be told what a swell fellow he was. At a time like this nobody made such a good listener as Jane. That was what had attracted him to her in the beginning—her

wide-eyed, little-girl look of worship, her breathless attention to tales of his exploits in the, to her, incomprehensible world of business.

Go through the garden, he decided. Nearer. As he rounded the corner of the house, his footsteps soundless on the turf, Harry caught sight of a blonde head just visible above the back of a *chaise longue* on the terrace. Good old Jane, waiting for him as usual! Harry grinned with the idea of surprising her. Stealthy as an Indian, he tiptoed on to the brick flooring of the terrace. With a lightning movement he encircled the blonde head, leaned over and planted a resounding kiss on the lips of its owner.

"I landed it, Janie baby," he cried and then dropped back, his face starkly incredulous.

For the young goddess who leapt from the chair and confronted him was blonde, true, and not very much taller than Jane. But she was not Jane. Harry had never laid eyes on her before in his life.

"I beg your pardon," he choked. "I thought you were my wife."

Anger evaporated from the girl's eyes. "At Miss Avery's they used to call us the Gold Dust Twins," she murmured, in a voice that made him think of Dietrich and Bankhead and Garbo. "You're Harry, of course. I'm Marian Tone, the long-lost girl friend."

"But I thought you'd be—" Harry stopped in confusion. He'd been so sure she'd be kittenish, or masculine, or homely, that he'd scarcely paid any attention to Jane's announcement that an old school friend of hers, recently widowed, was coming out to spend a month with them.

"Well?" Marian's gaze was understanding and amused.

Harry regained his poise. He was not a star advertising man for nothing. He grinned at her. Tall and lean and brown, Harry even in his

most sedate moods was a menace to pure womanhood. When he grinned there were those, both old and young, who found him irresistible.

"Swell," he approved fervently.

"You haven't been fishing," Marion wondered, reseating herself. "So what could you have landed to make you so enthusiastic?"

"Contract," Harry explained succinctly. "Biggest yet for us. Million and a half appropriation this year with more to come if we make good—and we will. It's big money, at last!" His voice was hushed, almost reverent. For a moment he'd forgotten his listener in contemplating the future, golden bright, after so many years of fate's teasing, of hoping against hope for the break that would land him permanently on easy street.

"Marvelous!" said Marian Tone. "Jane will be thrilled. By the way, she went down to the village. Something about extra asparagus—"

"Good! I mean, it's useful to have extra vegetables about, don't you think?"

"Tell me," Marian prompted softly, "all about your new contract."

Harry obeyed eagerly. Marian proved to be as good a listener as Jane.

"It means," he finished, "just about fifty thousand for me personally. Everybody said I was crazy when I bought this place on a shoestring and went into business for myself. This will show them!"

"And how!" Marian's low voice was thrilled.

Glamor, he thought, that was what she had. Slim, deliciously rounded, her skin sunned to a golden brown—lacquered toenails visible through the meshes of white sandals, hair which held the silvery sheen of moonlight in its waves. Her eyes—Harry couldn't be sure of their color—were enormous, accented by dark brows arched like the wings of little

birds. Intelligent, too! And sweet.

"I adore a man with vision and courage. Any string-saving clerk can play safe!"

Harry agreed. They elaborated the subject and soon were deep in their discoveries of mutual likes, dislikes and opinions. A gay voice interrupted.

"Hey, you two, it's time to dress! Cocktails in twenty minutes and heaven help us if we're late. Hol-landaise waits for no man. I was held up in the grocery."

Jane, smiling and sunburned and slim, dressed in knitted skirt and jumper, recalled them to immediate concerns. Harry's mood of conquest and enchantment was jarred. He kissed her perfunctorily.

"'Lo, dear. Marian and I've been getting acquainted."

"He's been telling me," Marian murmured, "all about his wonderful new contract."

"The Grady deal went through today," Harry explained matter-of-factly. For some reason he felt disinclined to go into details a second time.

"Oh, darling!" Jane's voice lilted. Harry knew that her eyes were shining. They always did when she spoke in that particular way. "Oh, darling!"

"Not bad," her husband admitted, extraordinarily casual.

"Money? Lots of it?" Jane sounded greedy, Harry thought, like a child in a candy shop.

"That depends on what you mean by a lot," he qualified.

"Then it is!" Jane was incorrigibly happy. "We'll celebrate! There's some champagne left over from the last customers' dinner. Dick Gordon's coming over. We'll get gloriously squiffy! But now we've got to hurry!"

Why did Jane have to be so darned practical and managing! Harry knew he was being unreason-

able and didn't care. Following the two girls into the house he decided that the first moment it was feasible he'd fire that fat Hulda from the kitchen and get in some one who didn't make a fetish of time.

At dinner, however, his irritation had vanished. A shower and fresh clothes had worked their customary charm. The cocktails had been beyond reproach. Dick Gordon showed up with two amusing new stories. Jane looked charming in cornflower blue, her fair hair fluffy and gleaming. Her hands, Harry thought, observing them critically, betrayed the avid gardener. She was never happy working in gloves. But at least she had the good taste to leave them unadorned. But for her wedding-ring, she wore no jewels. The ring had been his pledge and his solemn promise.

"Some day I'll buy the Kohinoor for you!" He'd vowed after their wedding, during the drive from church to boat. The Kohinoor, however, had been postponed for the Northport place, modest when compared with the millionaires', but something to live up to just the same, and the venture into business with two friends as optimistic and capable as himself.

Marian had entered the living-room a split second ahead of the apertif tray.

"So glad I don't have to be sorry," she smiled at Jane.

Dick was impressed and showed it. Marian in greenish-white trailing satin was enough to start ideas in any one's head. The dress was nothing but material and fit and line. A woman or a man-milliner alone could have gauged accurately its expensiveness. On the third finger of her right hand she wore a ring—a diamond! It was as big, Harry thought, as a cough-drop. That was her only ornament. It was, perhaps, the ring which reminded him of his

"Kohinoor" boast to Jane that May morning five years before.

When dinner was over and the four were sitting over brandies and coffee, Harry commented on the jewel.

"That's the loveliest ring I ever saw," he told her, "if you'll forgive me."

Marian smiled, twisted the great stone and looked pensive.

"It has a sort of history," she confided, "not a very happy one. Tory, my husband—he was a flier, you know—saw this ring after we were married. He determined I should have it. He said," she smiled tenderly, "it looked like me. When he died," her voice caught, "leaving just ten thousand dollars insurance, I was sentimental enough to spend it all on this! Silly, maybe, but," her eyes sought Harry's briefly, "sometimes it pays to be silly."

"It does look like you," Dick Gordon declared, "shining and flawless and expensive."

"So now," Marian went on lifting her head bravely, "I live with a rich aunt who is going to make me her heiress, if I behave myself properly. Otherwise," she laughed, "it will be just another little match-girl story."

Harry fumed inwardly. No girl so beautiful and so full of life should have to depend on the whims of a rich old woman.

"But think what a success you'd be selling shoe-laces, darling!" Jane laughed at the thought, with what Harry regarded as unwarranted callousness. "How about a rubber of bridge?"

The evening, they agreed later, while undressing, had been satisfactory.

"Dick fell for your girl friend like a ton of bricks," Harry said.

"She's lovely," Jane remarked sleepily, "and Paris clothes and the Kohinoor do help out. Oh, sweet, it will be such fun now you're rich or

almost rich. Will you buy me a *Chanel* and a *Vionnet* and a ring just like Marian's? I can't wait!"

"Pig!" Harry laughed.

"Well, maybe not all at once. But the ring, angel, the ring! You promised! And think how long I've waited and all the beautiful, indigestible meals I've cooked for you when we didn't have maids—and think of all the facials I've gone without and look at that wreck of a station wagon I drive around so you can be swanky in an up-to-the-minute roadster! Oh, I do want my ring! You promised!"

Jane did a sort of gleeful war dance around him, no trace of the wife of an executive visible in her performance. Harry thought, oddly, for as a rule he enjoyed her little-girl insanities, that little-girl stuff could be carried too far.

"I don't know. We'll see," he temporized.

Jane sobered suddenly. "I know," she said, "you have to put a lot of the profits back into the business."

When the lights were out Harry said tentatively: "Jane?"

"Um——"

"Jane, is this aunt of Marian's an awful slave-driver?"

"Shouldn't think so, judging by Marian's get-up."

Against his better judgment Harry pursued the subject. "What's she like?"

"Don't know." Jane sounded half-asleep. "Never met her. Hadn't seen Marian in years until I ran into her in town the other day when I was shopping. We lunched together and she seemed awfully down, so I asked her out here on the spur of the moment. . . . Darling, I do love you!" She curled her warm length about him, buried her head in the crook of his arm and slept.

Dick Gordon appeared the next afternoon with ideas. "Swimming," he suggested, "then a lobster at the

Old Mill and later on dancing at the club."

Harry and Marian were alone on the terrace. In response to his hail she had sauntered through the French doors of the guest-room leaving them open behind her to reveal a frivolous, somehow entrancing, disorder, cobwebby garments flung over chairbacks, an overturned powder-box lid, silver mirror next a popular magazine on the green bed-spread. Marian herself was breathing-taking in printed pyjamas which swathed her narrow hips, left her golden back revealed to the waist and followed faithfully the contours of her girlish breasts.

Harry carried a tray with three frosted, mint-topped glasses. At sight of her he nearly dropped it. An amused, speculative look in her slate-gray eyes, Marian approached him through the open door. Quite calmly she took his face between her cool palms and kissed him on the mouth.

"Tit for tat," she said.

Harry set down the tray.

"After all," she reminded him, "you started it. In this very spot. Yesterday afternoon." She added, as if it weren't the least important: "Jane's in the garden transplanting some incredible new flowers."

"I know," Harry said, feeling like an idiot as he indicated the third glass. "She'll be here in a minute for her drink."

It was at this point with Marian's kiss still fragrant on his mouth that Dick Gordon interrupted.

Harry was vague. Marian thought Dick's plan marvelous, subject, of course, to Jane's arrangements for the evening. She smiled at Dick who was imbibing Jane's julep. Reluctantly, Harry left them alone while he went to mix another drink. Jane thought it was a good idea. "As soon as I've washed off this top-soil," she added. "Why don't you

and Marian run along when you've finished your drinks and Harry and I'll join you on the beach."

Harry, who'd half-anticipated a tête-à-tête drive with Marian, was not too well pleased, but seconded his wife's suggestion feebly. Even to himself it sounded feeble.

"Shame to miss a minute of this sun."

A few minutes later they drove off, Marian lovely under a Javanese hat, Dick completely the conquering male.

"That might be a good match," Jane observed. "Dick has enough money and is so respectable that even Marian's dragon aunt couldn't object to him. . . . I won't be long, dear."

She left Harry in a mood of fuming impatience which he was too obtuse to recognize as jealousy.

Marian in a rubber swim-suit was revealed as even more alluring than Harry had imagined. Dick was beside her on the sand, cocoanut oil and sun glasses making him practically unrecognizable.

"Lie down and soak up a few vitamins," he advised Jane. Harry stretched himself on the other side of Marian. She gave him a level gaze from her slaty eyes, then appeared to forget him. Nevertheless, Harry felt in the accelerated heat of his bloodstream that she was aware of him as he was of her.

Time was suspended. Dick and Jane, eyes closed against the sun's pressure, were silent. Marian's presence became an insistence. Harry, punch-drunk with his success of the day before, lost his perspective. All that remained important was the remembered warmth of her lips, the curves of her body, so frankly revealed. Jane—Jane, naturally, was his lodestone, his permanence. But a man worked hard, his output was dependent upon his initiative, and wasn't variety the spice of life?

"How about a swim?" Harry suggested abruptly. "Marian?"

She raced him into the water, silently.

Marian swam well, but Harry reached the float first. The need to touch her, even if casually, had become a craving. The float was deserted and, he thought desperately, some playful idiots would be swarming over it soon. Helping her up the ladder he let his hands linger on her arms, cool and smooth. For a moment he wondered if he'd lost his mind. When he released her he was trembling like sex-starved seventeen. He, married, experienced, the hero of countless flirtations! This girl certainly had what it took!

Marian unwound her bandanna and pulled out a waterproof cigarette case.

"Smoke?" she inquired lazily.

Harry accepted, feeling uncomfortably that she knew exactly what he was feeling. As she leaned toward the match he lighted, her curving breast pressed against his arm. She seemed unconscious of the contact and her very unconsciousness was more provocative than any awareness could have been.

"I can't tell you, Harry," she said, "what a blessed thing this state of freedom is. You know, when you've been married and used to doing as you like it's hard to go back to your childhood and have to 'yes' even an old darling like auntie."

"God, yes!" Harry agreed fervently. "Isn't she— isn't she good to you?"

"Oh, yes, in her way. But she's still living in the bicycle-petticoat stage when there were *ladies*. She doesn't understand that times have changed. Kind, but awfully stuffy. Why, she won't even have a telephone in the house! Says they're insolent nuisances. Imagine having to make dates by Western Union or letter!"

"God, what a life!"

"When I go out," Marian continued, "she always has a maid sit up for me and if I'm later than she thinks is proper— Well, it's hell to be a poor relation!"

"You ought to have everything," Harry fumed, "cars and yachts and jewels and the chance to enjoy life—that most of all. You're so beautiful, Marian! I'd like——"

Harry remembered that this was a friend of his wife and that he'd no earthly reason beyond one brief kiss to imagine that she was the slightest bit interested in what he would or wouldn't like.

"Here come Jane and Dick," Marian said softly. "I think you're sweet to be interested in my problems."

The party became a foursome from then on. Dick tried to detach Marian, he was frankly adoring, but Marian said she'd hardly seen Jane all day and that she loved parties that jelled instead of just disintegrating into couples, and she said it all so subtly and cleverly that both Harry and Dick felt flattered and complacent. Jane looked at her, surprised. Jane seemed to remember that achieving solitude with a male had been one of Marian's outstanding accomplishments in the old days. But of course marriage did change people. . . .

At the club it was the same. Marian, tonight in filmy black, the Kohinoor blazing on her hand, was an instantaneous success. She made all the other women feel sunburned and domestic and as if their shoulder-straps showed. But she was so sweet they had to be nice to her or look like cats. And she refused steadfastly to treat the men with anything but the most impartial seductiveness.

Jane's best friend dared be frank.

"Where'd you pick up the little home-wrecker by *Vionnet*?" Sarah asked in the dressing-room. They

were alone. Jane laughed gayly.

"Finishing school together. I have not seen anything of her since until the other day. She's beautiful, isn't she?"

"She's a pre-war huzzy!"

"Darling!" Jane was shocked. "That's not like you. Marian's frightfully sweet and rather pathetic now she's a widow and has to live with some rich old aunt and can't call her soul her own."

"All right. But don't say I didn't warn you. She'd get into my house over my dead body—and Jack's almost as good a husband as Harry. Now get mad!"

"I couldn't get mad over anything as silly as that," Jane protested. "Besides I'm too happy to be mad tonight. Did you know Harry signed up the Canada crowd yesterday? It means," she sighed happily, "more money than we've ever seen before."

"How perfectly swell! I am glad, angel!" But as they returned to the dance floor Jane's best friend wore a highly preoccupied expression.

As golden day followed golden day the Emmet place resembled more and more a popular roadhouse. Sleek, expensive cars lined the driveway until all hours of the night. Jane discovered that she need not have bothered to plan entertainment for her visitor. Marian's days could have been filled with engagements twice over. But Marian, once so eager to be the focus of clamoring males, professed herself happiest just to "be quiet" with the Emmets and their friends in their own home. Being quiet usually consisted of dinder, bridge, cocktail parties, dancing or backgammon with a large crowd of guests to assist. Most of these were couples, but there was always a number of personable young men to play moth to Marian's flame. Harry managed to get home earlier from the office.

"But haven't you a ton of work

to do on this new account?" Jane wondered. Usually Harry drove himself like a steam engine during the first stages of a campaign.

"Not such a lot," Harry reassured her. "Things are more or less waiting for the old man to get back to Toronto. He's just left England and won't want to talk turkey until next week."

Harry was the victim of conflicting emotions. Or, rather, of an emotion, unprecedented, unexpected, violent and absorbing, which had collided with the routine of his well-regulated existence. He could never get a half-hour alone with Marian. Sometimes it seemed as if she were deliberately avoiding him. And yet he knew with a certainty beyond proof that she was no more indifferent to him than was he to her. His infatuation had long since got out of bounds. He was now no more capable of rationalizing his feelings than the drug addict or the drunkard.

Some subconscious part of him reminded him that he didn't want to lose Jane and that becoming involved with Marian might inevitably lead to that. But things couldn't go on this way. There had to be a showdown—and soon!

"You're lucky," Marian told Jane one morning from the depths of a deck chair as she watched Jane cut flowers for the house. "Such a lovely home and garden and your own life and your own friends!"

"And Harry!" Jane reminded her. "Oh, I am lucky!"

Marian bit her lips and her eyes narrowed, but Jane, glowing with happiness, did not notice the effect of her words.

"Jane is an ass," Jane's best friend told her husband on their way home from the Emmet's that night. "A blind man could see that that imitation Crawford is after Harry tooth and nail!"

"Good Lord," her husband ex-

claimed, "she hardly speaks to him, much less."

"That's just it," Sarah interrupted triumphantly and incomprehensibly.

"Harry wouldn't be such a catch for a girl like that," Bill went on. "He is on the way to make money, but at that, there're a lot richer men she could pick on around here."

"But none of their wives were in school with Marian," Sarah pointed out. "And might I add, none of their wives would expose them to this high-pressure sex appeal. Besides, Marian will have plenty of money in time. Her great aunt apparently has pots of it and she's to inherit. Oh, no, it isn't just money that that young lady's after! Even sirens have been known to fall in love."

"Well, have it your way," Jack yielded, being a peace-loving sort.

So the speculations went on. Jane remained superbly, or stupidly, oblivious.

"I've got to run up to Toronto tomorrow," Harry announced one evening when Marian had been with them a fortnight.

"Oh, darling! How long will you be gone?"

They were in their big bedroom upstairs and on the opposite side of the house from the guest suite.

Harry seemed to have difficulty with his studs. "Can't tell," he said, frowning, "but I ought to be back Friday or Saturday morning."

"And when it's all set and going beautifully," Jane begged, her eyes sparkling, "we can go shopping for the Kohinoor, can't we?"

"Afraid that will have to wait a while," Harry said uncomfortably. "Ought to put a lot of the profits back into the business. Next year, maybe."

"Don't think about it." Jane was swiftly contrite. "It doesn't matter a bit. What do I care! Haven't I got you!"

His response to her kiss was per-

functory, but Jane didn't notice that. Jane wasn't sensitive.

But even the least sensitive and suspicious person can not doubt the evidence of his own ears.

It happened at the club dance that night. A thunderstorm was brewing and Jane felt headachy and depressed. After half an hour of listening to Dick Gordon's raving about the incomparable Marian it occurred to her for the first time that she was beginning to be fed-up on the subject of Marian's charms and graces. When the orchestra began again she made an excuse for not dancing and went up to the dressing-room and from there on to an upper deck of the clubhouse where she dropped into a chair and proceeded to relax utterly. Soon she would have to return to the dance floor. Some one would be sure to miss her and wonder. But for a blessed fifteen minutes she could forget the whole business and get her jangling nerves in shape. At first she paid no attention to the murmur of voices below. Some couple seizing the opportunity for a petting party, she supposed. Then an intonation struck her with its familiarity and she listened shamelessly.

"Why *can't* you meet me in New York—or go with me?" It was Harry's voice, roughened by passion and exasperation. "Who'll ever know? Don't you know I'm mad about you! And you do love me a little, don't you, darling?"

"Of course, but you *must* understand! I wouldn't dare. Auntie—she'd check up. She always does. She'd find out! I can't! I tell you, I can't!"

Jane's nails bit little half-moons in her palms. Her body tensed, she waited for the next speech. Marian and Harry! God, what a fool she'd been for matters to have reached this stage without her knowing! Harry spoke again, his voice lowered so

that Jane leaned closer to the parapet in order to catch what he was saying.

"Then, I've an idea. I'm supposed to get in Saturday morning. Well, I'll arrange to get in town Friday night instead. I'll drive out, park the car down the road somewhere and come to you, sweet! It'll be easy. No one will ever know. You're on the other side of the house and if you leave the door unlocked! About midnight. Afterwards, I can leave, have a shave and a bath somewhere and show up for a late breakfast as planned. Well!"

"I—I don't know." Marian's usually ironic voice was shaky. Falling in love was something she hadn't counted on. "It's—risky!"

"It's the only thing to do," Harry interrupted her. "It can't hurt any one. I'm in hell, Marian. Things can't go on this way! I want you—want you, darling!" There was a moment's silence, the sound of breath sharply indrawn. Then Harry was saying triumphantly: "You will!"

"Yes!"

Jane fled. She must be seen dancing when they came in. As she flashed down the stairs, her blue eyes starry with the light of battle, a plan began to form in her mind. . . .

The next morning she poured Harry's coffee, saw him off. He was too absorbed to notice the blue shadows under her eyes and Marian was breakfasting in bed.

"See you Saturday morning," Harry said when he was leaving.

"Good luck, honey!" She made her voice cheerful and watched his car out of sight around the bend in the driveway.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday—her mind checked off the days. Sweetness and light. Courtesy and consideration. She could, Jane reflected, imitate the Borgias themselves when enough was at stake.

Before Marian awakened Jane was on her way to the village with the

shopping list—and her idea. . . . While the grocer got together her purchases and stowed them in the back of the car Jane went into a phone booth and put through a call to a friend in New York.

"And be sure," she ended, "to time it right. I don't want the telegram to arrive one second earlier."

"You can count on me," Ted Wiley assured her. He'd always had a secret passion for Jane which he knew was as hopeless as most secret passions—but that didn't matter. She was a straight shooter and he was with her, right or wrong. But he knew she was right.

Somehow the days passed. Marian was hectically gay. She flirted with Dick Gordon and all the white-flanneled young men. Her manner to Jane was perfection. Jane sat tight and waited. She could afford to wait. She forced herself to seem natural.

On Thursday she arranged a largish dinner party and bridge. It was late when the guests left, and on Friday Jane confessed to Marian at luncheon that she was dead tired and suggested that they spend an evening with books for a change. Marian was elated. Everything, it seemed, was playing into her hands. She'd had no intention of having an affair with Harry Emmet, but even the most calculating woman is sometimes taken unawares. Besides, Marian was confident that it would not end with being just an affair. Men didn't get over her easily and, she considered, once married and free, she could manage Harry easily enough. As for Jane, it was too bad—but every one for himself in this world.

They were having coffee in the living-room when the phone rang. Jane answered.

"It's for you, dear," she told Marian gravely. "A telegram."

When Marian returned her manner

was an odd mixture of excitement and irritation.

"It's about Auntie. She's ill. I'm to come at once."

"Oh, I hope not seriously," Jane cried.

"I imagine it's just indigestion," Marian replied petulantly. "But you never can tell. I'll have to go, Jane."

"Can't you phone her and find out how bad it really is?"

"I've told you she hasn't got a telephone—darn it!"

"Then, darling, you'd better rush a few things into a bag. You've just time to make the next train. The maids can pack for you tomorrow and I'll send your things down by express."

"Damn!" Marian was annoyed, but over and above the annoyance was an expectation, a hope which she could not quite hide.

Like a buzzard waiting for its inning, Jane thought to herself with disgust.

"I'll help you," she offered aloud.

Twenty minutes later they pulled into the railroad station's parking space with just time for Marian to get her ticket, thank Jane a thousand times and climb aboard the train.

And, my dear little Judas! Jane thought grimly, by the time you've discovered that your aunt is in excellent health, there'll be no more trains until morning and I hardly think that even you would risk a reappearance without an invitation. Besides, I'll plug that telephone until tomorrow morning—and then it won't matter how soon you contact the sappy Emmets!"

Back at home Jane read for a while in a vain effort to quiet the beating of her heart. Eleven o'clock. She turned out the lamps, all but one. Going upstairs she bathed, brushed her hair until it lay in silky, shining curls. Then to the guest suite, so beautifully isolated. She

threw off her dressing-gown and, without a qualm, put on one of Marian's Paris nightgowns, triple voile, that clung to her tenderly, soft as satin skin. She sprayed her hair and throat with Marian's special perfume. She took the precaution of pulling out the light plugs. Then, in a room palely lit with moonlight, she slipped between the sheets of Marian's bed and waited for her lover to arrive.

It was just after midnight when she heard the door to the terrace cautiously opened. Turning in bed, she saw a tall shadow standing silhouetted against the outside greyness. Her heart beat furiously.

"Marian—? It's Harry, darling!" The next instant he had crossed the room and knelt beside the bed, his hands seeking her, his lips groping for hers. "Darling—angel! I love you! Oh, sweet, is it really happening!"

"Sh-sh-hhh," Jane cautioned in a whisper.

"You're right," he agreed swiftly in tones as hushed as hers. To Jane's relief he demanded no speech of her. "Do you love me?" He asked once, and for answer she tightened her arms and pressed her lips more closely to his. It was sufficient reply. Just before dawn he left her. "Soon!" He whispered, and she answered him again with a kiss.

Jane slept until the sunlight streaming through the windows awakened her. She felt inordinately gay and young and triumphant and more than a little mad. At any rate, she, as Marian, hadn't disappointed Harry! That was a slight sop to her vanity. And the idea was working out better than she would have dared hope. She dressed carefully, and when half-past ten Harry drove up she was on the back porch arranging tea roses in a blue vase the color of her dress.

Watching him cross the lawn, she

thought that he looked extraordinarily handsome. No trace of guilt or self-consciousness could she detect, and for a moment anger seized her and it was all she could do to keep herself from hurling vase, roses and all in his face. But the thought of her idea steadied her. It was much the better way—the only way, in fact, to achieve her purpose and at the same time a nice revenge. Jane waved at him, smiled brilliantly.

"Good trip? Good luck?"

"The best—all set. How's my girl?"

"Never better," she lied pleasantly. "Have you had breakfast?"

"Long ago. Um-m it's good to be home."

He followed her into the house, carrying the vase.

"There on the desk," Jane directed. She did not miss his quick glance around the living-room. Would she ever again, she wondered, be happily blind—ever so confident of his love that she would not read hidden meanings into his simplest reaction or remark? Perhaps not. But he was her man and this was her marriage and she meant to fight for both with the only weapons at her disposal.

It was not until luncheon that he brought up the subject which she knew had been in his thoughts ever since his arrival. The table was laid for two.

"Marian lunching out?" Harry asked with elaborate casualness.

"Oh, dearest, in the excitement of seeing you I forgot to tell you. After dinner last night she had a telegram saying that her aunt was ill and to come at once. I put her on the train. We just made it."

"I see," Harry said. If a thunderbolt had struck him he could not have seen less.

"Yes," Jane continued, "it's a shame, isn't it? She didn't even have time to pack. I got her things to-

gether last night and then—it was so hot up in our room I decided to sleep in the guest-room. So I did."

Mercifully she dropped her eyes, apparently concentrating on the melon before her, but not before she had seen Harry's stunned look and the dull flush that swept painfully over his face.

"You—you slept in the guest-room!"

"Why, yes," Jane answered calmly. "It's really lots cooler."

The entrance of the maid gave Harry a moment in which to recover some measure of poise. His brain was whirling with speculations. Jane couldn't have known—or could she! Did Jane have a lover whom she smuggled into his house when he was safely out of the way? At the idea Harry was seized with a savage, unreasoning jealousy. He'd always felt sure of Jane. Damn it, Jane loved him. But he remembered that he also loved Jane and yet he'd not been immune to the lure of a new appeal. Jane, giving herself to a stranger who stepped through French windows into her bedroom! It was unthinkable! But Jane couldn't have known. Never again would he trust her out of his sight, if he could help it. And he could never be sure—

Never in the world unless he admitted his own guilt! Maybe, Jane had known all the time. But she *couldn't* have known!

The lobster was delicious, the salad a miracle of crispness and flavor, but to Harry they might have beenhardtack. It was with an effort that he followed Jane's chatter and made suitable replies. Resentment towards Marian flowered within him. But for her, this damned business of Jane and her fly-by-night lover would never have happened! Harry's sense of humor had gone into cold storage and Jane, he realized, was looking prettier than he'd seen her

in ages. Desirable as hell! What a fool he'd turned out to be! And if she did know——?

"Beautiful," said Harry leaning over to kiss the back of her neck, "how about flinging some things into a bag and running down to Montauk for a few days? We haven't gone away together for a long time. Let's," he added with unaccustomed diffidence, "forget we're old married people and have ourselves a time? What say?"

"O-oh!" Jane was as thrilled as a child. "Harry, precious, you do have the most gorgeous ideas! I'd love it."

"Can you be ready in an hour?"

"Half an hour," Jane promised, radiant.

"Swell," Harry told her tenderly, "because then we can make New York before the shops close. We can have dinner in town and drive out later by moonlight."

"Shops?"

"It looks like a grand day for buying the Kohinoor you've been wanting," Harry explained with his grin that she could never resist. "Business will just have to stand the traffic, I've decided." (And, he added to himself, let your swell lover—if you've got one—see how his swell love-making stacks up against me plus *that!*)

"Darling!" Jane was in his arms

and out again. "I'll be ready in fifteen minutes!"

The phone rang as she was putting on her hat. Harry was outside stowing the bags into the roadster.

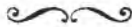
"Yes?"

Marian's voice drifted over the wire.

"But, sweet," Jane cried, "whoever would play that sort of stupid practical joke on you? . . . Oh, I *am* sorry, but Harry and I are driving down to the South Shore for a visit and, oh, here is the most gorgeous news! The darling is going to buy me a diamond just like yours! Now that he's going to make a lot of money he says it's what he wants to do first of all. . . . Yes, I sent your trunks down by express this morning. . . . No, it wasn't a bit of trouble. I decided not to trust the packing to a maid and did it myself. . . . Don't be silly! I loved doing it. After I finished I decided it was too hot to sleep upstairs and so I just spent the night in the guest-room. . . . Yes, dear, the room you had. . . . Operator! Operator, you've disconnected me."

"I am sorry, madam," the suave accents replied, "your party has hung up."

Probably fainted, thought Jane, and, humming a gay snatch of song, went out to join her recovered happiness.



REMEMBRANCES

By John McCullough

Big girls, little girls, tall girls and small

Brunettes, blondes and redheads;

I've loved them all! . . .

No, I'm not a Mormon, I've only one wife,—

But, oh, those fond remembrances—

Of my single life!

Cake For The Devil

By DORIS STEAD

RONNY lit a cigarette, and looked down at his wife, whose red curls were copper in the light of the sun. She lay full length on the rug gayly playing with the dogs.

"That's a fine pose," he said, "are your legs insured, Madam? They're very excellent on the eye."

Sandra jumped up, seized him, pulled him down on the davenport.

"Vulgar wretch looking at my legs; worse than a peeping Tom. I'll take it into court." Ronny lay back, closed his eyes pretending to sleep. "Let's swim," Sandra said poking him. "Come on, pig, stop going to sleep. I know you're just putting it on. I can tell by the way your eye-lashes are twiddling."

Ronny came to life, pulled her down on him. "Minx!"

"D'you still love me, Ronny?"

"Course."

"Honestly?"

"Honestly."

"How much?"

He found her lips. "That much." Sandra struggled loose. There were tears in her eyes. "Hey, for God's sake!" Ronny said. His arms were around her holding her tight. "What the heck?"

"I thought you didn't love me anymore, Ronny."

"Little fool."

"You were so strange last week."

"Get your suit on," Ronny said quickly, "we'll have a duck before dinner." He gave her curls an affectionate ruffle. "Don't be a damned silly kitten. Come on, let's swim." The lake was aquamarine. There

were little fishing boats far out against the horizon. The clouds tinted gold were the shape of flowers. Sandra was a nymph in the green bathing-suit to match her eyes. Her skin was delicately tanned and her short red curls made her look like a child. "Well, Peter Pan," Ronny said, and picking her up in his arms carried her to the lake's edge and dropped her into the water. She shrieked, pretending to drown. Ronny went in after her and they struck out abreast.

At the house Caldwell and his wife got dinner. It was an old house, whitewashed and turreted. The living-room was long and cool with many windows looking out to the lake. Ronny had had the walls painted pale green, said his father would turn in his grave could he know; there were etchings, flowers everywhere, books, and a fireplace large enough for a man to sleep in. The house was full of rooms, as if, Ronny said, some one had come in the night and cut them into shape. Square rooms, long rooms, even round ones. Funny. And the windows were leaded, romantic looking, with views of the orchards and meadows mad with color now.

Sandra loved the place. Her first summer here. She loved to ride in the early mornings on the silver horse "Moonlight." She loved the week-ends when their friends came down, and the nights, the nights most of all when she and Ronny would walk the length of the beach, arm in arm, whispering and laughing like lovers, planning the future,

building life, their two lives into one, their hopes and dreams blending like music. There was never anything, any dark cloud, any sadness.

"It is too beautiful!" Ronny would say. "We have too much, I'm afraid."

Then Sandra would hold him close and tell him no, it belonged to them. It was beautiful because they were making it so; because they were building with strong and lovely things.

Even when Ronny first met Marcia there had not been any difference. Ronny was on vacation. He and Sandra and a crowd had gone into town to see "The Devil's Wife." The play was storming Broadway. It was a hit because Marcia Dawn was a hit. She was marvelous, and beautiful, and brilliant! Exquisite, Ronny could see that. Any one could see that.

"She's a wonder," Bill Morgan said. "I've known her half a dozen months now. Let's go back stage and see her; nothing high-hat about Marcia. She'll treat you right."

Marcia was gracious and smiling.

"How sweet of you, Bill, to bring your friends. How lovely! You liked the play? Oh, I'm so happy. . . . I'm wonderful? Ah, but it's a wonderful play. You can't beat those lines, you know. Marvelous lines!" She laughed, lightly.

"Aren't you tired, Miss Dawn?" Sandra asked. "All that time on the stage!"

"It's my life, darling." Marcia smiled, her eyes languid. "I'm never tired. Shall we all go down to the Golden Slipper?" she said addressing Morgan. . . .

The place was crowded. It was crowded because it was Marcia's favorite haunt. They came to see her. She was dressed in a gown of black sequins, her hair flowing loose and gold. When Ronny danced with her it felt like flax against his cheek.

"You dance divinely," the actress said, "I think you're divine anyway." She laughed sweetly, softly, like a bell, and called to the orchestra to play a tune she liked especially. The crowd stood back while she and Ronny danced. They were beautiful together, he tall, graceful, swinging into step as though he had danced with her always. Marcia like a dream, her eyes closed, her long fair hair a golden cloud about her shoulders, her feet like jewels dancing in the fairy sandals.

Sandra felt no difference, no going away from her of Ronny. She had laughed with the others, told them how wonderful they were together dancing, and later, when they were back alone together in the house by the lake, she had said how beautiful Marcia was, how clever in the play, and oh, didn't she dance as though she were on wings.

"It made me wish Ronny, that I were a man and could have danced with her."

Ronny had answered quickly that it had been an experience—the evening, the play, the dance with Marcia, and most of all, he added, to come back here to the quiet where life was safe and real and they had each other.

Safe! Even then he knew he must say the word aloud using it like a sword so that he would feel that nothing could touch the happiness he had known during the past year. Sandra was all he ever hoped. Their love was magnificent, and his work—he was an architect—was moulding into great things. They had everything to live for. They *couldn't* lose. And that night he lay awake counting his blessings, wiping out the memory of Marcia with a smile.

A week later Marcia telephoned Sandra, wanting them to come to town.

"I am having a party in my studio after the show," she said.

Sandra was delighted. She called Ronny, explaining.

"Tell her no," he said.

"But it would be lovely, Ronny. Oh, please let's."

"I'm not at all crazy about going,"

Ronny said irritably.

"Oh, please, Ron, yes?"

"All right!"

Sandra went back to the telephone.

"We'd love to come," she told Marcia.

Ronny was moody. "I've only a little bit of holiday left. Why do we have to go into town?"

"You can sleep late in the morning," Sandra said. "Oh, don't be bad, Ronny, be sweet. Why are you being so horrid? We'll have a wonderful time. I think it's lovely meeting theatre people, actually having her ask us. You know she's quite the thing in New York, she must like us to want us to come to her party."

So Ronny put on his evening clothes and they drove to town. Marcia's studio was twenty floors up, high against the stars. The studio itself seemed almost as long as a city block. The bar at one end was white. Everything was black and white. Marcia was back from the theatre and wearing black velvet pyjamas. Some one was playing the piano. A Negro mixed drinks behind the bar like lightning. He was very black in a white coat. There was a picture director from the coast, a poet and his wife, a song writer, and one or two others from the play. Marcia introduced Sandra and Ronny. The picture director took a fancy to Sandra and they went to the bar to drink rum somethings. The gentleman at the piano who looked Russian sat like an effigy, still, only his hands racing over the cords like mad. Marcia asked him to play a tango, which she and Ronny danced.

"Do you like my studio?" she asked, her face to his cheek.

"Lovely. Fantastic."

"You think so?"

"But your hair should be black," Ronny said, "to carry out the scheme."

"Oh, darling, don't you like my hair?"

"I think your hair is the most beautiful I have ever seen; like spun gold."

"Ah, that's very sweet of you. Tell me, how long have you been married, Ron?"

"Year and a half," Ronny said.

"Was it her green eyes?"

Ronny did not answer, lost in the dance, the music.

The Russian stopped playing abruptly and turned round mechanically like a man on wire, a puppet. His face was white, gaunt, a suffering lost look.

"He is blind," Marcia whispered, "poor lamb. Come over and meet him."

His name was Alexandre Woroblin. Russian. He stood up and shook hands with Ronny, smiling a dead smile.

"You play splendidly," Ronny said.

"Thank you!" The Russian bowed slightly.

"Rest a bit and have a drink, Alex," Marcia said.

"I would rather not," the Russian said, "later, not now. I cannot play well when I am drinking. You know how that is with me." He laughed shortly. "I will play something light, something in a light mood." His hands fluttered a little, then fell back to his sides. "You would like this, yes?"

"A waltz," Marcia said. "I have a very fine dancing partner, Alex. He is tall and brown like a polo player; handsome, and his hair goes any way all over the place as if he's always standing in the wind, delightfully boyish."

"Please—" Ronny laughed embarrassed.

"You are happy, I can tell," the

Russian said. "I can always tell." He turned facing the piano again with a queer crooked smile on his lips.

Ronny and Marcia moved to the centre of the studio again.

"I know," Marcia said, "let's go out on the terrace; sit under the stars. Oh, I adore that thing he's playing, simply adore it, listen, listen!"

The night was navy blue, star filled. The lights below in the city golden eyes. The Russian played on and on. Lovely mad things, stirring-ly sad things, the music drifting out over the terrace and into the night catching the stars. Marcia found Ronny's hand, then his lips. Her eyes were dark and lustrous under the light of the moon, her mouth a red flower. I am mad, Ronny thought, I am stark crazy mad! But she was in his arms, their lips meeting again and again, her voice rich deep pleading:

"Ronny, Ronny darling!" Close her firm, round breasts, the lovely lines of her shoulders, her white throat. . . . "Kiss me, Ronny darling, again! Again!"

The music, the night, the wild odor of flowers in white jars, the scent of her hair, the exquisite warmth of her red lips! Ronny's world broke into pieces, spinning miles to the lights below; he knew only desire, the want of this woman pulsing through his veins like wild horses. Shadows on the terrace brought him back. Voices. Some one laughed. Sandra and the picture director standing together. Sandra! Ronny stood up suddenly, fixing his tie, brushed a hand over his hair. Had *she* seen him like that? Had Sandra seen him with his arms around this woman, his lips on her throat, her mouth, desire furiously taking possession of his senses? Surely she must have heard his passion racing into chaos.

But Sandra was sweet. Nothing in her face to tell the story.

"We've been talking hours," she said to Ronny. "Mr. Westbrook has been telling me about Hollywood. Lived there for ages."

Westbrook grinned. "And I've been hearing all about a horse called Moonlight and a husband named Ronny."

"I gave her that horse for a wedding present," Ronny said unsteadily. "It's an Arabian. Very special." He laughed unnaturally.

Marcia laid a hand on Westbrook's shoulder. "I'm afraid I'm not a very nice person letting my guests take care of themselves."

"Don't worry," Westbrook said pleasantly, "it's a swell party. Good liquor. Beautiful women and, my God, where did you get the Russian? He's immense."

"Oh, I came across him one night playing in a club. Pathetic, isn't he? The war, you know. I took pity; asked him to drop over. He did. We became friends. Quite a gentleman. Thoroughbred. Whenever I have a party I let him know. He's mad about music, simply mad. Never stops. Adores to play for me."

"If he could only see you," Sandra said.

"Ah, yes," Ronny said.

"You're all so sweet," Marcia said. "It is sad, isn't it? He's such a poor lost soul." She sighed deeply.

"I think you're just swell," Ronny said. "I can understand how he idolizes you. I feel it in his music." Ronny caught her hand tight. He was loosing hold again. She was superb. She was magnificent. His heart beat like mad; a wonder they could not all hear it.

Marcia said: "Yes, I know he adores me," she laughed softly. "Sometimes I have a hard time. He can be very romantic." Her eyes found Ronny's. He said in a strange stifled voice:

"Let's join the others, eh? What are they all doing?"

Westbrook took Sandra's arm. "Gambling, I bet. They were when we came out. Your poet friend is a whizz, Marcia, he and his wife are cleaning up."

"Oh, they always have all the luck," Marcia said gayly. "Poor Jim takes it on the chin every time."

"The song writer?" Sandra asked. "I think he's so witty."

"He's witty," Marcia said dryly, "until he starts losing money. Then he takes a fit. He always loses. I've never seen it to fail yet."

They all went into the studio. Sandra left Westbrook and caught Ronny by the arm.

"Hello, handsome!"

Ronny smiled awkwardly. "Flirting with me?" he said.

"May I?"

"Bet you can. Having a good time?"

She nodded, her eyes shining. "Isn't it lovely here? Isn't Marcia grand? Oh, I've had the loveliest time tonight. Have you?"

"Great!" Ronny said, staring down at her. She was such a kid. Such a sweet, trusting little kid.

"Why do you look at me like that?" she said.

"You look like an angel," Ronny said.

"I've never seen an angel with red hair," Sandra laughed merrily.

Marcia joined them. "Conference?" she asked slyly, one brow up quizzically. "Don't you know we're all ready for a champagne supper? Let's go." She took Ronny's arm. Westbrook came from somewhere and led Sandra to the long candle-lit table.

It was an elegant party. The Russian bent over the piano, gaunt, white, blind, playing mad music from a mad lonely soul. Black tulips in white bowls. Shadows. Marcia's hair spun gold in the candlelight, her laughter a silver bell. Ronny lean-

ing close whispering, his brown face like an etching on a coin, only his eyes alive and afraid. The song writer full of wit, full of toasts. The poet making love to his wife in verse. Westbrook a little joyfully drunk, telling Sandra she had a virgin mind and the face of a virgin and hair like flaming nasturtiums, and Sandra, exquisitely shy, admiring the beauty of Marcia over the tip of her glass. So the night fled on navy-blue wings. The party broke up with gay good-bys. Ronny and Sandra were last.

"I shall always remember tonight," Sandra said, her eyes sparkling, cheeks flushed. "It's been like something in a book. Wonderful."

Marcia held Ronny's hand tight in hers, an anquished look on her face.

"Nor I," she said intensely. "I hate your going," her eyes were on Ronny, pleading, sad. "It's awful you live so far away."

"Come out," Ronny said. "Why not next week-end? Say yes?"

Marcia dropped his hand. "Oh, lovely. Lovely! Yes, Yes!"

"It's beautiful," Sandra said. "We'll go sailing; do all sorts of things."

"What day can you be down?" Ronny asked quickly.

"Let's see. Let's think. Dash the wine," Marcia laughed, running a hand wildly through her hair, "Sunday, yes. Can't make it before. Oh, damn, damn, wish I could. Show Saturday night. How I hate that, every Saturday night like taking a slice off your life. Never mind, I'll be down Sunday." She paused, looked up at Ronny. "I'll stay until Monday afternoon. Fact, I'll stay forever if you'll ask me."

Ronny's eyes dropped from hers. "You're New York, Marcia. You'd wither and die away from it." He laughed shyly keeping his eyes away from her.

"Really? You think so? A town

girl, eh?" Marcia pulled his ear playfully. "Don't think I'd care anything about lakes and boats and old togger, eh?"

"Oh, you would, I know," Sandra said. "Don't worry about anything Ronny says. 'He's shy because you're a great actress, Marcia; afraid you'll find us too tame.'"

"So! Well, we'll see about that!" Marcia made her eyes wide.

Ronny made a move. "Then it's next Sunday." Their hands met a moment. "Then good-by until then."

"Until then," Marcia said softly, suddenly gentle.

Sandra sat close to Ronny on the way driving back. She slept with her head against his shoulder. He drove carefully not to jog her, grateful that she slept. She was like a dove; a child. Not a woman any more. Something he must protect from hurt. Hurt! The pain of love was upon him and the pain of duty. He was madly, passionately in love. He was crazy in love and he had a wife. All the simple happiness he had known was gone. Like the tide going out—like the sun going down! The months of his marriage sped before him, photographing scenes: Their honeymoon in London; boy and girl. He had been so afraid, she was so young. Months of growing up together. Harmony. Companionship. Understanding.

Ronny shut the memory out driving fast now like a fiend. Sandra awoke, held on to his arm:

"What a beast I am going to sleep!"

"S'all right."

"You must be tired, Ronny."

"No!" He shrugged.

She glanced up at him. His face was grim. Jaw set.

"I must learn to drive," she said gently. "You always have to do it; it isn't fair."

There it was smacking him in the face, that sweet unselfishness. The

child quality of her heart jumping at him without knowing. Damn life. Damn love.

"Well, here we are," he said, turning in the driveway. "Me for bed."

"Won't you have some coffee?"

"Nothing." He jumped out of the car walking fast into the house.

Sandra ran after him. "Ronny?"

"H'm?"

"Ronny, you're not cross with me?"

"Hell, no!"

"You look cross."

"Well, I'm not, see. Why should I be? Hell!"

"I know I was a little bit silly with that picture director, Ronny. I didn't mean to be. I wouldn't do anything to hurt you." Her arms were around him holding fast, her head down. "Oh, Ronny, you're so sweet. I wouldn't ever want any one else."

Ronny's lower lip trembled. "Okay, kitten!" He lifted her chin, looked into her blue eyes. "Listen, if ever I do anything to spoil the way you feel about me, you take a gun and shoot me, see?"

He turned running blindly upstairs slamming the door of his room so that it shook the house. . . .

The days following were strange and unreal. Ronny played a hard game. He was sweet and gentle with Sandra, but Marcia was ever in his mind. Sometimes she seemed so close he could feel her breath on his cheek; found himself listening to her voice. He counted the time until her arrival; it was like waiting for the beginning of the world. Nothing interested him. He was quiet, going off for hours at a time to lie on the rocks, fighting it out with himself and getting nowhere! Always the mad desire to telephone her, to get in the car and rush like mad. Anything to be near her again. So he counted the hours until the last day.

"You are so quiet," Sandra said. "You've been so quiet and strange,



Ronny. What is it? Are you worrying about something?"

Ronny passed a hand across his eyes. "Nothing. Oh, I guess one or two things on my mind. Nothing much. Work next week, you know." He smiled at her uncertainly.

"Don't spoil the last of your holiday thinking of work. Bet you've been building bridges. Not fair. Holiday isn't over yet."

"Oh, you mustn't mind me," Ronny avoided her eyes. "You haven't been married to me long enough to know *all* my moods, sweet."

"And Marcia'll be down tomorrow. Don't forget *that*. We *must* show her a good time, oh, Ronny, don't go getting all architectish."

Ronny went to the window. The lake was light blue and still. The rocks in the sun made a jagged silver shape, like a drunken elephant, a little crowd of gulls sitting on its back. There wasn't a sound, only color everywhere, the horizon blending with the lake, a blue chiffon scarf.

Ronny came back to his chair again, drew a time-table from his pocket.

"She didn't say what train," he said unsteadily. "Think I should call her?"

"Why, yes. There's an idea. How

Cake for the devil!

crazy we are. Funny she didn't say what time. *Did* she say what time? Let's think." Sandra made her eyes narrow. "We were all so woozy-

woozy from the champagne. Call her, that's an idea. We'll have to know what train to meet, have to know that. Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if she could come down after the play tonight!"

"No trains," Ronny said.

"Her car?"

"Hasn't got a car. Doesn't keep a car. Got in a smash-up one time. Taxies everywhere," Ronny said jerkily. "Think I'll call her to find out what train to meet. Think I will."

He went to the telephone, trembling all over; his voice shook as he asked for the number, his hands broke out into a sweat. His heart clanging like a gong; the seconds of waiting like little devil knives jumping out of the receiver. Then she spoke:

"Marcia," he said, "it's Ronny!"

"Ronny? Oh, darling, how lovely. I've waited like mad for a call. How cruel of you to make me wait so long."

"Have you? Have you really, Marcia?" Ronny's throat wanted to burst; it wasn't his throat at all, tight, bursting. "I'm sorry."

"You'll have to make up for it, Ron, darling. I've been loving you and loving you every single moment day and night since we said good-by. I've been through hell!"

"What train?" Ronny said, his heart on wings.

Marcia laughed gayly. "I didn't say what train, did I? I knew you'd be telephoning. Didn't think you'd take all week, cruel, lovely, murderous wretch."

"I wish you had no show tonight," Ronny said. "I wish——"

"Listen, Ron, are you still listening?"

"Yes. Yes."

"D'you still love me?"

"Too much."

"Sure?"

"Too sure."

"Not feeling just a wee bit religious?"

"Don't be crazy."

"Well, then," she paused, came back, "just lighting a cigarette. Listen, darling, why don't you drive down for me. Pick me up, after the show? Why don't you come and get me? Could you, darling?"

Ronny stopped breathing, then: "Don't see why not."

"You sound so stilted, darling, so cold like a dentist or something." Ronny laughed softly. "You do still love me, don't you? Don't you?"

"I told you."

"You're not alone. Is that it? Sandra there. That it?"

"Right."

"You think she'd mind your coming up for me, darling?"

"We'll both drive up and get you, Marcia. Love to. Great idea."

"Oh!" Marcia's voice changed. "Can't you come alone?"

"Rather a large order," Ronny said, "can't you figure it out?"

"Try, will you? Will you try, Ron? Oh, I do so want to see you. See you alone. That wonderful drive. Think of it, darling."

"See you after the show," Ronny said, "that's sure."

"Are you telling me good-by, Ronny?"

"Good-by, Marcia, take care, take good care of yourself——"

"By, my love, my sweet Ronny darling!"

Ronny sat with the receiver in his hand, her voice still ringing in his ear. Then he stood up, plunged the receiver back in place and walked down the hall, his legs shaky, the whole of him feeling unbalanced like those shell-shocked fellows in the war, he told himself; it was as though, suddenly, he had lost his reason and wasn't here at all; just a ghost; his soul having flown far off to a studio high up against the stars. . . .

"Well," Sandra said, "what did she say, Ronny? What train?"

"Wants us to drive up and get her," Ronny said unevenly. He went to the dresser, found a bottle, poured himself a stiff drink. "Have one, Sandy?"

"Sure. Ah, that's enough, oh, that's *too* much. You know I never drink it strong like that. Watch out you don't spill it; look how your hand is shaking; there, that's right, put some back. Fine. Yes, a little soda. What did you tell her, that we would?"

"Didn't you hear what I said?"

"How could I, silly? I was out in the garden. We'll have to do something about those roses, it's a shame. What did you tell her?"

"I told her we would."

"Would what?"

"We'd drive up and get her."

"Why don't you go up and get her, Ronny?"

"You mean without you?" Ronny was startled. She nodded. "Why?"

"Well, you know what a sleepy thing I am. Most likely fall asleep on the drive back. That would be horrid. This way I'll get a nap in early, be waiting when you come. Coffee. Fire going. Have everything just splendid. Won't have to keep Marie up that way. It'll be frightfully late, you know. I'll stay here and have everything ready. Wouldn't you like that?"

Ronny looked down at his hands. He was a thief. No good. She was wonderful. An angel! Couldn't she see what had happened to him? Couldn't she see how mad he was to get away from her? To get away from here to *her* alone?

"Okay," he said quietly to keep his voice natural, "you'll keep the home fires burning, eh? Have it nice when we get back. Fine, She'll like our place; the way you have everything fixed, Sandy."

Sandra laughed. "You're sweet,

Ronny. Do I make you the right kind of wife. Am I all right, Ronny, truly?"

"You're swell."

"You haven't kissed me for hours and hours, Ronny."

Ronny dropped both hands on her shoulders, kissed her nose.

"Don't mind me, Kit," he laughed uneasily. "What d'you say to a jog up the beach?"

"On the horses?"

"Sure." Ronny finished his drink. Now he felt better. Stronger. His head sang. Perhaps if he had another.

"Don't drink any more," Sandra said, "spoil the ride for you. Wait until we get back."

"Okay!" Ronny put the cork back in the bottle. "Time we get back I'll have to dress for town. Better have an early supper."

"That's right. I'll tell Caldwell."

Ronny reached town in time to see the last act of Marcia's play over again. She was as superbly beautiful in that gown of jade green, her hair falling gold, her voice like music, rising, falling in rhythm as she walked, stood a moment, pensive, sad, broke into fire. God she was superb!

The curtain came down with deafening applause. Ronny found his way back-stage. Her room was full of flowers, crystal jars, bottles, photographs, telegrams, letters, velvet, chiffon, brocaded things, gold and silver ornaments. Ronny gasped. Dropped down into a chair. This was Marcia. Then she came, was in his arms.

"Darling, darling!"

"Marcia!" he whispered hoarsely.

"We are alone. You came alone."

"I came alone."

"I knew it. I knew you would. Hold me, sweet. Hold me tight."

"I saw you again in the last act," Ronny said breathlessly. "Got here just in time. You are wonderful, Beautiful and wonderful!"

"You think I'm beautiful, Ronny?" She was looking up at him with passionate eyes, her head thrown back.

"If I were an artist," Ronny said, "I'd draw pictures of you and hang them in every swank cocktail lounge in Paris, New York and London."

"And wouldn't you keep one for yourself?"

"I don't believe I would."

"So *that's* all you care."

Ronny drew her close again. "I wouldn't need to keep one. I'd have it painted on my soul."

"You're gorgeous, Ronny." Marcia laughed delightfully. "Are you happy?"

"Too happy."

"I mean with *her*?"

"I'd rather not answer that right now, if you don't mind!" Ronny stopped short, Sandra's face was too clear, her fine blue eyes— He moved away from Marcia, said: "Where do I put myself while you change out of that 'Devil's Wife' affair?"

"You shy, darling?" Her eyes laughed at him.

"Lord, damn it, no!" Ronny felt himself blushing. "Say who wants to get in? Somebody knocking."

Marcia went to the door, stood there, "Hello, who is it?"

"Hello, Marcia!"

"Hello, West. Listen, darling, I'm rather busy, d'you mind?"

"Sure, I mind."

"Oh, now be good. Be sweet."

"Shall I wait?"

"I'm going to be busy, West. And I'm in a frightful dashed hurry."

There was a pause, then: "Well, I'll hop along then. See you later, maybe?"

"I'll give you a call, darling. You were sweet to think of me."

"You won't forget?"

"I never forget."

"Good-by."

"Good-by, West, darling."

Marcia came back to Ronny, pulled

his face down to hers kissing his lips.

"Is he in love with you?" Ronny said. Marcia laughed lightly, running her lips across his eyes. "Don't do that!" His voice was harsh. "You drive me mad."

"Don't you want to be driven mad?"

"I don't know," Ronny said under his breath. His lips found her lips, their mouths one. "Open your eyes, Marcia. Look at me, Marcia."

Her lashes were long, sweeping, coming up slowly, her eyes languid, smoky.

"There, what do you see?"

"Do you love me, Marcia?" he asked huskily.

Marcia pressed her flat hand over his heart. "I can feel it beating, Ronny, like a drum. Listen. Can you hear it?"

Ronny held her fiercely to him. "You haven't answered my question. Look at me, answer me."

Slowly she raised her eyes. "Do you want me to love you, Ronny?"

"Yes, oh God, yes!"

"I do, Ronny."

"Oh, my sweet!"

She jumped up suddenly. "Let me change, darling. Have yourself a brandy or something while I change." She went over to the cabinet. "Here's anything you want. I had Freida get some ice. Help yourself." She disappeared in back of the screen.

Ronny fixed a drink while she changed, chatting to him from behind the screen. When he saw her again, she was dressed in street clothes. A tailored frock and cape the color of wine. "You look wonderful," he said, admiringly. "Your hair is a golden cloud against the wine."

"You say such lovely things, Ronny. Did you fix me a Scotch?"

"Drink from my glass," he said.

"Right. Where were you drinking, here?"

Ronny nodded, smiling. Marcia lifted the glass to her lips.

"Ah, *that* was good. My first today." She put the glass down. "Listen, Ronny, I've got to stop off at the studio. Mind?"

"Of course not."

"Then let's go."

"Not before you kiss me again."

"No. Maybe when we get to the studio. Maybe not then. I mustn't spoil you." She laughed, unlocked the door. "We better get out of here before they shut us up in the theatre for the night."

"I wouldn't mind."

"Yes, you would! It gets as cold as a graveyard."

"Then you've tried it?"

"Once."

"Don't make me jealous," Ronny said, squeezing her arm.

"God, no, darling, nothing romantic; an all-night rehearsal. We worked to get this play into shape, believe me."

Ronny's car was red, the shape of a submarine. Marcia looked like Garbo in it.

"You know the way, Ron?"

"Sure, I know." He laughed softly. "Listen, I've been up to your studio a million times since last week. I know every stone in the road, every squeak in the elevator, every cobweb."

"No cobwebs," Marcia said, pulling his hand from the wheel to her lips. "Not one bit of a cobweb. How dare you! I hate spiders. Ugh!"

"I've dreamed of you every single living moment," Ronny said.

"Yet you didn't telephone me until today. Think of that!"

Ronny said nothing driving fast.

"Think of that," Marcia said again.

"Why didn't you call me, Ronny?"

"Don't bring Sandra back into it again," Ronny said tensely.

"Sandra? What had *she* to do with it?"

"Oh, I couldn't call you, Marcia.

I couldn't sneak around to it."

Ronny's face was unsmiling, jaw set.

"She doesn't guess," Marcia said, leaning forward, looking up at Ronny's face. "You haven't been stupid enough——"

He shook his head. "Nothing! She wouldn't! She—she thinks I'm perfect; wouldn't dream— Oh, God, Marcia, I love you. Damn it to hell I do. I can't help myself."

"All right, sweet lamb, don't get into a pet over it. Look, see those lights far, far up? The studio. Isn't it gorgeous so far up? I'm crazy about it, like living in the clouds."

Ronny brought the car to a stop. They got out. The doorman touched his cap, shut the door after them.

"Shall I drive it round to the garage, Miss Dawn?"

"No, thanks, Joe. We'll be down shortly, leave it in the driveway. Wonderful night, isn't it, Joe?"

"It is that, Miss Dawn."

They shot up in the elevator. Marcia leaned against Ronny. The colored boy smiled. Marcia smiled. Ronny hummed a song. They got out at the big, white door.

"Ring the bell for me, Ronny."

Ronny rang the bell and a Negro opened the door. Ronny recognized him from the bar the other night.

"Good evening."

"Good evening, sir."

"Hello, Sykes."

"Hello, Miss Dawn. Good house tonight?"

"Wonderful, Sykes. Good house every night."

"They come to see you, Miss Dawn."

"Thank you, Sykes. Now listen, we haven't long. Mix up something. Something special. Yes my cape, here, my hat too. May as well be comfortable while we have our drink." She smiled at Ronny, took his arm.

"Well, Miss Leading Lady," he said, "where shall we sit?"

Sykes put a match to the fire. It had grown chilly. The flames leaped blue and orange, splashing the walls with foreign shapes in shade and night. Ronny relaxed against the cushions, Marcia on a hassock at his feet, her head thrown back against his knees. His fingers twisted her fair hair in curls, round and round. Sykes came with the drinks, tall, bending over with the tray, his face very black against the white coat, his teeth flashing.

"The way you like it, Miss Dawn. The way I learned to make them in Bermuda."

Ronny tasted, whistled. "God, that's a drink!"

"A toast, Ronny!" Marcia smiled, raised her glass.

"To your eyes," Ronny said.

"Won't do. Too trite."

Ronny flinched. "To our love," he said.

"Ah, to our love!"

Sykes came in again. Refilled the glasses.

"I'll be getting tight," Ronny said. "I don't want to. Don't want to spoil this with getting tight; never was a brilliant drinker."

Marcia laughed. "You're such a boy, Ronny. Adorable!"

Ronny drew her up from the hassock, close to him. "I'm no boy, Marcia. I'm no kid."

"Are you sure of that?"

Ronny was sarcastic. "Sure? Hell, listen, Marcia; I've put on ten years since last week, since first I met you. You've done something to me. I—Well, hell, I want more. I want you. Good God, that's it. I've shed my kid cloak. Found life. Found love!"

"Sweet, Ronny," Marcia said with his hand to her lips. "You really do care, don't you?"

"Care?" He laughed harshly. "Did you say *care*? I'm crazy, stark mad about you, losing my wits."

"Thought you said you'd just found them?"

"I've found you, Marcia, that's what I've found."

Marcia took his face between her cool hands. "You're quite sure you love me, Ronny?"

"Quite sure, Marcia."

"Then stay with me tonight," Marcia said breathlessly. "Stay, Ronny and love me."

Ronny moved away, leaning back, looking into her face.

"We can't! I can't do that."

"Yes—yes!"

"No, Marcia."

"Then it isn't true, darling. You don't love me. You only think you love me." She drew his face down to hers. "Kiss me, sweet, sweet Ronny!"

Ronny pushed her away, stood up. "I can't, Marcia. Don't ask me. I can't stay. I can't. You don't know what you're asking."

"Then you don't love me."

Ronny turned on her fiercely. "I want you more than anything else in the world, Marcia. I'm going mad inside."

"You've a funny way of showing it," Marcia said, smiling faintly, almost disdainfully.

"I have, have I? Well, see here!"

"I adore you when you look mad like that," Marcia broke in. "They'd go daffy about you on the stage. You really should have been an actor, Ron, you're so beautifully emotional."

"Don't joke," Ronny said hoarsely, "for God's sake listen; listen to what I have to say, Marcia." He dropped down beside her, grasped her two hands tight. "I'm crazy about you, Marcia. I want to marry you. Marry you! I've thought it all out. I can't go on like this. I want you like hell, but I want you the right way, not a lot of mess and hurt. I can't take you while I'm married to Sandra; break her heart. I'm no saint, Marcia, but I can't take you, love you the way I want to love you

—married to her. It's not my way, God, no, it's not my way!"

Marcia was laughing now, her lips wine red, head thrown back, hair hanging long and loose and gold in the firelight.

"Dear, serious, sweet, Ronny, are you proposing to me? Are you, darling?" She fell back against the cushions laughing.

Ronny was stabbed to the quick: "Marcia!" he said wildly.

"Oh, Ronny, Ronny, I can't stop, I can't stop laughing, you're so funny!"

Ronny caught her hands, then flung them roughly away. "You're drunk! Drunk!"

Marcia stopped laughing. "I'm not drunk, Ronny—very sober." She got up, snapped the lights on, then lit a cigarette and stood over by the mantel, smoking like a man, looking over at Ronny with contempt. "Young fool!" she said.

Ronny walked out on to the terrace, stood looking down. There was no beauty now, no glamor, the lights far down like tinsel on a Christmas tree.

Somewhere a clock struck two, hollow, haunting. Ronny turned, went back into the studio. She was still standing there with a cigarette in her hand, her face empty of expression. Suddenly she looked up.

"Well, Ronny?"

"Well?" His voice was hard.

"I was right, Ronny, you are only a boy."

"I'm a damned fool!" he said grimly.

"Perhaps. Perhaps."

"Well, I'll get going."

"You'd better telephone her. Tell her you're on the way. Tell her I was taken ill." She laughed acidly. "Wait, I'll write a little note."

"To hell with that," Ronny said viciously. "Keep your notes."

"Your love soon changed to hate, Ronny," she said dryly.

Ronny made a sound of contempt. He moved to the door.

"Good night," he said wretchedly.

"Good night—good-by, young Ronny."

Her laughter followed him.

"I put your car in the garage," the doorman said.

"Well, get it out," Ronny said tersely.

"Listen, you don't have to talk that way to me."

"I didn't tell you to put it away," Ronny said.

"She did."

"You lie. I heard her tell you what to do with it."

"Oh, yeah? What did she tell me to do with it?"

Ronny was getting mad. "She told you to leave it in the driveway."

The doorman grinned. "Hell, listen, fellow, that means put it in the garage. That means what went up with her is staying overnight. Listen, I been taking orders from her long enough to know my stuff." He spat, laughed coarsely. "You don't have to get funny with me, youngster. You're only a stage-door Johnny to me, see?"

Ronny saw red. "By God, you—"

"Say, listen," the doorman had him by the shoulder, "you start any rough stuff around here and I'll call the cops."

"Well, get my car. I want to get out of here."

"You do, eh? Like that, eh? You spent your hour of love with her and now you want to be off, eh? Listen, let me give you a tip: Take a look at that poor blind guy once in a while. There he is, eating his bleeding heart out for her, crazy bleeding mad over her; married her when she was a nobody, he did. Lost his sight a couple years ago, he did. She don't want the public to know; they like to play single, them actresses. I know. I know it all. He talks to me by the hour about her, he does; he's

nuts about her, the poor blind guy! One of these days he's going to take a gun and shoot her guts out. I feel it coming."

Ronny's mouth hung open. He passed a hand over his face.

"Good God!" he said, his voice hoarse, broken.

"I don't talk this way often," the doorman said, "I got a drop too much drink in me I guess. But it's seeing him like this morning, standing there, his stick in his hand, asking me about her. 'What she have on?' he says. 'How'd she look?' he says. 'Wonderful woman,' he says. And me knowing how she is with one man after another, while he lives separate from her like he's got a disease or something. Like he's not good enough for her. Lord, but it burns me up!"

"I have a long drive," Ronny said weakly.

"Yeah. Sure. I'll get it now."

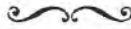
He brought the car around. Stood off examining it.

"Nice little job. Looks like an imported." Ronny handed him a tip. "Thanks a lot!" He leaned on the car door, staring in at Ronny. "I've had a drop too much I guess. It'd cost me my job if she knew, but when I see that poor blind guy——"

"Forget it," Ronny said.

The car shot straight ahead. Ronny's eyes were wet. I have a girl who loves me, he thought. I am young and strong and I have my sight. I have everything a man could want and I almost lost it. His heart opened and closed; he breathed with relief. He had been through a crisis and come out clean! Exalted, he pulled up at a pay station and put in a call to Sandra.

"Sandra," he said, "I'm rushing home. I'll be home before you know it," and before she could answer he had hung up.



NEW YORK

By Reginald Wright Kauffman

Perilous towers round a cluttered bay;
 Canyons where gnomes pursue the tickers' gold;
 Sweat-shops and dance-halls for the young-made-old;
 A few grudging spaces where pale children play.
 Days drugged by night, and nights that rob the day;
 Bodies for barter; honor, bought and sold;
 Cliff-dwelling folk, greeds, mean and manifold;
 Lights, laughter, tears, jazz, motor-horns—Broadway!
 This is Manhattan, as her own dull eye,
 Jaded from reading in the book of death,
 Sees the reflection she is careless of.
 A city where the millions race to die!
 Is lust too jealous of her heavy breath
 To leave some leisure for a little love?

Bridal Eve

By VICTOR ROUSSEAU



“OF course you’re going to stay on here, darling,” said Nan to Lois. “I’ve got to keep this place till fall, and I’ve been stung once with sub-letting, which was quite enough for me. You see, it’s not going to cost me a cent. But it’s just too bad, your having to spend the summer cooped up in New York.”

“You’re awfully sweet, Nan,” Lois said. “I guess even New York in

summer is better than being homeless. When are you getting married?”

“Saturday,” answered Nan, brushing out the shining ripples of her red-gold hair. “His wife got her divorce on Monday, and he doesn’t want to wait. You see, darling, he seems to want me quite a lot.”

“I do hope you’ll be happy, Nan,” said Lois wistfully.

Nan held the brush poised. “I’m afraid it’s going to be just a little deadly, being cooped up with one

man for the rest of my days," she said. "But I'm going to make good, Lois. I've got to. I'm twenty-seven, you know. If it wasn't for that— Oh, well, what's the use?"

She began unbuckling the garters of her sheer gun-metal stockings, then pulling the silken sheaths from her dainty limbs. What a beautiful woman, Lois thought, as she watched her. Kind, irresponsible, and yet with a pretty definite idea where she was going, and what she was doing. No wonder Hempel had starred her in that last, short-lived play, in which Lois herself had had only a few lines to speak! Nan's shoulders and arms were flawless, creamy-white, with the faintest undertone of gold.

Nan looked up, one bare foot daintily poised. She spoke as if she felt more explanation was necessary.

"It's lucky I've been careful," she said. "He's not the sort who would ever ask me any questions, but he has a lot of quaint, old-fashioned ideas about women. He can't suppose I've never had my experiences, but he's the kind who'll put all his doubts down in the bottom of his mind, and accept me as I am, because he's a gentleman, Lois. Oh, I wish I loved him! I wish— I wish—"

"You see now why I'm not telling people about it. I'll be so glad to leave Broadway for ever, and everybody we've known, and settle down on that place of his in Connecticut."

"Ah, don't speak to me about Connecticut!" exclaimed Lois, shivering.

"It's pretty rural, I admit, and I don't wonder you made a flying leap from it," said Nan. "But I'm going to be a good wife to him, and go in for the society matron stuff that they love out there. I've got to, darling, at twenty-seven!"

"Does—does Cyril know?" faltered Lois.

"I had to tell him, dear. He knows

that, after Saturday, we're through. I'm going to make a clean break. Yes, Cyril knows. And he wants to meet my husband. Imagine it? Men are so queer. I asked him what satisfaction he'd get out of it, and he didn't know."

Lois, seated in her pyjamas on one of the twin beds, was wondering just how varied Nan's experiences had been. Nan seldom mentioned names. She'd never told Lois whom she was going to marry. Lois knew that Nan would just slip away, that she would never see her again. And she loved Nan, despite Nan's lack of responsibility, and men who had been in her life before she fell so hard for Cyril Trumbull, Hempel's leading man.

But Nan had been always careful. She had never let any man come up to the little apartment. But she had been away most week-ends. Once, Lois knew, with old Hempel. More than once, she was sure, with Cyril Trumbull. Never with this unknown man whom she was to marry on Saturday.

Nan slipped into her pyjamas and came over to Lois.

"Darling, are you always going to be such a little ninny?" she asked her. "You could get where I am. You're gorgeous, with that dark hair, and those gray eyes of yours, with the black rims around the pupils. If I were a man, I'd fall for you so hard."

"But one doesn't have to," said Lois.

"No, of course one doesn't have to use all one's assets, if one doesn't want to. Only, darling, what are you going to do when the fall comes, if you don't get a part? Listen, Lois, listen, dear, you know how I've always got along well with men. Never stood for any rough stuff or promiscuity, have I? They're so fair, so decent, and they want to give a girl a break, if she's straight, but still, they earn the money, don't they?"

And we women have to live. Be fair to them."

"I am fair to them."

"You're not, darling. Lois, I've never quite got you. I know you're fastidious. But you've got temperament, you're a woman, aren't you? You don't really have to play this silly old-fashioned game— Oh, you know what I mean!"

Lois was thinking. Why shouldn't she explain to Nan, after all, now that she would never see her again? Nan had been so dear to her, let her share the apartment, never thrown any parties there—and she'd never see her after Saturday!

It wasn't easy to explain, even though explanation would let down those dreadful barriers in her soul. Yet she found herself sobbing it out, while Nan sat beside her, one arm over her shoulders. . . .

"When did this happen, darling?" Nan asked her.

"Four years ago, nearly, when I was playing stock at New Haven. I was only eighteen then, and was looked upon as a child genius. Maybe I'd have become one, if it hadn't happened. I was on my own, with just a few hundred dollars that I'd inherited from my uncle's farm. Oh, Nan, I was desperate about him!"

"Wouldn't he marry you, poor darling?"

"He couldn't. He was a married man. I knew it all from the first. He wasn't to blame. We just couldn't help ourselves for loving each other. Then I ran away and came to New York, because I couldn't bear it any longer."

"And you've never seen him since?" asked Nan.

"I never let him know where I'd gone. I just disappeared. And, of course, he's forgotten me long ago. I was just an—an experience, I suppose."

What a cheap little tragedy, Nan thought. What a little fool, though,

to have let it affect her life the way it had!

"You know, dear," Nan tried to console her, "we were all young and innocent once. And we learn to put those things behind us, because we've got to. If you had got somebody else to love you, you'd have forgotten that fellow long ago. The best cure for a dead dog is a live one."

"I couldn't!"

"Why not?"

"I suppose—because I'm made that way. I don't want any other man in my life. He knows me, Nan, he knows me as a woman, and not as a hat and a bundle of clothes. Don't you understand? He's held me in his arms, and I tell you we were mad about each other, and— Oh, I can't go on!"

"And you, my dear," said Nan, "are a Broadway actress!"

"A failure, like hundreds of others."

"You don't need to be. Hempel thinks you're grand. You've just let this thing get you down and crush you. You've got to snap out of it, darling."

"How?" asked Lois, dabbing at her eyes.

"You've got to mix, my dear. You sit here alone and mope while I'm away, and then think you can get ahead in a business that needs more personality than any other. You don't have to take lovers, but the right sort of man could help you to the big money, the Chanel frocks, jewels, —everything one wants. See, darling? Did you ever know I used to be crazily jealous of you, because of Cyril?"

"I wasn't sure about it. I knew you'd find out Cyril was nothing to me."

"Listen! That man was in love with you before he ever looked at me. He is still! Lois, I'm giving him up. It's so tough on both of us. You're the only person who could

make him forget me. And you're about the only person I'd be willing for him to forget me with. You've always liked him, haven't you?"

"Yes, but—not in that way. He's always been kind to me."

"He'll get you a swell part for the fall, if you'll come out of your shell. Oh, Lois, I can't bear to say what I'm saying to you. I wouldn't say it to any girl but you." Nan was crying now. "What would you think of a farewell party, just us four—us two, and Cyril and you?" Nan asked. "A good-by to the old life. I'm trying to help you and Cyril, see?"

"You mean you want me to become Cyril's——?"

"I don't mean anything, except I want you to come out of your shell. He's a grand person. Let the future take care of itself. Be human. Say you will."

"I will!" Lois exclaimed, so quickly that Nan was taken aback. "Yes, I will! You're right. I know I've been a fool about that man for four years. I'll do it, Nan. However, I'm not pledging myself about Cyril."

"I'm not asking that, darling. But he's all broken up about me, and I'll never see him again. Not after Friday night, never, never, never! And life goes on. Will you come, dear, and will you put that man out of your mind?"

"Yes, I will!" said Lois.

But half that night she lay wide-eyed in her bed, listening to Nan's rhythmic breathing, and living over again those weeks in New Haven, weeks of such madness as would have seemed impossible. . . . Jim Burnett's people were rich manufacturers somewhere near. Jim was just through Yale and they met the second week Lois had been playing. Lois hadn't been exaggerating when she told Nan that she belonged to Jim. She'd known it the moment they met.

First the madness of it! Ah, but then the sordidness of it, inseparable from such an affair in a country town! The trips overnight to Bridgeport and other cities, rooms shared with a sense of furtiveness in shabby hotels where there was no chance of Jim's being recognized. And, all the while, Jim's wife!

A secret marriage in his junior year, to a little floosie who refused to divorce him, to whom he had to go home weekly, after his pretended post-graduate work was done. A hell in a little cottage—for Jim's parents had refused to recognize her. Sharing Jim with another woman! That was even more sordid than the shabby hotels.

It had all become impossible. The ecstasy and horror of those weeks had blended until, out of it all, the wild impulse for flight had come to Lois. She had disappeared. Never since seen any one she had known in New Haven. Worked in a store, typed, got small parts in shows, been befriended by Nan! All the while the memories of those nights!

"I will! I will!" she repeated to herself a score of times, clenching her small fists. "I've been a fool! I've let that man destroy my life. I don't care what happens now. My life is going to be my own. I hate him!" . . .

The faint gray of the summer morning was beginning to steal into the room before Lois slept at last. It was Nan who awoke her with the orange juice, toast, and coffee. Dear Nan! The world wouldn't have recognized her for the grand person she was, because the world doesn't recognize how women can be loyal to women. But Lois knew.

"I've been thinking it over. I'll come on your party," she said gravely.

"Friday night? I may be away till then."

Lois knew where Nan was going,

knew that she and Cyril were not going to break up without a farewell. And she thought, I shared my lover with another woman once, and now I've got to take another woman's lover. Life's horrible—but it's that way."

"Friday night," Lois repeated.

"I'll give you a ring, darling," Nan told her.

Nan was gone later, with a flurry of suitcases and hat-boxes, and Lois was alone in the little apartment that was to be hers till September. Lois was thinking about Cyril Trumbull. With her definite act of rejecting Jim Burnett, and all their memories, her personality seemed to have become enlarged. She saw now in what a narrow circle she had been wandering. It had been a miracle that she had ever got that job with Hempel.

She thought of Cyril, and of his numerous little courtesies. She'd lied to Nan when she pretended she hadn't been sure whether Cyril had been in love with her. He had been mad about her, and Lois had known it, and put it down in her subconsciousness. Now, Nan wanted her to console Cyril, because she was leaving him forever.

And, with that larger consciousness, Lois saw Cyril as a man, and a very desirable one. Tall, handsome, a gentleman, and a man who could help her. What a fool she had been!

What an asset woman had in their beauty, she thought cynically, as she dressed before the mirror, taking in each feature of herself, looking at her black-rimmed gray eyes, and the curves of her breasts, and the beautifully modelled limbs that tapered to those slender ankles under the fawn stockings.

"I've got to live!" she said to herself. "I've got to live! Oh, I hate you! You robbed me of everything, when I was eighteen. A child! Those

horrible little rooms that smelled of dust and plush." And there was the woman waiting for Jim—waiting for him in their cottage after she was through with him!

Nan didn't come back. Lois had known that she wouldn't. Thursday passed, and Friday came, and then, in the afternoon, the ring, Nan's voice:

"Is that you, darling? Can you meet us at Tony's at seven o'clock tonight? Oh, Lord, I've had a wild time, Lois." Nan's voice was hysterical. "Us four! Listen, dear—listen, darling: you've got to be yourself. Cyril's rather blue. Yes, we're all counting on you. You see, it's going to be a sort of mixed party. It's per-shonality that's going to count. Be yourself, Lois. You can swing it. I'm damned if I can."

Nan rang off. Lois knew that Nan, who hardly ever drank much, must have been under an intense emotional strain. With Cyril, of course! And marrying the man from Connecticut, because she was twenty-seven. And dedicating her, Lois, as a peace-offering, a love-offering, to Cyril Trumbull, to help him to forget the past.

She'd play her part. She wasn't going to be rooked by Jim Burnett any longer! Not even if he had known her—as she had told Nan. Not even if she had laid aside all the reticences of a young girl for him, because she had been desperately and madly in love with him!

"I'll make Cyril Trumbull!" she told herself. "I've got to live. I don't care. I don't care! Jim killed something in me. I guess all men kill something in women. And then they call us heartless! I want clothes and shelter. And there isn't any love!"

"Do you hear that?" she said to herself, as she slipped into that gold lace evening gown. It clung to her, it was a part of her, it was like an

extension of her own body. Lois looked at herself in Nan's pier-glass.

"Can I make Cyril Trumbull?" she asked herself. "I can make any man! It isn't nice. No, it's not nice. Life isn't nice. It wasn't nice," she said, hardening herself, "when Jim used to leave me in those squalid little Bridgeport hotels, to go home to his wife. I guess I've lived through all that. I'm myself now. Do you understand?" she asked the gold-sheathed woman in the mirror.

She snapped off the lights, groped her way to the door. Oh, God, why did she have to keep thinking, thinking? But there would be drinks soon, and then she wouldn't have to think. . . .

Jim Burnett was the first person she saw in the lobby of Tony's. Not changed, except for a few lines about his mouth and eyes. Harder, as she was harder,—but not changed. Then Nan, then Cyril Trumbull.

"Lois, dear I want you to meet my fiancé, Mr. Burnett," said Nan, a little thickly.

Lois bowed, and saw Jim's eyes devouring her with incredulous amazement. . . .

The dinner was a farce, a dream, a nightmare. Nan and Cyril had evidently been imbibing a good deal. To them, the setting was unreality. Only Jim and Lois were alive. They were watching each other, incredulous of each other's presence. And Nan was going to marry Jim!

But he knew her! . . . He knew her because of all those nights together in those wretched little hotels. He knew her, and she was his, and she'd met him again after all, when she'd never expected to see him again!

They had champagne. Nan and Cyril had been drinking. Only God and those two knew where they had been, the past two days. They were lolling in their seats, but Jim and Lois were looking at each other, in-

credulous, and barely speaking. Nan leaned toward Jim, and Lois could see that she was pulling herself together.

"Darling," she said, "I guess I'm pretty well soaked. I've got to go home."

"I'll take you home, Nan," answered Jim. But he was still looking at Lois.

She was his woman, as she'd always known she was, and that sheath of gold that concealed her was just a jest. But there's loyalty between women. Lois leaned toward Nan.

"Hold up, dear," she said. And whispered: "You and Cyril are staging too much of a show. You'd better send him home. We're going back to the apartment."

"Sure," answered Nan. "Sure! But this is the lasht night of my single life. Tomorrow night I won't be a maiden lady any more. 'S that true, Jim?" she hiccupped.

Lois had never seen Nan vulgar before. She saw a sombre flicker in Jim's eyes. They rose from the table. Jim paid the check. The four of them were in the lobby of Tony's, and then, somehow, Cyril was helping Nan into a taxi and getting in after her. Jim's hand checked Lois. They stood together, watching Nan and Cyril arguing. Jim turned toward Lois and said:

"Oh God, how I've wanted you, and now I've found you again."

"You've got to see Nan home," said Lois.

But the taxi was moving. Nan was beckoning to Jim, but it was moving, and the two disputing figures disappeared in the maze of traffic down the side street. . . .

The taxi was gone, and Jim and Lois were still standing on the curb.

"Cyril's seeing her home to our apartment, Jim," said Lois. "I think we'd best take another taxi and see that she's all right."

"Not yet! There's too much that

we've got to talk about. I'm not getting married until tomorrow, you know."

They looked at each other, taking it all in, everything, just a man and a girl who loved each other, and were caught up by life, as they were snarled in the tangle of pedestrians and traffic moving along the road.

"Jim, she's going to be your wife!"

"Tomorrow! . . . Why did you run away from me?"

"Jim, my dear, that's all in the past, isn't it?" said Lois softly.

"There isn't anything but the present."

Lois caught her breath. "Nan's my friend," she whispered. "And going to be your wife. Let's part now, Jim,—right now! I'll give you her address."

"I've been crazy since seeing you here tonight."

They weren't answering each other's challenges. They were pursuing each their own train of thought. Ah, but it led in one direction, into each other's arms. Lois was fighting, fighting, to be loyal to Nan. It wasn't any use.

"Jim," she tried again, "You're marrying Nan tomorrow. And she's such a grand person. Jim, don't condemn her because she got plastered with an old friend the night before marrying you. Most men have stag parties before they get married, don't they? Jim, for God's sake, never condemn any woman for anything," she cried hysterically. "Oh, if only you men could understand how difficult life is for us!"

"I'm not condemning Nan. Let's go to my apartment and talk."

"I'll go for a few minutes,—only a few minutes, Jim. I've got to go to Nan. She'll need me."

Jim didn't answer her. He was holding up a finger as a taxi drew up to the curb. And Lois knew that she was lost. She couldn't make anything come real. She was stand-

ing before the swinging, open door of the taxi, and Jim wanted her to get inside.

She was inside now. She was slumping against his shoulder, as she had seen Nan slumping against Cyril's. But she wasn't drunk. She had never been more sober, and a little, clear light in her brain was playing over the whole setting, searching out and analyzing. . . .

The taxi stopped. Jim was helping her out, and her limbs were so weak. But Jim's hand was under her arm, just in the way he used to help her out of taxis in Bridgeport, centuries ago. . . . They were in a dinky little elevator, propelled by a black boy. A door opened, and then they were in Jim's apartment.

"Have a drink, dear?" asked Jim. Lois shook her head. She looked at him, pleading without speaking. She wanted him to take her back to Nan. "I love you, dear," said Jim. "And I've found you again after all these years."

"But everything is different," said Lois.

"Nothing has got to be different."

Suddenly Lois found herself laughing hysterically. "Oh, Jim, look at me! Don't you want me to take off my hat and put it on a chair, the way I used to? You never knew whether I had my hat on or off, did you? Do you remember that time—?"

After that, nothing seemed to matter. Lois remembered later having said: "Swear that you'll go to Nan the first thing in the morning!"

But he hadn't answered her. All he had said was, "I've loved you for four years. There was never any one but you. Do you remember the old days?"

Lois answered steadily, "I remember them. I remember all the ecstasy and terror of them, and your going away to your wife. I ran away from it all. But there has never been any other man in my life, Jim." . . .

"You know," he said, much later, when they could talk again, and hold each other close, and laugh, "you were such a child. That was the thing that hurt me most, thinking of what I had done to you. After you ran away, I knew that I'd never find anybody like you again. I've cultivated another side of my nature since. I've been a kind of playboy, since I came into my father's money. God, if you knew how I've hated the women I've been with!"

Lois was silent; frightened that he was going to speak about Nan. Because this night had been madness, and they'd never see each other after the morning.

"It's four years since I've seen my wife," he said. "I asked Nan to marry me, because I'd persuaded myself that our past had been a dream."

What could you do, when men stirred you so, and played on you like that? Lois cried against Jim's shoulder for a long time. Then she struggled up.

"We've got to go for Nan," she said. "Poor girl, I guess she passed out. We can't let her wake up alone and not remember what's happened. This is your wedding morning, Jim."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Go to her and remind her that this is your wedding morning," said Lois.

"I can't!"

"You can and you will! You're not a coward, Jim. You're not going to run away from a woman, are you? Listen, she doesn't have to know anything about us—nothing at all. Make up anything. People who ask for explanations deserve to have lies told them, don't they? Never mind what you tell her, just go to her, poor darling. Oh, Jim, she's fine. She's my best friend in the world."

"You're very loyal to her, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am. She sheltered me, and she fed me. And I understand what

not one man in a thousand understands, the depths and complexities of a woman's heart. She's expecting to marry you, Jim. She's going to be a good wife to you. She's going to be a society matron in that horrible little town you live in. She's going to honor you. You've got to go to her."

"How about you?" asked Jim.

"I'll go to her too. If she asks anything, maybe I'll tell her. Jim, I owe her so much!"

"I'm coming," said Jim. "Get into these." He was holding up two sheer stockings of fawn.

The pallid light of morning was already stealing into the apartment. Lois, putting on the gold sheath of a gown, realized how odd it would look in the morning. But that didn't matter, because everything had become impossible. The only thing that counted was that the old sense of furtiveness was gone. The old smells of dust and plush. There were just Jim and she, fighting together, with their backs to the wall. She wouldn't let him turn Nan down. He couldn't, just because of that stupid party.

"I'm ready, dear."

He had shaved, and Lois saw him putting his razor away in its little case, with such an odd sense of intimacy. It seemed impossible, that in another hour, she would have parted from him forever.

They walked downstairs in the gray of the dawn. A sleepy negro was stretched out on a bench beside the switchboard, but he didn't stir as they went by. Now the two were in the empty street, walking, walking. Red clouds were floating in the east, over the river.

"I guess we'll find it hard to get a taxi at this hour in the morning," said Lois.

At that moment a taxi purred up silently beside them, and Lois gave the address. They got in, sat side by side, hands just touching. Every-

thing was in suspense. But everything had always been in suspense between them. Never the time would come when life grew real for them.

The apartment-house! The little walk-up apartment, four flights up. The ring at the bell, and the repeated ring, and then, at last, the rustling inside. Then the door opened, and Nan stood there.

She wore a blue kimono over her canary-colored pyjamas, she was sleepy-eyed.

"Well, for heaven's sake, where have you folks been?" she asked. She teetered a little as she balanced herself upon her mules. "Cyril and I been waiting for you for hours," she said. She called back into the room. "Cyril! Here they are! All ready to go on with the party! Don't forget, this is my wedding morning."

"Like hell it's your wedding morning!" said Cyril Trumbull, coming into the little living-room, in his shoes, trousers, and overcoat.

Lois took Nan by the arm and drew her back into the apartment.

"Darling, you're going to marry Jim," she whimpered. "Oh, yes, dear."

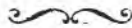
"Listen here," answered Nan thickly, "he turned me down last night, didn't he? For you,—you little double-crossing snake. Well, I may be twenty-seven, but I just can't take it—see? Cyril and I are mad about each other. Go on! I always guessed that when you came out of your shell you'd make a grand slam. Go ahead with him!"

"Nan,—Nan, listen! Jim's the man I told you about, in Connecticut, four years ago!"

Nan burst into shrill laughter. "Congratulations, my dear!" she cried. "Well, Jim and I couldn't have made it in a million years. You see, Cyril and I decided life would be just too tough if we had to give each other up, even if he hasn't got a cent, and——"

But Jim had slipped his arm about Lois, and was drawing her out of the apartment. And the door closed softly behind them.

They stood together for a moment at the head of the stairs. Heaven opening before them, and the past all dead—forever dead! Then they went down, hand in hand.



A MODERN KNIGHT

By Pamela Greene

My love is a stalwart guardsman,—
 He's a mighty man and brave;
 And his strength is tested daily
 By many a burly knave.
 My love has no shining armor,
 Nor palfrey with trappings gay;
 But his steed's as swift as lightning
 And he always finds a way
 To rescue babes from death's clutches,
 Or maidens in distress,
 As he slams the doors together
 In the rush-hour Bronx Express.

A Bouquet of Flowers

By THOMAS W. DUNCAN

HER eyes were gray as opaque whorls of cigarette smoke, and now, in the middle of the evening, the irises had opened too far; and this caused things to blur. She was one of six—six who had crowded into the pink-lighted booth. Al, Joe, Eddie, Gloria, Mari-
bee,—they had come here to help her celebrate, and they were all drinking too much, talking too much, laughing too much.

Outside, a freezing wind leapt across the snowy countryside and screeched at the cornices of the long, low barbecue; and inside, a pay-phonograph was sobbing that it was in the mood for love. . . . Across the table, Al was telling what he had said to the salesmanager. Suddenly, Audrey stood up.

"Where you goin,' baby?" Al asked.

"Be back! . . . Right back!" she said rather unsteadily.

The linoleum floor, where three couples were attempting the dance, tilted eccentrically beneath Audrey's pumps. At the phonograph, she paused uncertainly and twirled the shiny knobs, but the music wouldn't stop. She wished it would. She was not, just now, in the mood for love. She was in the mood to celebrate.

She pivoted slowly, a woman in her middle twenties, a woman blonde and ear-ringed. Somehow, her directions were mixed, and instead of returning to the booth of celebration, she found herself wandering along a line of strange booths, and pausing at the mouth of a booth that was almost empty.

"Good evening," Audrey said. "Are you celebrating, too?"

The man, incredibly, was drinking coffee—black coffee. He put down the thick cup. He said:

"No."

He was somewhere beyond forty, long and lean of chest and stomach, long and lean of face. His ears were set close against a head of frosted hair. He wore horn-rimmed glasses.

"Tell me something," Audrey said. She sat down opposite him. "Tell me why you're here, if you're not celebrating."

"I changed a tire. . . . I wanted to get warm."

Audrey asked him for a cigarette. "Well, I'm celebrating," she said, letting the smoke drip languidly off her tongue. "Celebrating my divorce from Bruce. Tomorrow night I'll be Miss Audrey Reeve again, see? No longer Mrs. Bruce Hodson. Great feeling."

"I should imagine—" A smile touched his gray mouth. "But aren't you celebrating—ah—a bit prematurely?"

"Pre—? Oh, no! Not premature at all. He won't contest it, see? My lawyer's smart. I get a hundred and fifty a month, beginning tomorrow. Account of me being treated cruel and inhumanly. Bruce agreed to that. My lawyer went to the hospital to see him."

"Hospital?"

"That's it. Sure. Bruce was foolish—see? Letting himself get run down. It began that day he got jealous of Larry. That was a laugh, too. I never loved Larry—know that? It

was always Al. Like that old song—'it was Al all the time'!"

"Bruce," the man said. "Bruce Hodson . . . Ah, not Dr. Bruce Hodson—?"

"Right the first guess, brother. The psych—the psych——"

"The psychiatrist?"

"That's it. Hard word, know it? Bruce is smart—I'll give him credit. How a dumbell like me got him—he used to tell me he loved me because I was like life. Funny thing to say. But he said lots of funny stuff. Used to say I was like a bouquet of flowers." Audrey snickered. "I was a stenographer in his office. First, he never noticed me. Burned me up. I was carrying a torch for Al in those day. Al had married Margie—see? Al regrets it, now. Well, I decided that Doctor Hodson would notice me or I'd know the reason, and when he started to notice me he noticed me plenty. . . . But after we were married it was awful—way he treated me. Cruel. Used to yap at me about using the wrong—wrong grammar — before his highbrow friends. Terrible! Things I went through. And it was always I was drinking too much and spending too much and I should have a baby and a lot of crazy stuff. And me yearning my heart out for Al. . . . He never knew about Al, though. It was Larry he was burned up about, although, honest, Larry and me were never much more than good friends.

"Larry—he was old acquaintance of Bruce. In bonds. Well, I kinda liked the kid at that. Lots of fun, know what I mean? Afternoons, he'd drop into the apartment for a drink. Maybe Larry didn't act just the way he should, but he was a good kid. Well, one afternoon Bruce came home. Last fall—cold, rainy afternoon. Larry beat it, but he left his brief case before he lit out the back door, and oh, boy, was Bruce ever sore! Know what? He started out to

look for Larry and beat him up. Gee! It was sure exciting. But Larry stayed out of his way, and Bruce—that cluck—he wandered around in the rain looking for Larry, and then he got drunk and was in the rain some more, and me home worried to death for fear he'd catch Larry! Tell you, I been through things. . . . And Bruce got pneumonia, and it kinda has left him run down, and he's in hospital. . . . He won't appear against me—account of the scandal. But he won't go above a hundred and fifty a month alimony—the cheap skate.

"Course, I ever marry, even that will stop. But I won't! Not me! I know how you can suffer, in married life. After Bruce went to the hospital I rang up Al—and do you know it?—Al had never really got over me. Al will stay married, on account of the kids, but we can still see each other. . . . Oh, there he is now. Out on the floor. Al! Here I am! C'mere, Al."

Al came.

"We thought you was lost, baby," Al said.

Audrey smiled. "I been telling the gentleman about you, Al." She turned to her host. "This is Al Guild, the Al I to'd you about. I didn't get your name."

The man said, "My name is Paris. Carl Paris!"

Audrey stood up, saluted him. "Well, it's been nice meeting you, Mr. Paris. Don't let that coffee make you tight. Good night, Mr. Paris," she smiled.

She took Al's arm and smiled up at him as they passed the pay-phonograph and crossed the linoleum floor where couples were attempting the dance. But Al didn't smile at her.

"What's the mater, Al? You're not jealous, Al? Honest, I——"

Al backed her into a dusky corner. His fingers gripped her shoulders.

"Now lissen," he said. "Now get

this through your dome and answer me straight. What did you tell that bird?"

"Tell him? Why, I told him—just about me and Bruce and how I love you, Al!"

Al drew a long breath between clenched teeth.

"Lissen," he demanded hoarsely, "did you tell him the truth, or what your lawyer told you to tell in court tomorrow morning? Just you tell me that!"

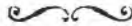
Audrey frowned, pursed her lips. "That liquor, Al. I couldn't begin to remember all the things my mouth-

piece told me to say—tomorrow——"

And Al was saying, "That's too bad. That's just too bad," Al kept saying, very sarcastically. "Because lissen, baby. Get this straight, baby. I happen to know who you were talkin' to."

"Well, gosh, don't be so mysterious, Al. Who was he, Al? Spill it!"

"You were talkin' to a man you'll see tomorrow, baby. You were talkin' to a man you'll see plenty of. You were talkin' to the fellow you'll appear before tomorrow, baby. To Judge Carl Paris!"



VISITING NEW YORK

By John McColl

At home, he is a true Rotarian
 But in New York! Oh, Boy!
 He puts behind him all agrarian
 Impulses to enjoy
 A bit of Broadway life—the stuff
 That back home he'd consider rough.

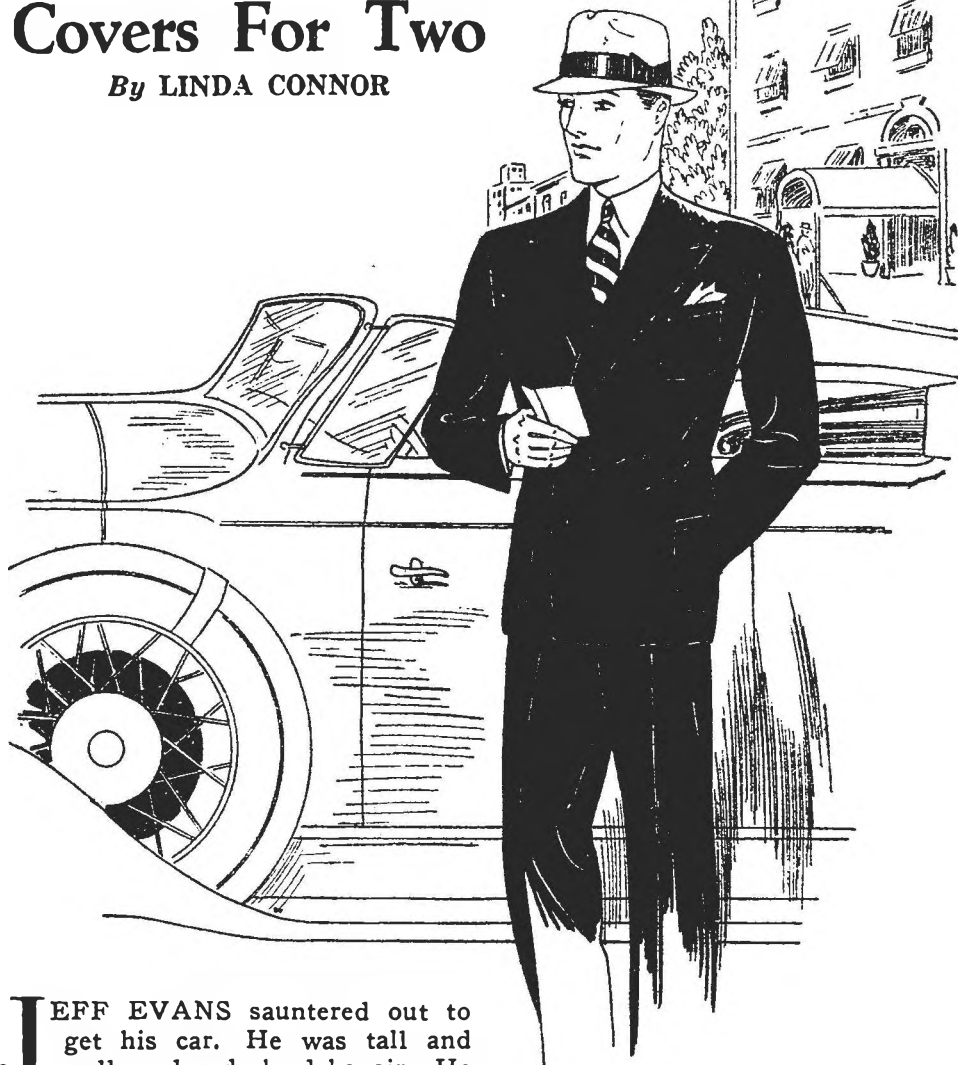
At home, a cocktail's reprehensible;
 He voted extra dry!
 But here a quart of champagne is defensible,
 Because New York's supply
 Of water—he has read this—squirms
 With tetanus and typhoid germs.

At home, he never, never lets his wife
 Play auction bridge for points;
 But in New York he soon forgets his wife
 In gay chop-suey joints!
 For Broadway broads are ill-starred elves,
 And they need saving from themselves!

At home, he always swears that when he goes
 To New York he will do
 The classic picture gall'ries—then he goes
 To some risqué revue.
 And, as the undressed damsels start
 To cross the stage, he studies art!

Covers For Two

By LINDA CONNOR



JEFF EVANS sauntered out to get his car. He was tall and well made; dark, debonair. He wore his clothes with distinction and his honors lightly. At the moment, however, he wore a frown that deepened when he saw what appeared to be a traffic slip on the windshield. He said something brief and bitter between his teeth which changed to a whistle of surprise as he read, not a traffic slip, but a note, written hastily in a woman's script:

"I'll meet you at the Westwood Arms.

"Sunroom. Seven P.M."

It was unsigned. The Westwood Arms was one of the quieter hotels, luxurious, and off the beaten path. Obviously the note hadn't been intended for Jeff, but he recognized a rendezvous when it socked him in the eye. Being a writer in need of a tasty plot, he vowed then and there to keep the other fellow's date.

He had a hour or two to spare. During that time he drove around aimlessly, worrying over the same thing that had worried him all day: for three days past, in fact. He had

been assigned to do an original for the screen. *Apex Pictures presents Meredith Marshall In*— That was the point, what to present her in. Red-haired, red-tempered Meredith; gorgeous as all get out and hard as nails. The studio had been riding Carter Goss who, in turn, had been harassing Jeff. But Jeff's usual fertile imagination had been a barren waste. He had gone into a sudden, serious slump. He said to Carter only that afternoon.

"No can do."

"You want to keep on at Apex to the tune of three figures a week, don't you?" Carter inquired. Jeff didn't need to answer that. It went without saying that he did. "All you have to do," continued Carter blandly, "is to turn out something for Marshall that will mean berries in the box-office."

"Oh!" Jeff had raised mocking eyes to his superior. "That's *all* I have to do." . . .

Well, it had him worried and morose and— He consulted the watch on his brown wrist. It was time to mosey into the Westwood Arms. He tucked an evening paper beneath his elbow and walked through the lobby and the lounge back to the sunroom. It was unoccupied. Jeff put his hat down beside him and shook his paper out. He barricaded himself behind it, that is almost.

He didn't have long to wait. . . . She was punctual and she was pretty— Most decidedly pretty. She made Jeff think of the song which had been current only a little while before:

*"Lovely to look at
Delightful to know,
And—heaven to kiss!"*

She was slender and young in her simple black dress with a white ruching at the throat. Her feet and ankles were good. On her bronze-brown hair was a little black hat

with a tiny brim that shadowed her eyes.

She looked at Jeffrey once, briefly. Then she peered around a bit. She seemed to be rather agitated, getting up frequently to look out into the lounge. At length she came back to sit down patiently and wait. However her attempts at composure weren't notably successful. Jeff surmised, and rightly, that she had something on her mind. She fidgeted for half an hour, until he couldn't stand it any longer. What was more he had an overpowering desire to find out what the whole thing was about. Jeff cleared his throat, screwed up his courage:

"I'm afraid he's not coming," he said.

For a moment she didn't seem to hear. Then she looked at him, startled.

"Were you speaking to me?"

"Of course," Jeff said. "Who else? What I mean is—" He looked around the otherwise empty room and grinned

The girl appraised him thoroughly. Then she said: "I have an idea you've mixed your types this time." She displayed no panic. No anger. Only a cool disdain. She turned away.

After pondering a moment Jeff leaned toward her. "I'm not trying to intrude. I just happen to know that there isn't any use to wait." She looked up in some annoyance. "You see," explained Jeff, "I got your note."

"You?"

He nodded and pulled it from his pocket. "You wrote this, didn't you?"

"Yes. I don't understand though."

"Neither do I," he confessed. "Don't you think we ought to talk it over?"

"Not necessarily."

Jeff let that pass. He indicated the slip of paper in his hand.

"Did you put this on a chocolate-colored roadster with—"

"—with the top down and blue wheels," she cut in breathlessly.

"That's how it happened then. There are only two of those in town—the other one belongs to Carter Goss."

"I guess I made a mistake." Her cheeks flamed. She started to rise.

"Wait a minute please." Jeff was standing too. "Wait,—won't you?" She seemed to pause. "We could—find Carter somewhere. He'd hate to miss this, if he knew."

"Thank you," she looked him directly in the eyes. "I suppose you did what any normally curious person would have done."

Jeff tried to think of a word to describe her eyes. He snapped his fingers mentally with impatience. They weren't trusting—they had a certain sophistication, but there was no coquetry. They were gallant—that was the word.

"I'm Jeffrey Evans, a writer on the Apex lot where your—er—friend, Mr. Goss, is one of the producers. It didn't occur to me when I found the note that the mistake happened because our cars are alike. But I'm glad now that you got the wrong one. I'm all alone," Jeff said and presented her with his white smile, "and a little at a loose end, if you know about things like that. I'd consider it a great favor if you'd have dinner with me," he concluded impulsively.

"I'm Sherry Baird," she said, "and I do know about things like that. I'm an actress out of a job. I was going to meet Mr. Goss here on—some business."

She said some other things that Jeff missed, because he was thinking, sardonically, that if it was business with Carter Goss it was probably nobody's business.

"About that dinner?" he said aloud.

"I'll accept your invitation," she answered him frankly, "because I'm awfully hungry."

Jeff looked down at her. She took his measure. He stuck out his hand.

"This is my lucky day, Miss Baird." . . .

Before the evening was over he was calling her Sherry and she, at his request, called him Jeff. He liked to hear her say his name. He liked the evening enormously, but he didn't like the look on Sherry's face: it was too sad. Nor did he like the way she drooped, spiritless, the moment the conversation lagged. He didn't like the toneless voice; it all spelled defeat and a kind of quiet desperation.

"Tell me?" he begged.

She told him her story briefly. It was merely a variation on an old theme. She had lived on a ranch upstate with her father and mother. She had wanted a career and her mother had fostered the idea, but her father had opposed it from the start.

"Father doesn't believe in careers for girls. In fact, he doesn't believe in girls at all now that I think of it. He wanted a son," she smiled ruefully, "and look what he got."

There was no bid, for pity or sympathy in anything Sherry said. It was a straightforward story told without frills. Her mother had died suddenly. After that Sherry had cooked for the ranch hands, kept house for her father. During that time she had tried to convert him to her way of thinking; that she should at least have a try at some other kind of life. He had refused to listen, maintaining that she had a good home, had had a good education and ought to be satisfied. Someday she could marry some young rancher.

She had rebelled. The breach between them had widened and she left home to find her way alone.

"It was something like the end of the second act in a play," she tried to smile and failed. "He told me if I went that I needn't come home aagin. Well,—so far, no luck.

Except for Mr. Goss whom I met and who seemed to take an interest."

"And offered to give the little gal a hand?" prompted Jeff.

Sherry couldn't miss the edge of irony in his voice. She didn't. She looked directly at Jeff.

"Mr. Goss knows how desperate I've been. He put it to me straight this afternoon—give and take. And I said 'no' of course."

Jeff bent his head. His lips were tight, his eyes narrowed. He had always known Carter Goss was a playboy, but up till now Jeff had thought him not a bad sort. Now the thought of Sherry caught in Goss' web filled him with rage. Unreasonable rage, in a way, since he'd only known the girl a matter of an hour or two.

"He told me to think it over," she went on. "Well,—I thought it over. I couldn't see a single thing ahead. I need money—badly!" she barely whispered that. "So I changed my mind and left the note on the car."

Jeff saw that she was making a brave attempt not to cry. He made his voice purposely very light and off-hand. "At that point the heroine—meaning you—takes a new lease on life. Because Uncle Dudley, meaning me, enters the picture." Her eyes were still lowered; she was still fighting tears. "Listen!" Jeff said. "There's a destiny that shapes out ends—or fate or something. Maybe that's why the note got all mixed up. Anyway, here's how!"

He was a little self-conscious in his offer of assistance and vitally aware of her as a woman. He put the latter away back in his mind, shut and locked the door on it and threw away the key. If his plan worked at all he would have to school himself to forget that Sherry Baird was youthfully tempting, beautiful and beguiling, without realizing what her powers really were.

"I have an apartment," he began. "Three rooms. So far I've had a

woman come in three days a week to clean and straighten up and cook a little. She hasn't been very good. Careless,—you know. I was thinking about firing her and getting some one else." He met Sherry's troubled blue eyes across the table. "Honestly, I was," Jeff insisted. "Her name's Mrs. Fernanda and she has three stalwart sons to support her, so she'll get along. I'd like to be taken care of a little better than that," Jeff declared. "Have some one there all the time to sort of make it home-like. Make me feel as if I really lived there. You said you had cooked for your Dad and that you knew your pots and pans. If you don't think this kind of a job would be beneath you—until you find something else, of course—"

"I wouldn't think it was beneath me, Jeff. It isn't that."

He broke in hurriedly. "Please don't refuse because it seems irregular. If you were fifty years old there wouldn't be any question—there shouldn't be any as it is! We're both free, white and twenty-one," he grinned.

She smiled back faintly. It was an encouraging sign. "You've just saved me from a pretty bad predicament," she said. "You're sure this wouldn't be an out-of-the-frying-pan-into-the-fire proposition, Jeff?"

"I give you my solemn word," Jeff said. "You could keep on looking for something in your line, and meanwhile you'd have a place to stay, plenty to eat and a living wage besides. I'm not offering you something for nothing; I'd expect value received. There are no strings to this. When you find a place on the screen—and you will—" he reached across and gave her arm a friendly pat, "you can 'give notice.'" Jeff didn't dare look at her, the struggle within her was so obvious.

She was a long time answering. She was near the breaking point, she couldn't afford to be choosy now.

Finally she summoned her voice; a sob under the surface smoothness:

"Jeff,—you're a prince!" . . .

Life seemed to swing into line for Jeff from that time on. Sherry moved her few belongings, one small bag and a suitcase, to the apartment the following day. Jeff proposed to give up the one bedroom to Sherry, but she flatly refused to allow him to make the sacrifice. She would sleep on the broad, low couch in the living-room leaving the back of the apartment to Jeff. He demurred about this, but she won out with the statement that it would be inconvenient for her to get breakfast and move about if he were sleeping in the living-room.

She managed the three rooms with ease; it was all absurdly simple after the inconveniences of the ranch. The middle of the day was hers to do with what she would. Almost every day she went job hunting. She made every contact that she could and tracked down every lead with her heart set definitely on the screen. If Jeff might have helped a bit in that regard, he was warned away. Partly because Sherry had made it plain that she preferred not to be obligated. She had a stubborn pride about it now and felt if she had talent some one would discover her some day. The other reason, purely selfish, was that Jeff was living so serenely that he couldn't bear to contemplate a change of arrangements.

But if life at home was serene, life at the studio was sufficiently tempestuous. Meredith Marshall was finishing a picture soon and Jeff had drawn a blank as far as any potent new idea for her was concerned. She was becoming difficult about it and Carter Goss was becoming irate. He had refused to put any one else on the story insisting that Jeff alone should work it out. The two had nearly come to blows on one occasion. Jeff couldn't stand the sight of his smugness any more. He hated

his superiority, his pompous demands. Turned cold at the thought of Sherry, whose progress might have depended upon the erratic whims of Carter Goss. The whole pattern resolved itself into a crazy-quilt of circumstance. If Jeff didn't dish up something in the way of a story for Meredith he would lose his job, for Meredith was Goss's latest love. If Jeff lost his job he wouldn't be able to afford to keep Sherry any longer and the thought of losing Sherry was—

Never more alarming than on one night early in April. Jeff had come home exhausted. It had been one of those days. Conferences lasting hours during which every one wrangled and no one would agree. A set-to with Bernheim, one of the higher-ups. Meredith throwing a scene in Goss's office which resulted in Goss making threats and setting a deadline for the story Jeff was to turn in.

In contrast his rooms were airy, cool and full of flowers. There were countless evidences of a woman's thought and care. The papers, unopened, lay in a stack by his favorite chair. Cigarettes handy. The faint, enticing aroma of food. And last, but not least by any means, Sherry in a new blue frock with her eyes looking as if they had been cut from the same material as the dress.

Jeff bathed, shaved and changed; he felt immeasurably relaxed. He asked Sherry if she would join him in a little drink before dinner. While she fluttered in and out of the kitchen Jeff poured and mixed and clinked ice in small frosty glasses.

Covers for two. Crystal and silver, hyacinths on the table which matched Sherry's dress. She had been extremely modest when she told Jeff that she could cook plain food. She was a wizard in the kitchen, but Jeff wasn't thinking of the delicious repast, his mind was occupied with other things. He was acutely aware

of Sherry's slim roundness: of her candid eyes and her mouth so sweetly serious, so desirable; of the simple lines of the dress she wore, which subtly enhanced her charms.

"Any luck today?" he asked abruptly.

"Only a little."

Jeff looked up, fearful that she had found a job, that she might go and leave him alone and desolate. It developed, however, that it was only a promise to let her know if anything turned up. She had heard that chant before. So had he. He sighed slightly with relief.

He hadn't intended going out that evening, but for reasons best known to himself he trumped up an engagement. Sherry washed the dishes and walked down to the neighborhood movie. He had begged a time or two to take her out to dinner and to a show, but it had seemed more prudent to keep their relations businesslike. She had been firm.

"Not that I wouldn't like to go, Jeff," she had explained, "but if we do that our viewpoints will become fuzzy. You wouldn't be taking your fifty-year-old housekeeper out. I've got to keep my place. Remember that."

Jeff got the implication. What she meant was that he must remember to keep his place. She had put it very deftly.

He came in rather late. The door between the hall and living-room was closed, that meant that Sherry was in. There was no light. Then she wouldn't be reading, she'd be in bed.

He went back to his own room quietly and undressed. Slid into bed and lay there taut. Tense, as if he were listening. He was listening to his own heart beating a swift tattoo. He had had Sherry in his mind all evening—he hadn't been able in hours of driving to get rid of the vision of her in the little blue dress

smiling at him across the hyacinths.

It was a still, moonlight night. No breeze. Just the subdued murmur of the city. Jeff flung himself out of bed, pulled his robe on and looked out the window. The distant hills were mistily visible in the moon's radiance. The distant hills—but Sherry was close and intimate. The situation, starting out sanely enough, was becoming impossible for Jeff. He had reasoned, argued with himself, brought every bit of restraint and control into play. It was no use. Sherry had come to fill his thoughts night and day. He hadn't been able to work. He couldn't rest. He wanted her.

He felt the need of a cigarette—fumbled around for one. His case was in the living-room. The package he had bought that evening while driving around had been used up. A deep drag or two, then each one hurled away. Only to light another.

Jeff started toward the living-room to get a cigarette. Bars of moonlight lay across the bare floor between the scatter rugs. Sherry was asleep, hair tousled, one soft arm flung upward. Jeff stood transfixed and looked at her. "Sherry!" it was almost a prayer.

She wakened, dazed. "Jeff—?"

"I came in to get a cigarette. Can't sleep. Feel like a smoke. Have one with me?"

"Why—" she was pulling a *négligé* around her shoulders hastily. A frilly thing as festive as a party dress. "Why,—yes; since I'm awake I suppose I might."

Jeff lighted hers, then his. "I'm sorry to have disturbed you this way. Just couldn't sleep. Restless. No," he laid down his cigarette, "I'm *not* sorry, Sherry." He had gone over to the couch where she sat huddled in bedclothes with her hands locked around her knees. He sat down beside her there. Saw her eyes filled with moonlight. Saw her face—white

magic. And her throat like a lovely ivory vase. "Darling," he said huskily, "it's been half heaven, half hell."

His lips met hers. He felt her yield to him, tightened his arms eagerly and forced her head back against his shoulder with the pressure of his kiss. The smoke from two cigarettes twined around them thickening the air. Sherry struggled a little. Coughed. Choked.

"Jeff,—dear, will you get me a drink of water?"

His pulses were pounding. He could hardly bare to separate himself from her for a moment. He laughed shakily.

"Don't vanish into thin mist while I'm gone."

In the kitchen he took a goblet down. All of his senses seemed sharpened. He noted that the shelves were in perfect order; everything had its place. He got two ice cubes from the refrigerator and dropped them in the glass; he let the water run from the faucet for a bit to get cool. He saw, and touched tenderly, her little ruffled apron hanging there. He was aware of her in everything. Dangerously, dizzily aware. Recklessly aware. He tried to steady his hand as he carried the water back. The ice clinked against the glass.

"Dearest!" began Jeff.

The bed was tumbled. Sherry wasn't in it. She wasn't in the room. She had vanished, as he had feared she might, into thin mist.

"Sherry!" Jeff cried. It came from the very depths of him.

Her clothes were gone from the chair. The door to the hall was open. The other door, into the corridor, stood ajar. Jeff set the glass down dully. He wiped his hands on his handkerchief, then wiped his face. He went to the door and looked out. Shambled back and sat down, closed his eyes. He was alone!

A pitiless gray dawn found him still sitting there; lips twisted wryly.

He tried to tell himself that he could find her before her money was gone. She had two months' salary, enough to keep her for a short time. The fact that he had driven her away hurt him horribly. Carter Goss was a rake, but he at least laid his cards on the table. Jeff called himself a cheat—the lowest kind!

Hate of himself sickens a man inside—and Jeff was sick. He couldn't bring himself to face the fact that she was gone for a day or two. In his heart was a faint hope that she would come back. The hope died a lingering death.

She wouldn't even trust him while she came back to get her things. At length he went into the closet—the suitcase was still there. A few of her clothes, freshly fragrant, reminded him poignantly of her. He folded and packed them away. In doing so a letter fell out and spread its pages on the floor. He bent to pick it up and saw enough to enlist his curiosity. It was from Carter Goss; a damning bit of evidence, a plea—if Sherry had been the sort to make use of it. Jeff knew that Goss wasn't usually careless enough to write letters that could be used against him. He very carefully covered all his tracks. He must have wanted Sherry badly, so that he lost his sense of discretion for a time. Jeff held the letter in his hand. He was white with rage, at Carter Goss. At himself—no better than the rest! At the whole filthy world of men.

It was then that an idea was born. Jeff slammed the top of the suitcase down and snapped it shut. He rolled up his sleeves and cleared a place for his typewriter. A story began to unfold itself. It had do with a man who desecrated a woman's faith.

Carter Goss stopped at Jeff's table in the studio commissary.

"What's the matter with you, Jeff?"

You look terrible. Are you sick?"

Jeff looked up with burned-out eyes. "Sick of myself," he said bitterly.

"Going to get that story done?"

"I've got it done," Jeff answered indifferently.

"You *have*? Meredith'll be glad to hear that. Why didn't you——?"

"I was coming in to see you this afternoon."

Carter Goss became the executive once more. "Come at five. I'll be busy before that," he said with some importance.

Jeff nodded briefly. Said half aloud as Goss moved away: "You'll be busy afterward too, you——"

At five, exactly, Jeff walked across the lot to the modernistic office of Carter Goss. In his hand he held the script of a story. In his pocket he carried something which he meant to make use of if the occasion demanded it.

Goss leaned back in his swivel chair looking as triumphant as if he himself had been sweating the story out.

"I know you've done a good job, Jeff. You look as if this had taken it out of you. I'll read it and pass it on to Meredith. She'll be delighted!"

Across the desk Jeff fixed Goss with a level gaze. Jeff was pale, grim, relentless!

"No, you won't pass it on to Meredith!" he said. "My heart's blood wrote that thing and I have a girl in mind who's going to play it."

A smile twitched at the corners of Goss's mouth.

"Oh, you have a girl in mind, have you?"

"You're damned right I have," Jeff ground out. "You'll read it while I'm here and then you'll give it back. And you'll tell Marshall something—anything. This story's not for her."

"You're crazy, Evans!" Carter leaned forward.

"Like a fox," Jeff replied. His voice was chill. "You're going to give a certain girl a break,—but not in the way you intended to." The man across from him looking blank. "Ever hear of Sherry Baird?" inquired Jeff.

Carter Goss's florid face blanched. With a great pretense of nonchalance he took a cigar from a box on the desk.

"Now, Evans, perhaps we can come to some——"

Jeff cut him short. "She's going to play the lead in this picture," he tapped the manuscript to emphasize his words. "I don't know any one who would do a better job of it." Jeff was ready to resort to anything to gain his point. The weapon which he carried in his pocket was the letter Goss had written to Sherry. That would bring him to time, if nothing else availed.

For a moment the producer stalled. He tried rather weakly to bluff his way through, but it was plain that Jeff, in his present mood, wasn't to be bluffed. He was almost ashamed at the way Carter knuckled under, like a whipped dog. Folded up and all but collapsed at the thought of exposure.

"What shall I tell Meredith?" he whined.

"Tell her the story wasn't good enough for her. Not her type. Flatter her out of it. She'll fall for your drivel."

"Where's Miss Baird?" Carter asked fearfully, as if he expected Jeff to produce her as a magician would a rabbit from a hat.

"Never mind where she is. You read the script. Then tomorrow you go to Bernheim and fix this up."

"An unknown? I can't sell Bernie on some one he's never seen. How do we know whether she has the stuff?"

"I know she has," Jeff said. "She'll live this part. Let Pomeroy play the

lead opposite her. He'll think it's his picture until she steals it from him. You take care of the details. Give her a build-up before the thing is released. You've done things like this before—and for a less worthy cause," Jeff added significantly. "And you'll do it now—or else——"

The two men stared at one another across the desk. The young man whose face looked as if it might have been hewn from stone—and a wilting older man whose sins had at last caught up with him.

It was late when Jeff left Carter Goss's office. He was fagged, weary beyond words. But the scene was set and the wheels were in motion to launch a new name on the film firmament. And the name was Sherry Baird—providing Sherry could be found.

But she had vanished completely. Jeff hadn't had a word from her, not a sign. He had walked the streets hoping blindly that fate would bring them together. Fate—who had done Jeff some good turns in the past. He had haunted the places where she might be. Self was forgotten for Jeff had learned a bitter truth. He only wanted to atone for what he had done to her. He wanted to lay the opportunity he had made for her right at her slender feet. It was imperative that she should have her chance.

There was a bare possibility that she might sometimes see his car since it was rather outstanding. He could leave a note on the windshield as she had done—weeks, months, or was it years ago? The idea was fantastic, but Jeff didn't care. He was ready to clutch at straws.

He wrote a note that night. Potent in its plea, bald in its agony. In the morning he put it on the windshield of his car. It was still there that night. He re-copied it and left a fresh one there the second day.

Carter Goss sent word to Jeff to bring Miss Baird in. They would make some tests.

Jeff wore a path across the floor of his small office. The ash-tray on his desk was filled, emptied, filled again. At the end of the day he was haggard and jumpy. He went out to get his car. The scrap of paper on the windshield was precisely where he had left it. His feet dragged. He took it down and was about to wad it up, throw it away when something told him to look at it. He did. There was an added scrawl below what he had written. "*Sunroom. Seven P. M.*"

Jeff's heart was beating like a triphammer. He knew what she meant and where. Like a man in a frenzy he dashed home. Freshened up and looked critically at himself in the mirror. This was an older, sombre face that he saw. Anxiety in the eyes, suffering around the mouth.

He was the agitated one this time in the sunroom at the Westwood Arms. Unable to sit still, he walked up and down with his hat in his hands. It was cool and dim there after the sun went down.

At the sound of footsteps Jeff wheeled and stood still, as if he had been cast in bronze. The sight of her brought a sudden tightening to his throat. He was overwrought.

Her eyes were very wide. She was thinner; shabbier too. They stood a little apart without speaking. Then Sherry shook her head.

"Jeff, you look so badly. I've worried about you every time I've seen you."

"Worried about me! . . . Seen me?" he stumbled over the words.

She nodded slowly. "I've been watching you. From across streets. Hidden in doorways. Because I—Oh, Jeff——"

She was in his arms; held to his heart, forever safe. Cloistered there. Happy. His little Sherry Baird! And Jeff was Jeff once more!

Once A Woman's Bad

By MARY CARSTAIRS

LACY hadn't been exactly a good woman when Spike Harrigan married her. Good, that is in the moral sense of the word; hers were wreathed with a few too many primroses, but she had a soft heart and the milk of human kindness flowed abundantly in her soul.

Spike was of Puritan ancestors. He was big and burly and knew a lot of the world and her sometimes cruel ways. Enough to make him sympathetic and understanding of his fellow creatures most of the time, but occasionally, some of the strict, rigid blood still flowing freely through his veins, played hob with what the world had taught him, and he became relentless, flinty-hearted, and assumed a God-and-me attitude. Some men are like that!

He hadn't meant to fall in love with Lacy, whom he met through a lusty friend. He had always thought he would marry some virginal woman whose life had been so sheltered and cloistered that the word sin was something she knew of only through the thunderings of a self-righteous preacher. (There are still a few such women left in the world, I have heard.) But he did fall in love with Lacy, perhaps, because, in some inarticulate way, he sensed the true goodness in her soul that was untainted by anything her body might have done, and because Lacy, for the first time in her twenty-seven fully lived years met the man in Spike Harrigan that she could worship and respect. His friendship, and final courtship of Lacy, was as restrained and modest, as if she had

been a sheltered and cloistered flower.

He said to Lacy, right after the Justice of Peace had pronounced them man and wife and they were moving her few things into the two rooms they would henceforth call home:

"Lacy, you're my wife now! I know all about what y'ur life has been, and I know it probably wasn't all y'ur fault, bein' an orphan and all, but from now on you've got to forget that all of that ever happened." He said it very firmly, almost angrily. There was no mistaking the finality of the words. Tears quivered in Lacy's brown eyes.

"Why, Spike," she said, "you don't think,—you ain't thinkin' that I'd ever—that now, I'd—" Words failed her in the tremendousness of her emotion. Words were hard for Lacy to juggle, anyway.

"Naw, I don't think so," Spike said, and his voice was a little softer. "But I jest wanted you to know I wouldn't stand for any foolishness."

Spike didn't know it, but still in his sub-conscious clung the words his stern old father had told him as a boy: "Once a woman's bad, she's always bad!"

Lacy looked so forlorn and hurt, and tried to tell Spike again so piteously that never before had she loved any one, that her past life didn't mean anything and was forgotten, that he felt like a brute and gathered her up in his big rough arms and petted and comforted her like a child. . . .

Life flowed serenely on in the two

little rooms. Lacy scrubbed the floors every day and gloried in the cleanness and brightness that emerged under her hands. It was the most wonderful thing in the world, she knew, having a sweet little place like this, and a good strong man coming home every night to eat the hot dinner she laid on the kitchen table. And what a man her Spike was! A man a woman could depend on, a man to work for and sacrifice for. She was so grateful for his love for her that she would have liked to have gone down on her knees every night and kissed his feet. She knew now how people had felt about Jesus.

That other life she had known before meeting Spike Harrigan was as distant and remote as a bad dream, forgotten with the first rays of the morning sun. She felt as if Spike had given her a new body along with a new life.

Now and then, on her way to buy groceries she met Solly Moffett. She had known Solly quite well in that long ago, and he always stopped her and jested about her having gone respectable. Lacy would smile, rather shyly, and hurry on. She got so she avoided Solly and the others, insomuch as she could, that made her remember.

If it hadn't been for that long cold, hungry-filled winter of '32, Spike and Lacy might have gone on living in that safe, contented way until they had grown old together and raised a flock of young ones. But in the early part of that winter Spike lost his job as a truck driver for a warehouse. The racketeers were cutting in, and Spike wouldn't be dishonest, although he might be cold and hungry instead.

"I'll find another job," he told Lacy between his pacings of the floor. "It's hard on you, honey, but you wouldn't want food that had been boughten with filthy money, would you?"

"No, Spike, no, I wouldn't." Lacy's

brown eyes followed his pacings wonderingly.

But Spike did not get another job. And after a while there wasn't any chance even to work, as the racketeers had told him he might work or else get out.

That had been the heartbreaking day, when Spike was ready to do anything to buy food for Lacy, and couldn't find anything—anything, at all, to do. The trucking jobs were all filled with men who had thought more of their food than their scruples at the beginning.

There was a hunted look in Spike's eyes that night, and because Lacy could not stand looking at his drawn face for a while, she slipped on her shabby coat, and told him she was going to take a walk. He hardly heard her words, and barely noticed when she walked past him and slipped out of the door.

There was a soft snow filtering down outside. Lacy walked through it for blocks and blocks, wondering why this should have to happen to her and Spike. Especially to Spike, who was so honest, so good.

Presently, she passed a brilliantly lighted café. It was a place where the people with money ate, and because Lacy knew it was warm inside, and the people within were eating hot, delicious food, she lingered a moment on the other side of the door, hoping to catch a whiff of warm odors. Just as she started to move away her foot touched something in the snow. She stooped down and picked it up. It was a wallet. She walked on, not hurrying too much lest she look suspicious, and when around the corner she opened it. There were twenty-five dollars in bills in it.

Twenty-five dollars is a lot of money to people whose living scale is as low as Lacy's and Spike's!

Half-running, half-stumbling; joy flooding her whole being, she went

back through the snow to the two-room apartment. She drew swift pictures in her mind: Joyous surprise and relief beaming from Spike's face when she showed him her windfall. Then remembering his honesty she took the money from the wallet and folded it in her pocket, and threw the wallet which had a name engraved on it away. At last she was there!

"Spike, Spike, look!" She shoved the bills at him. "I found it!"

His eyes went to the money, to her face flushed with excitement, and back to the money in her outstretched hand again. Up over his neck and face crept a deep red. Then his voice thundered:

"You — ! D'ya think I'll take that kind of money? I suppose you think ya made a sacrifice for me," his voice sneered. "It was just the easiest way for you, that's all. You couldn't hang on a little longer. Didn't have the guts! You found that money,—like hell! Take it and get out! Get out, I say!"

Dimly, as if from far away she

heard Spike's voice shouting other things as she went through the door and down the stairs.

Somewhere she knew there was no use explaining the real source of the money to Spike. Somehow she knew that Spike was believing because she had once been bad, it was easy again, and nothing she could say now would change that. In spite of her love for him, he believed!

Down on Second Street, her head lowered against the snow that was now falling more swiftly driven by a chill wind, she ran headlong into Solly Moffett.

"Well, Lacy, you! At this hour. I thought you had taken the veil and all of that."

When she didn't answer, he lifted her chin, and his expert, knowing eyes scanned her white face. Her eyes told him all he needed to know.

"So—" Then: "Forget it, baby. What's one man more or less? Now, I allus was pretty good to you—how about a little drink?"

"Sure, Solly," Lacy said. "Sure, why not!"



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Romance And Your Stars

By RUTH GREENHILL

To determine the particular influence affecting you during the month of December, find your birthdate. If it falls on or between March 21st and April 21st of any year, read the Aries forecast, if on or between April 22nd and May 21st, read the Taurus forecast, etc.

December Forecasts

Aries (March 21-Apr. 21): In business a powerful and most helpful contact can be made if you do not seek it out. Let things come to you at this time. Co-operation with others is necessary when Mars dominates the house of partnerships, otherwise quarrels and definite breaks occur which leave you in a vulnerable position. Travel or things pertaining to it are favored.

Taurus (Apr. 22-May 21): Overwork will bring on a nervous condition so that at this time it is necessary for you to slow down and get plenty of rest. A partner's activity can be most helpful if you are willing to see his side of it. Jupiter has moved into Capricorn and remains for a year in this business sign, favoring you in many ways. Those of you who are in a position to travel will find it most advantageous to do so. Still changes for those born between 23-29 of April.

Gemini (May 22-June 22): Jupiter moving into the 8th house of your solar chart for a year's stay promises you help from either your marriage or business partner during that time. Speculation or any form of chances is not advised. Romance is risky until after Mars gets out of your 5th house which will be early in Jan., 1937. Form no ties until after that date. Mark time if born between 10-14th of June.

Cancer (June 23-July 22): Still dealing with Mars in the house of your home which pushed domestic affairs into the foreground. Deal with one thing at a time this month and resolve not to allow circumstances to upset your world. Certainly before Jan., 1937, you will have made some change in your manner of living. Jupiter in Capricorn for the coming year favors you very much. It is possible that added authority comes to you, if you have earned it. Regarding this boost, if it comes, do

not allow it to go to your head, because in the summer months of 1937 you may have to do some swift back-tracking.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Much mental activity and possibly many short trips which add in some way to your earning capacity, perhaps at a later date. Don't decide important affairs too quickly and beware of the famous Leo arrogance. Social life is being stimulated. This can wear you down if you allow it to. Jupiter in your house of work for a year will certainly bring profitable employment.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 21): Dec. 2nd finds Jupiter moving into your house of romance for his stay of a year. You will be able to handle your emotional nature so that it will bring you in a measure some deep-seated ambition. Popularity and happiness will result from this transit and many contacts will be made to a mutual advantage. Watch out for too much self-assurance, follow social leads, ask for the well-earned raise in salary, but be conservative with your earnings. During the spring months of 1937, you should start a bank-account. May need it later on in the year. Watch home life during the middle part of the month.

Libra (Sept. 22-Oct. 22): You seem very sure of yourselves this month and if not careful you stand to lose the very thing that you want. The coming year is the time in which to build a solid foundation as Jupiter begins his stay in the house of your home. During the latter part of the month some unearned increment is likely to find its way to you or you may find yourself realizing one of your fondest hopes in so far as your future existence is concerned.

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 22): With the eclipse falling in your house of finances

you may find it difficult to handle your money wisely during the last half of the month. Jupiter's transit in your 3rd house for a year is an excellent position for seeking an increase in salary or for undertaking journeys. This is a good position for the mind and for dealing with near relatives. From the 27th to the end of the month you are especially favored by Jupiter. Take advantage of those days.

Sagittarius (Nov. 23-Dec. 22): Health conditions for those born from Dec. 11-15 will not be good. Some change in your manner of living comes at this time. Make it wisely. Jupiter in your 2nd house for a year promises you financial gain and new opportunities to make money. Seek employment around the 27th, if you are in need of it. Friendships active.

Capricorn (Dec. 23-Jan. 21): Here Jupiter starts his journey through your Sun sign. This brings a new twelve-year cycle and one in which you can make rapid progress if you have worked hard during the past year. You will be more contented and reasonable than you have been for some time. Emotional matters that have

been trying will adjust themselves and superiors will favor you. Health bears watching during this month.

Aquarius (Jan. 22-Feb. 19): Jupiter goes into the 12th house of your solar chart now and in a way protects you from those whom you think are your enemies. Not very active in this house and he may be thought of as gathering strength throughout this coming year so that when he enters your own sign in 1938 he will be able to shower his blessing upon you in full measure. Beware of arguments and over-confidence.

Pisces (Feb. 20-March 20): Jupiter's entrance into your house of friends on the 2nd places the emphasis of his years transit therefore on the affairs of this house. Business arrangements with friends should be helpful. This is the year then (1937) when you should make an attempt to form lasting ties with others. Jupiter passing through this house should bring you the realization of at least one of your ambitions. Avoid however foolish expenditures on friends. The last part of the month is favorable for beginnings.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

If the answer to your question does not appear in this issue it will follow soon. All questions will be answered through this column.

L. W. April 19, 1911. N. Y. C. Harmony is shown between the charts to a certain extent. The rest is entirely up to yourself and your husband. You may find it difficult to understand his strong dominant nature since you are somewhat fixed in your opinions and your viewpoint is slightly limited in its scope. The tendency to cross bridges before you come to them is quite pronounced in your nature which your Aquarian husband may not be able to appreciate. Both of you need to give ground when necessary so that harmony prevails at all times. In your chart a cross aspect between the Sun and Uranus sounds

a warning for much tolerance and understanding of the partner at all times.

L. L. G. April 17, 1911. Chicago, Ill. You are not denied happiness. Between the age of 29-31 there will be an opportunity to form a relationship with one of the opposite sex and again when you are nearing the age of 34. Both of these periods are important ones in your life. Not only for personal relations but for home life, health, finances and new beginnings.

E. K. B. May 26, 1902. Ithaca, N. Y. Marriage

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was not promised you at an early date. There must have been disappointments along the lines of romance for you, but at the age of 39-30 there comes an opportunity for an attachment. Use care at this time so that you do not make a mistake in your choice. Sometimes a life of single blessedness is, after all, the best. You decide which you really want.

A. C. March 2, 1879. Woodstock, Ill. There are those who have many opportunities for marriage and you seem one of them. Your chart offers new friendships now, and for the next three years. One of these new formed friendships can easily terminate into a marriage since you are not adverse to the tie that binds.

S. B. April 21, 1898. Jamestown, N. Y. Your fears seem well grounded in this case, if "fear" we can, or wish to call it. Yes, there have been restrictions placed upon you. Always for a very good reason, although at the time we may not be able to understand the reason. You must learn to stand alone. A late marriage is shown for you,

if by the time you reach your late forties you are not completely disillusioned.

R. H. May 10, 1887. Rochester, N. Y. There begins a new cycle when we reach the age of 49 and in your case I would say that this change has definitely to do with your business and your standing in the community. This and the next three years will find you contacting many people, and if you are not married you may yield to the temptation that seems to stalk you—offering marriage. Be careful of your actions. 1937 brings a helpful influence into the life. Make changes then, and in October and November of 1936.

T. C. T. Dec. 7, 1876. Newark, N. J. Changes for you in 1937 and 1938. Maintain a calm attitude toward everything that occurs, since you cannot change anything that another wishes to do. Do not give way to anxiety regarding the future. There is enough good showing in your chart to bring you through safely. Yours is the strong character that never says die. Travel for you in 1938-39.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACTS OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933, of Breezy Stories & Young's Magazine published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1936.

State of New York } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Phil Painter, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Editor and Publisher of the Breezy Stories and Young's Magazine, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 587, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher, C. H. Young Publishing Co., Inc., 55 West 3rd Street, New York; Editor, Phil Painter, 55 West 3rd Street, New York; Managing Editor, none. Business Manager, Phil Painter, 55 West 3rd Street, New York.

2. That the owner is: C. H. Young Publishing Company, Inc., 55 West 3rd Street, New York. Sole Stock-

holder: Phil Painter, 55 West 3rd Street, New York.

3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owing and holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none.

4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company, but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also that the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner, and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him.

PHIL PAINTER.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16th day of September, 1936.

LAWRENCE HARRY MILLER, Notary Public, New York County. Clks. No. 442, Reg. No. 8-M-504.

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28x4-35-20	2.20	30x4-35-20	2.45
28x4-35-19	2.25	30x4-35-19	2.50
28x4-30-19	2.30	30x4-30-19	2.55
28x4-25-18	2.35	30x4-25-18	2.60
28x4-25-19	2.40	30x4-25-19	2.65
28x4-25-20	2.45	30x4-25-20	2.70
28x4-25-21	2.50	30x4-25-21	2.75
28x4-20-17	2.55	30x4-20-17	2.80
28x4-20-18	2.60	30x4-20-18	2.85
28x4-20-19	2.65	30x4-20-19	2.90
28x4-20-20	2.70	30x4-20-20	2.95
28x4-20-21	2.75	30x4-20-21	3.00
28x4-15-17	2.80	30x4-15-17	3.05
28x4-15-18	2.85	30x4-15-18	3.10
28x4-15-19	2.90	30x4-15-19	3.15
28x4-15-20	2.95	30x4-15-20	3.20
28x4-15-21	3.00	30x4-15-21	3.25
28x4-10-16	3.05	30x4-10-16	3.30
28x4-10-17	3.10	30x4-10-17	3.35
28x4-10-18	3.15	30x4-10-18	3.40
28x4-10-19	3.20	30x4-10-19	3.45
28x4-10-20	3.25	30x4-10-20	3.50
28x4-10-21	3.30	30x4-10-21	3.55
28x4-10-22	3.35	30x4-10-22	3.60
28x4-10-23	3.40	30x4-10-23	3.65
28x4-10-24	3.45	30x4-10-24	3.70
28x4-10-25	3.50	30x4-10-25	3.75
28x4-10-26	3.55	30x4-10-26	3.80
28x4-10-27	3.60	30x4-10-27	3.85
28x4-10-28	3.65	30x4-10-28	3.90
28x4-10-29	3.70	30x4-10-29	3.95
28x4-10-30	3.75	30x4-10-30	4.00
28x4-10-31	3.80	30x4-10-31	4.05
28x4-10-32	3.85	30x4-10-32	4.10
28x4-10-33	3.90	30x4-10-33	4.15
28x4-10-34	3.95	30x4-10-34	4.20
28x4-10-35	4.00	30x4-10-35	4.25
28x4-10-36	4.05	30x4-10-36	4.30
28x4-10-37	4.10	30x4-10-37	4.35
28x4-10-38	4.15	30x4-10-38	4.40
28x4-10-39	4.20	30x4-10-39	4.45
28x4-10-40	4.25	30x4-10-40	4.50
28x4-10-41	4.30	30x4-10-41	4.55
28x4-10-42	4.35	30x4-10-42	4.60
28x4-10-43	4.40	30x4-10-43	4.65
28x4-10-44	4.45	30x4-10-44	4.70
28x4-10-45	4.50	30x4-10-45	4.75
28x4-10-46	4.55	30x4-10-46	4.80
28x4-10-47	4.60	30x4-10-47	4.85
28x4-10-48	4.65	30x4-10-48	4.90
28x4-10-49	4.70	30x4-10-49	4.95
28x4-10-50	4.75	30x4-10-50	5.00
28x4-10-51	4.80	30x4-10-51	5.05
28x4-10-52	4.85	30x4-10-52	5.10
28x4-10-53	4.90	30x4-10-53	5.15
28x4-10-54	4.95	30x4-10-54	5.20
28x4-10-55	5.00	30x4-10-55	5.25
28x4-10-56	5.05	30x4-10-56	5.30
28x4-10-57	5.10	30x4-10-57	5.35
28x4-10-58	5.15	30x4-10-58	5.40
28x4-10-59	5.20	30x4-10-59	5.45
28x4-10-60	5.25	30x4-10-60	5.50
28x4-10-61	5.30	30x4-10-61	5.55
28x4-10-62	5.35	30x4-10-62	5.60
28x4-10-63	5.40	30x4-10-63	5.65
28x4-10-64	5.45	30x4-10-64	5.70
28x4-10-65	5.50	30x4-10-65	5.75
28x4-10-66	5.55	30x4-10-66	5.80
28x4-10-67	5.60	30x4-10-67	5.85
28x4-10-68	5.65	30x4-10-68	5.90
28x4-10-69	5.70	30x4-10-69	5.95
28x4-10-70	5.75	30x4-10-70	6.00
28x4-10-71	5.80	30x4-10-71	6.05
28x4-10-72	5.85	30x4-10-72	6.10
28x4-10-73	5.90	30x4-10-73	6.15
28x4-10-74	5.95	30x4-10-74	6.20
28x4-10-75	6.00	30x4-10-75	6.25
28x4-10-76	6.05	30x4-10-76	6.30
28x4-10-77	6.10	30x4-10-77	6.35
28x4-10-78	6.15	30x4-10-78	6.40
28x4-10-79	6.20	30x4-10-79	6.45
28x4-10-80	6.25	30x4-10-80	6.50
28x4-10-81	6.30	30x4-10-81	6.55
28x4-10-82	6.35	30x4-10-82	6.60
28x4-10-83	6.40	30x4-10-83	6.65
28x4-10-84	6.45	30x4-10-84	6.70
28x4-10-85	6.50	30x4-10-85	6.75
28x4-10-86	6.55	30x4-10-86	6.80
28x4-10-87	6.60	30x4-10-87	6.85
28x4-10-88	6.65	30x4-10-88	6.90
28x4-10-89	6.70	30x4-10-89	6.95
28x4-10-90	6.75	30x4-10-90	7.00
28x4-10-91	6.80	30x4-10-91	7.05
28x4-10-92	6.85	30x4-10-92	7.10
28x4-10-93	6.90	30x4-10-93	7.15
28x4-10-94	6.95	30x4-10-94	7.20
28x4-10-95	7.00	30x4-10-95	7.25
28x4-10-96	7.05	30x4-10-96	7.30
28x4-10-97	7.10	30x4-10-97	7.35
28x4-10-98	7.15	30x4-10-98	7.40
28x4-10-99	7.20	30x4-10-99	7.45
28x4-10-100	7.25	30x4-10-100	7.50

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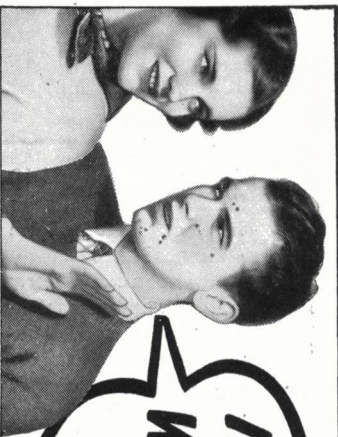
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**I'M FED UP
WITH ALL THIS
SOCIAL STUFF**

**- BUT
PIMPLES
WERE THE
REAL REASON
AL SAID
"NO TO
PARTIES**



GOSH, SIS, LOOK AT THESE HICKIES - THEY'RE SOMETHING FIERCE I TELL YOU -



I'LL SAY THEY ARE - BUT THAT'S NO WAY TO GET RID OF THEM, AL, YOU OUGHT TO TRY EATING FLEISCHMANN'S YEAST - I'VE HEARD IT'S A SWELL PIMPLE CHASER.



**LATER
HELLO, HELLO - OH MURIEL - YOU BET I'LL BE THERE -**



MY STARS - YOU'D THINK AL WAS THE ONLY BOY IN TOWN THESE DAYS - IN THE WAY THE GIRLS ALL KEEP CALLING HIM UP; HE'S NEVER HOME ANY MORE!

IT'S WONDERFUL WHAT LOOKS CAN DO FOR YOU! AL'S A DIFFERENT BOY SINCE GOT RID OF THOSE PIMPLES HE HAD!

**DON'T LET ADOLESCENT PIMPLES
PUT A CHECK ON YOUR GOOD TIMES**

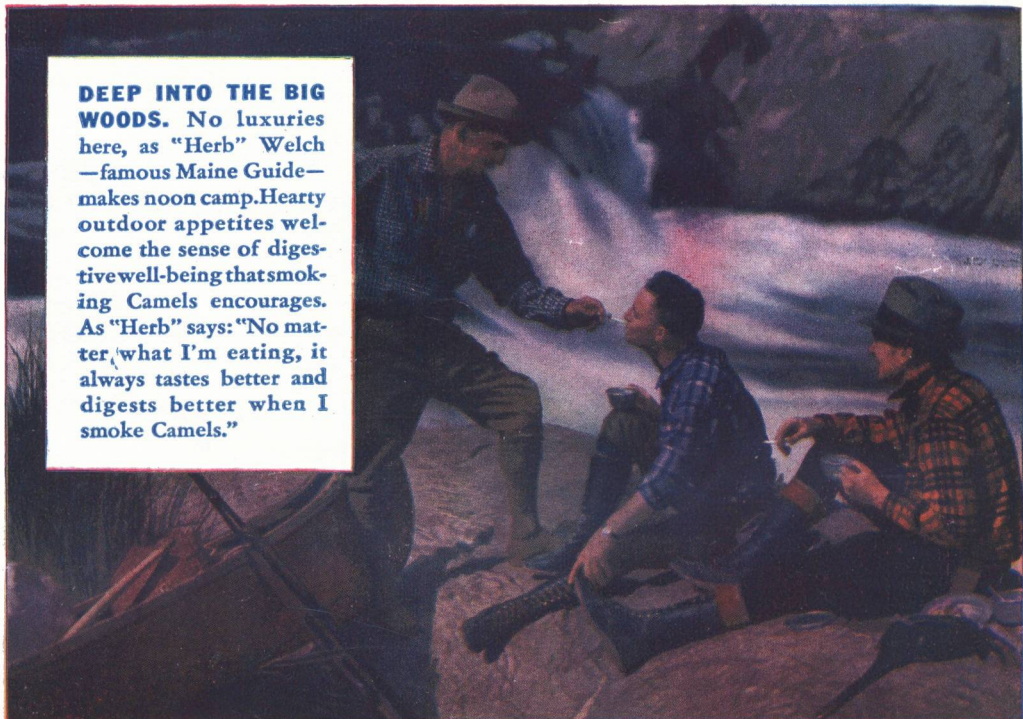
PIMPLY SKIN makes any one feel low spirited. Yet many boys and girls have this trouble after the start of adolescence, from about 13 to 25, or longer. At this time important glands develop. The whole body is disturbed. The skin gets oversensitive. Waste poisons in the blood irritate this sensitive skin—pimples appear.

Fleischmann's fresh Yeast clears these skin irritants out of the blood. Then, pimples go. Eat 3 cakes daily, one before meals—plain, or in a little water—until your skin is perfectly clear.



clears the skin
by clearing skin irritants
out of the blood

DEEP INTO THE BIG WOODS. No luxuries here, as "Herb" Welch—famous Maine Guide—makes noon camp. Hearty outdoor appetites welcome the sense of digestive well-being that smoking Camels encourages. As "Herb" says: "No matter what I'm eating, it always tastes better and digests better when I smoke Camels."



**WHEREVER...
WHATEVER...
WHENEVER
YOU EAT—**

*For Digestion's Sake...
Smoke Camels!*

Smoking Camels brings a sense of well-being

YOU eat over a thousand meals a year! Food is varied. Place and time often differ. Thanks to Camels, you can help digestion meet these changing conditions easily.

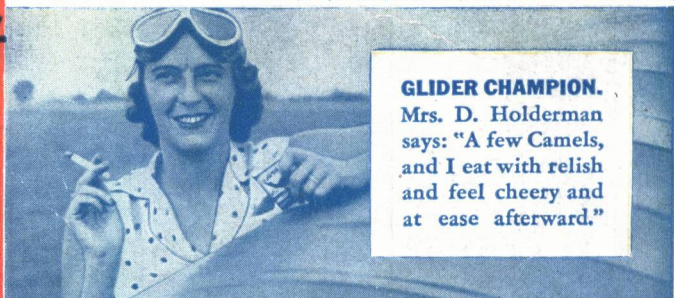
Smoking Camels speeds up the flow of digestive fluids. You enjoy food—and have a feeling of ease after eating. Mealtime or *any* time—make it Camels. They don't get on your nerves.

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Costlier Tobaccos

● Camels are made from finer, **MORE EXPENSIVE TOBACCOS...** Turkish and Domestic... than any other popular brand,



GLIDER CHAMPION. Mrs. D. Holderman says: "A few Camels, and I eat with relish and feel cheery and at ease afterward."