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# Cupid's DIARY

No. 114

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The Garden  
of  
Memory  
By

MARY FRANCES DONER



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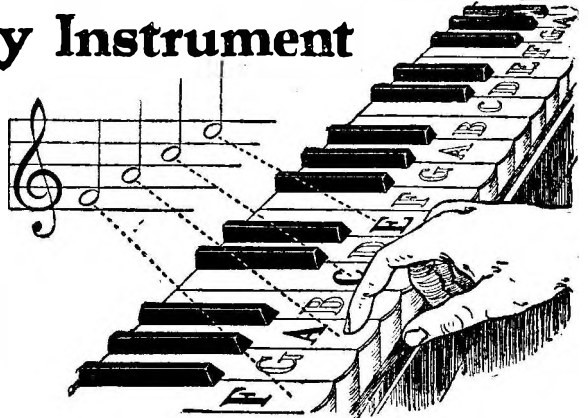
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# Cupid's DIARY

*Published every  
other Tuesday*

This issue dated May 17, 1927

Whole No. 114

Vol. XXXVIII. No. 3

## Contents

The Garden of Memory . . . . .	<i>Mary Frances Doner</i>	4
The red rose is a falcon, and the white rose is a dove!		
Star Dust—Part One . . . . .	<i>Beulah Poynter</i>	26
"We are such stuff as dreams are made of And our little life is rounded with a sleep"		
The First Absence . . . . .	<i>Mary Carolyn Davies</i>	43
Verse		
A Poor Young Man . . . . .	<i>Dorothy Dow</i>	44
Gentlemen must live		
Lilac Time . . . . .	<i>L. Mitchell Thornton</i>	50
Verse		
The Dollar Princess . . . . .	<i>Corinne Harris Markey</i>	51
The love call sounds o'er far horizons		
Crossed Confessions . . . . .	<i>Berton Braley</i>	65
A pair of amiable alibis		
The Heart of Fleurette—Part Three . . . . .	<i>Jane Hurrle</i>	71
Who is the half-breed girl called "Jeanne Rabelle"?		
Smiles for Sale . . . . .	<i>Leon Turner</i>	87
Pollyanna scatters sunshine		
The Test that Told . . . . .	<i>Inez M. Nichols</i>	96
The secret of abiding love		
Hidden Gold . . . . .	<i>Linda Fitzgerald</i>	108
Verse		
The Miracle . . . . .	<i>Penelope Russ</i>	114
It came at the end of a dream		
Due Diplomacy . . . . .	<i>William Freeman</i>	109
The winsome wiles of a lady in love		
Wait for Love! . . . . .	<i>Maysie Greig</i>	123
A romance of crinoline days		
Eve Had Nothing to Wear . . . . .	<i>J. Russell Warren</i>	130
You'll understand the poor girl's sorry plight!		
The Post Office . . . . .	<i>Conducted by Mrs. Russell Laird</i>	137

## Summer Time Romance

**I**N the next issue of *CUPID'S DIARY*, there will be so many gay, glamorous stories of young love that we're not going to feature any particular story—they are all features!

Consider these:

"Honey Minds Her Business"—one of Carleton Montanye's sparkling tales of youth and love in the summer time—

"The Little Heaven" by Dorothy Dow—this has a realistic appeal that will touch your heart—

"Enchanted Moon"—Madeleine Sharps Buchanan must have been in league with the moon fairies when she wrote this one. It has a delicate, fantastic charm that will delight you—

More, much more of Beulah Poynter's "Star Dust"—and the thrilling conclusion of Jane Hurrle's "The Heart of Fleurette"—

Watch for this big number!

Payment will be made upon acceptance for all manuscripts, suitable for "Cupid's Diary." All manuscripts should be accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes. Contents copyrighted 1927 by The Corte Publishing Co., Inc., 97 Fifth Ave., New York, N. Y., George T. Delacorte, Jr., Pres. and Treas. Yearly Subscription, \$4.00; Single Copies, 20 cents. Entered as second-class matter January 28, 1923, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Published every other week (26 issues a year). Printed in the U. S. A.

Just like Adam and Eve were punished for eating forbidden fruit, so do a vast number of men, both young and old, suffer today because they lack strength.

Dissipation has weakened many so they can no longer withstand the slightest exertion—others were born weak and have never known how to build their bodies so they could take advantage of the many pleasures they seek. There is no excuse for anyone crying for health and strength—everyone can enjoy life—I will show you how.

### I Rescue Weaklings

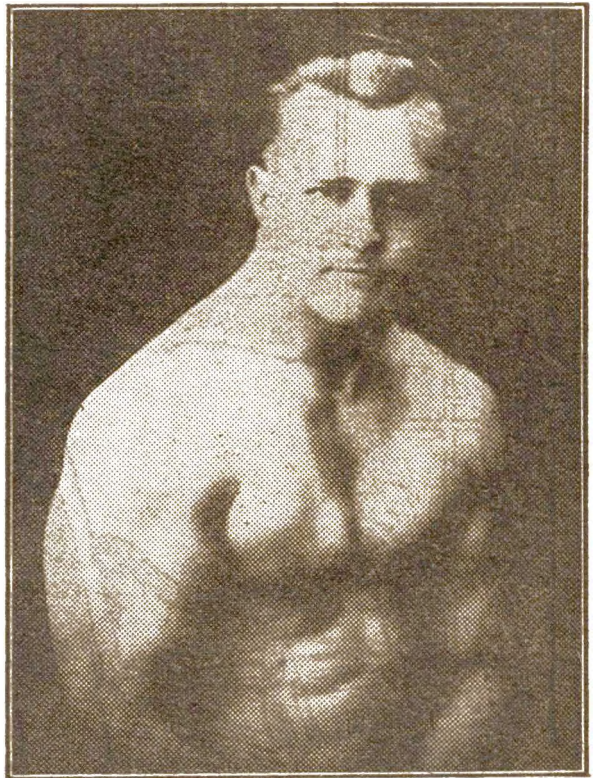
They call me the Muscle Builder—but I do more than that. I take that old bony and muscleless body of yours and rebuild it from head to foot. I do not only take the outside and put a veneer on it, but I also do a good job with your inner organs. My proven method of Muscular Development builds your tissue and muscles throughout your entire body. After I get done with you, you will not only be a picture of health, but you will be "there" to withstand any problem of life, that only a real healthy man can stand. You will not know of any forbidden pleasures. You will be able to live until your heart's content. I will give you that springy step rubber heel advertisements tell you about. I will make you a he-man. Your friends will marvel at you. I will put you far away from your grave and keep you away.

### Here's What I Do the First Thirty Days

With my system of Muscular Development everything comes easy. The first thirty days I put one solid inch of muscle on your arm and add two inches to your chest. I don't promise this, I guarantee it. That's why they call me the Muscle Builder, but this is only a starter. After you have worked with me for ninety days you will be what is commonly termed as in the pink of health. Almost overnight you will develop into a superman. You will bubble over with pep, enthusiasm and vitality. No one will dare call you skinny or kid you about being a weakling—let them try it and I'll bet they will never do it again. This new strength and health of yours will fool them all and make every one respect you and seek your companionship.

### An Ounce of Action Is Worth a Thousand Words

I could go on talking about the wonderful things I have done for men and about what I can do for you—yes, I could write enough to fill all the pages of this magazine, but I would not get anywhere and neither would you. Action is the thing that counts. Take me up and make me prove that I can remake you—that I can make a muscular marvel out of you. You take no risk, I don't promise, I guarantee to do it. If I fail, and I am sure I won't, you are out nothing—that's fair, isn't it?



**EARLE E. LIEDERMAN, The Muscle Builder**

*Author of "Muscle Building," "Science of Wrestling," "Secrets of Strength," "Here's Health," "Endurance," Etc.*

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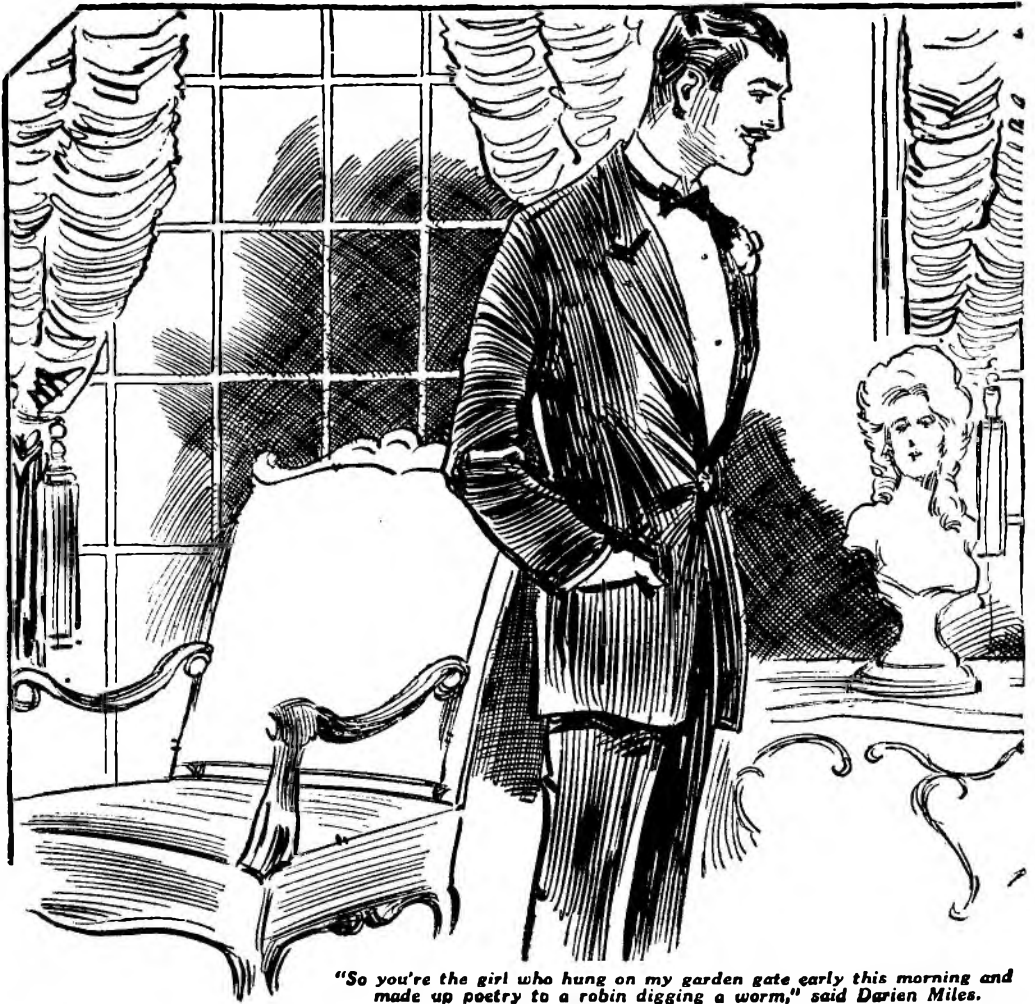
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*"So you're the girl who hung on my garden gate early this morning and made up poetry to a robin digging a worm," said Darien Miles.*

## The Garden of Memory

**I**f you had never owned an honest-to-goodness party dress, nor been to any honest-to-goodness party, nor had a man in love with you, nor known a thrill—how would it seem some morning to find a letter like this in the mail box?

*"My dear Lucia,  
Until last week, I did not think you knew of my existence. Perhaps you lis-*

*tened at keyholes and heard the family discuss me in whispers. Perhaps you rummaged in the attic one rainy day and discovered a yellowed letter or two—telling of Liané's sin. Such a little sin, Lucia! Loving a man named Philippe who was interesting—instead of one named John who was not.*

*When Rita Carstairs, of Torristown, lunched in New York with me one day last week and said, "I wonder if you*



*Lucia blushed and lost her poise for a moment. She had made up some silly poetry. The little green gate had fascinated her.*

### **By Mary Frances Doner**

know just what you represent to Lucia West?" of course I told her I hadn't the slightest idea—never having seen Lucia West, and never having heard from my people in all the years since my marriage to Philippe. And she said, 'You are a goddess to that girl. She said she never hoped to even see you, but that you would always represent the thing she would have been, had life seen fit to give her a chance.'

It warmed me, Lucia, down to the bottom of my heart. Like a message one finds tied to the white throat of a dove that flies, suddenly, through the window. Perhaps I won't be here next summer. The doctor encourages me—but he lies, Lucia. I know. I'm going to my cottage at Swampscott the middle of this month and I want you to come and spend the summer with me. There's a check enclosed for expenses, and don't

worry about clothes. We'll see to that after you arrive.

Your affectionate aunt,  
Liané Dugrenot."

That's what happened to Lucia West on a rainy Monday morning in June. She sat down quite suddenly, letter fluttering in a trembling hand. A letter—a real letter from Liané Dugrenot!

The glowing, glittering, forbidden name that represented springtime in Paris, moonlight in Venice, sunrise on the desert, adventure, life, romance—anything but a real flesh and blood person. Liané Dugrenot! That name emerged suddenly from the cloudy substance of dreams. It swung with swift, sure strokes across that page like the tread of small graceful feet. Liané Dugrenot. The older sister of Lucia's dead mother, who had been engaged to John West and who had scorned him for another. And then Lucia's mother had stepped into her sister's shoes, married him, given him a daughter and gone on to another world where family feuds do not exist, nor bitter words, nor the never-ending cruelty of a tongue made sharp through disappointment in life's one big love.

All her life Lucia had listened hungrily to any stray word of that mysterious, fascinating person, born Annie Hatton—now Liané Dugrenot. Bit by bit, she had pieced together the glittering puzzle that spelled the woman's life. At sixteen, when engaged to Lucia's father, little Annie Hatton had married Philippe Dugrenot, a French wine merchant then traveling in America. Met him—rather violently—in a train wreck. She was returning from a visit to great-aunt Tabitha—returning in disgrace. Because she had smiled above her prayer-book in great-aunt Tabitha's pew at a good looking youth who smiled back. And Philippe was returning from the west en route to France. He was probably ten years older than Annie Hatton. Queer, how fate sent them crashing down an embankment together, into each other's arms, into each other's lives. Philippe had called her Liané at once. Said it suited her better. Said Dugrenot suited her better, too. They were married before they left the hospital, and

went to Paris to live. That's how Lucia West came to have an aunt like Liané.

"I'm going to my cottage at Swampscott the middle of this month. . . ." And Lucia closed her eyes and dreamed. Hadn't she listened enraptured to Rita Carstairs' careless description of Liané Dugrenot, her foreign manner, her suite at a famous New York hotel, her cottage at Swampscott on the coast of Massachusetts? Cottage, indeed! It was, as Rita described it, a square of white marble against the green that sloped lazily out to the sea. Cottage! Italian poplars, dark sentinels stationed throughout the grounds, rising in peaked sombreness to an eternally cloudless sky. Jeweled spray of fountains flashing rainbows through the garden, leaping and falling within marble confines.

**R**AIN dropping monotonously outside, now. Rain. Rain. Rain. Crystal tossed from angels' careless hands in heaven. Clouds? Tulle—black tulle. Like party frocks over sky blue! A summer at Swampscott! If St. Peter, himself, had rapped at the door and offered his arm to Lucia, she could not have been more thrilled. As a matter of fact, few men knocked at Lucia's door, except the milkman and the iceman and Pietro, who sold vegetables.

That was John West's fault. He had rheumatism, stigmatism and a temper. Some earlier admirers of Lucia had cause to remember the latter, and news travels. But Lucia got to believing that she was the cause. It made her self-conscious, grieved her. She thought she was plain, unattractive, without charm. And then, too, there were the unending demands of a selfish father. So she made her own clothes and hats—and looked it. And romance, in Lucia's life, was an unknown quantity.

John West was a tyrant. Everyone in Torrystown knew it, Lucia, most of all. He had terrorized her mother before her. He terrorized Lucia now. He had a fair income from a few successful investments and he hoarded it, leaving Lucia to save and scrimp. He had a brother, Will West, in town, who offered occasionally to relieve Lucia. And Will had a housekeeper with designs on John



West. He was, people said, Agnes Jenkin's last hope—and laughed when they said it. But John West raged so when a vacation for Lucia was mentioned, nothing ever developed.

Liané's invitation now—well, that was another thing. Something primitive stirred in Lucia's heart that day. She would have walked through a wall of fire to realize the joy that her aunt's letter promised. It amounted practically to the same thing in the end. John West shouted, cursed, denounced her for even considering the plan. Liané Dugrenot! Indeed, his daughter would never set eyes on that woman's face!

Lucia listened and trembled, but she did not waver. Ten days later, she left for Swampscott with her father's fury ringing in her ears. It didn't matter. Nothing mattered. With uncertain feet at last, she mounted the stairs to paradise.

"SO you've come, little Lucia?" said Liané Dugrenot slowly as she raised herself to one elbow on a chaise longue, where she was nursing a heart spell, pulled the lace and satin throw higher across her graceful body, tugged at a painted satin cushion under her shoulder, and lay appraising Lucia. There were peach taffeta hangings at the windows, flowing into the peach moiré walls. There were Venetian glass sconces on either side of a pale blue taffeta dressing table, sconces that held little thin gold candles. There were cushions and vases, and little benches with painted satin covers and little chairs with painted satin seats. There was the majesty of calla lilies in one window—and the modesty of massed violets in another. There was a charming Louis XV bed with upholstered panels of silk set into the foot and head board and decorated with delicately painted French designs of flowers and birds.

"Take off that hat, my dear," said Liané kindly, "and draw up a chair, and tell me all about yourself. What have you done with your young years? How many men have loved you, how many have you loved? Tell me your favorite author, your favorite flower, the music you like, the pictures you admire?

I want to know all about you. I don't want to waste a minute—for who knows? To-morrow I may not be here!"

Lucia swallowed hard and tried not to be frightened. There was nothing to be frightened at. A fairy queen lay opposite questioning her, the one person in the world whom Lucia had lived to meet. And until this moment, she had never realized completely the difference between a French frock and a thing like the home-made copy-book pattern that she was wearing. You could wear a little tan silk dress with cross-stitch trimming back in Torrystown and not feel conspicuous. In this room, it was as out of place as a blazer jacket at a royal ball. Lucia suffered horribly that moment. Aunt Liané would be ashamed of her, here before the servants. But something in the kind smile of the lady opposite routed the panic in Lucia's heart. She gulped and smiled and said, "I—I've been so busy taking care of father—I—I don't know, really. But I like everything that's beautiful, and this must be the most beautiful room in the world!"

Liané Dugrenot studied her thoughtfully. "I knew," she said quietly. "I gathered many things from Rita Carstairs' innocent remarks. You've spent the most precious years of your life ministering to the selfishness of a man whose conceit received a mortal blow years ago. John West doesn't know how fortunate he was to lose me. I'm sure I should have made him miserable. I suppose you haven't married simply because your father scared away every man in town who wanted to carry you off. I hope you didn't love any of them?" She leaned forward slightly, her face a bit tense.

Lucia smiled sadly. "No. I've never been in love. And I don't blame father for my unattractiveness. In my dreams I'm a ravishing woman of the world—like you—" she dared in a whisper, dropping her eyes. "But in real life, I'm a colorless, uninteresting person with hair that won't stay put and a pug nose and—"

"Stop that sacrilege!" commanded Liané Dugrenot impatiently. "Always remember this, Lucia. We are what we

want to be—potentially. You are a flower concealed with wrappings. A lovely flower. Your hair—how *could* it stay put? Tons of it—and no sense to having tons of hair these days. Never saw such a glorious color in my life. Red and gold and amber. Chop it off, child. However, we'll see to that. Pug nose, did you say? Nothing of the sort. It's your most intriguing feature. Retroussé—provocative— All my life I've wished for a nose like yours. You're like a Watteau sketch in a hideous polychrome frame. Wait!" said Liané Dugrenot in a whisper. "There will be a transformation."

**L**UCIA had suddenly discovered the source of the low constant moan that had been throbbing here since her arrival. Through a distant window she saw a glistening patch of sea, and she flew to it, breathless, and stood looking out, hands clasped before her. The sea. It lay in smooth quiescence to the sorcery of the sun. It rippled timidly along the gold stretch of shore, like a lover's fingers against his lady's hair; caressingly, gently, with reverence.

Her glance wavered, swung finally, as if from a hypnotist's gaze, out through the grounds, paused for a moment in amazement. She was like a child, suddenly released, free.

"Why!" she exclaimed. "What a funny little green fence down there at the end of the garden. It looks as queer in your garden as I look in this room!"

Liané Dugrenot laughed softly. "If it only looked half as well! That, my dear, is the one blot on this otherwise perfect landscape. It ruins my garden. Looks like Cinderella at the ball—after the clock has struck twelve. Old Leslie Harmer kept it there for spite, I guess, and there's nothing I can do about it. When I bought this land, that fence was standing there. I thought I'd have no trouble tearing it down and replacing it with a hedge, since I was willing to stand the expense. But old Leslie refused. Said his wife had loved it, and she was dead. I had to put in that stretch of rhododendrons along there, but you can see the thing from out the upstairs window."

"Leslie Harmer is dead now," went on Liané presented. "He wore overalls half the time, and smoked a vicious pipe. The house is early Colonial and an interesting type. His wife probably inherited it from her people. Since his death—"

"But there's someone moving over there—someone in the little garden," put in Lucia.

"Um hm. A young person inherited it. Nephew, I guess. They call him Darien Myles. Sounds like an actor, but he isn't. Arda Baker says she knows people in California who know him. Paints. Has lots of money. Must move with a wild set in Los Angeles. Arda doesn't know the other kind."

"Darien Myles," Lucia repeated the name to herself. "Isn't it a romantic name?"

"Romantic—yes," agreed her aunt. "But not much like the man, himself, from all I hear. He's the last word in sophistication. He plays around a lot with a rather fast set. In the end, I shall probably win my point. The little green fence will scarcely fit in with things as he will conduct them in the house next door."

"Sophisticated," mused Lucia aloud. And turned with a gesture of hunger and longing toward the woman opposite. "Oh, Aunt Liané! Teach me the secret! You know! Teach me the language, show me the gestures, the manner. I've been a child so long. I've read of sophisticated people, seen pictures of them in smart clothes in papers and magazines. I want—just once—to be a girl that men will admire. I want to wear smart clothes, to cultivate an air that goes with them. I want to learn to laugh lightly at serious things. I want to be the sort of person you are, Aunt Liané! That is my dream. Then men will admire me—and love me, too. The sort of men I want!" She was breathless as she finished. The urge had torn these words from her, had exposed her soul. She was afraid Aunt Liané was going to laugh at her.

**B**UT Aunt Liané didn't laugh. She lay very still and smiled across at Lucia, though Lucia wasn't sure that smile was for her. She seemed to be

looking beyond—perhaps at a vanished youth.

"The secret," she said slowly, "is to take life as a big joke. Never get serious over it. I did once. I loved Philippe too much. He discovered that and then—" she shrugged and smiled, a

charming, or all three. They call that love, I guess. Flatter them a little—never let them be sure of you. Men are all alike. Before you decide on one definitely, see that he's well able to take care of you. In the last analysis, men are all the same. Subject your moods and



"My dear, you will be distinctive, smart," promised Aunt Liane. "You will look like a person—not a gingham ad."

tight, frozen little smile. That was all. "One has to laugh with men. One can't let them see tears or a pale wan face. They run from it. The men of to-day put love in the background. Marry a girl because she's beautiful or witty or

fancies—use your head and don't get sentimental. You'll live to a good old age that way. I've always had heart trouble. That's why I'll die, probably, in a year. Not from a broken heart, mind you. A deceased one, rather!"

She said it with almost militant firmness. Without a single quiver in her voice.

And Lucia, her new, blinded disciple, believed her. Subconsciously, however, the name of Darien Myles kept ringing through her consciousness. Just a name—and a rather bookish one at that. But a charming one. It held Lucia, made her wonder, made her afraid. How could she ever hope to hold the interest of a person like that, for instance? She, to whom persiflage had been a thing to admire in smart stories and books. Never a thing one could master.

"It isn't difficult," went on Aunt Liané, "once you make up your mind. You're beautiful, Lucia. You want to free yourself from the clumsy platitudes of small town talk, and from the self-conscious silence you will suffer before people of a different type. You want to acquire an assured manner, a lightness, a gayety. And because you want it so very much, things will come easy to you. I'll put you into some decent clothes, shear that lovely hair, brighten your lips with a bit of carmine, tint your cheeks a deeper pink—and wait! Even Darien Myles, himself, will be crawling at your feet! I know him slightly. Met him at a tea yesterday at the Hopkins'. There is another chap, though, a great catch, Lucia—Courtlandt Sayre. He can be hateful and disagreeable, so the girls say—but it's worth the ordeal. I'd be delighted if you could win his interest. When things are ripe, I'll give a party. We shall see!"

That was the last Lucia heard of Darien Myles until the night of the dance given in her honor by Liané Dugrenot.

**E**LAINÉ STROH, the New York modiste, with two little French assistants, worked tirelessly on a fitting wardrobe for the Dugrenot niece. Lingerie of chiffon, in shades more illusory than real; pale yellow, like the heart of a valley lily; and green, like the tip of its pointed leaf, combined with incrustations of lace. Stockings so sheer as to seem but stuff of clouds. And gowns! Here Aunt Liané had her swing. Because she had always looked well in

black and red and violent blues, she wished to repeat the effect in Lucia. But Lucia West and Liané Dugrenot were two very different people. And a shingled head, with an eccentric fringe of copper gold above the eyes, and small, close ears, with long bizarre pendants, and chains and bracelets and rings—well, these things might have complemented the exotic beauty of Madame Dugrenot. They outraged the beauty of her niece.

The night of the party! Elaine Stroh clapping in tight columnar silhouette about the slim Lucia West a gown of slinky black satin. Ear rings of cloudy jade reaching to her shoulders, and one huge jade ring on the index finger of the right hand. Hair slicked like a boy's. Eyes deepened with a dark, shadow cosmetic. Lips shaped—red, red lips. No rouge. Powder applied in liquid form. Like kalsomine, Lucia decided. She stood before the mirror and looked at the reflection. It was not Lucia. It was an unnatural reflection, a Lucia cast in a different mold. A Lucia whose bright red lips made her smile seem hard and cold. Gone was the graceful droop of hair. It was a shining gold cap now. Gone was Lucia!

Liané Dugrenot was murmuring from the chaise longue beyond, "At last. You've cast it off—the home made look! You're distinctive, smart. You look like a person, not a gingham ad. Here. Give me your arm. We'll go down stairs together. Pain or no pain, I've got to see the riot you create!"

There was a swing of defiance to Lucia's shoulders as she descended the stairs. There was magnificent confidence in her bearing. Aunt Liané was right. One needed chains and rings and rouge and slinky satin gowns to capture the fancy of interesting people.

She met Courtlandt Sayre, and gave him a smile that Du Barry might have envied. And she said, after the manner of Aunt Liané's teaching, "You are even handsomer than they told me!" And allowed him to hold her hand and murmur things in return that a certain Lucia West back in Torristown would have considered presuming. She felt giddy. Like laughing and crying all at once.

"The first dance is mine—remember!" he told her, as other guests came up. She nodded. He was handsome, but she didn't like his eyes. She'd have to stop disliking things about these people.

At that moment, Aunt Liané was whispering, "That was noble, child! Treat men that way and they'll be crawling at your feet. I told you about young Sayre. You've got him interested. I'm proud of you!"

Lucia smiled thoughtfully. She wasn't quite so sure it was noble. It was different at any rate. The silly, insincere remark she had offered young Sayre had borne fruit instantly. One went about being popular this way. The arriving guests moved up in groups and were presented to Lucia by an aunt who fairly quivered with pleasure. More people with slinky satin gowns, and chains and bangles and painted cheeks. Surely Lucia had no cause to feel conspicuous.

"My niece, Lucia West—yes—yes—and this is Darien Myles, my dear!"

**T**HE words brought Lucia back swiftly. Darien Myles. Somehow that name had a special significance. She turned and let her hand rest for a moment in his. She met eyes that looked curiously into hers. Eyes with a smile in them. A polite smile edged with ice. He was handsomer than Courtlandt Sayre. Bearish looking. Looked as if he could roar on occasion, and purr on occasion, too. Looked terribly likeable and rather fearsome. The old Lucia West trembled a bit in her little satin slippers. The new Lucia gave him a casual hand, smiled and said, "Oh, yes! You're the artist who lives next door, aren't you? How nice!" Just as she thought Aunt Liané would have her speak. Just cool enough. With a sort of insolent friendliness. With the proper and accepted flippant hauteur.

He said, "Yes. And you're the girl who hung on my garden gate early this morning, and made up poetry to a robin digging a worm."

She had. That was the truth of the matter. The little green gate had fascinated her.

Lucia blushed and lost her poise for a moment. "How do you know?" she

demanded, casting a nervous glance over her shoulder at Aunt Liané, who was fortunately engaged in conversation with another gentleman. The poetry had been about love!

"I sat under an apple tree not ten feet away from you and listened. It was a terrible poem. Anyone who'll rhyme love with shove—"

"And this is my niece, Lucia West," came Aunt Liané's voice with divine intervention. "Arda Baker, my dear!"

Lucia turned, after a glance of dismissal at Darien Myles, and smiled at Arda. She didn't see her. She mumbled words mechanically. She was thinking, "He's rude and boorish. Not nearly so nice as his name. What was the rest of that poem, I wonder? Oh—Lord!"

He told her the rest of it when the evening was almost over; when after successfully eluding Courtlandt Sayre and other clamoring males, Lucia had found a sheltered bench beneath the rhododendrons in the garden. She had not been forced to elude Darien Myles. His indifference had been marked, to the point of rudeness. He had not asked the guest of honor to dance, had not cut in on her and other partners.

He said to her now, "Oh, hello! Thinking up more poetry?" The way a grown person would speak to a very small child. With all the casualness and unconcern of mild indifference. He sniffed at a blossom close by and turned away when she didn't answer, as if nothing in his life could be of less importance.

She called after him, "I don't believe you heard my poem this morning. You probably saw me from your window." It wasn't at all what she had intended to say. But the sharpness of her tone served her purpose well. It was all that Aunt Liané could wish for.

His laugh came ringing back as he stopped short, swung and retraced his steps. "It gave me quite a jolt, to tell the truth," he told her. "Such a sophisticated person making up sentimental wish-wash about love. You don't look the part. Is it, by any chance, a secret complex?"

And Lucia laughed with studied sarcasm. "Don't be an idiot! Love is a myth. Something people write novels

about—and poetry. There's no such thing." She had risen, and stood before him, slim and defiant in her bizarre costume.

"I haven't the slightest intention of challenging that statement," he told her. "Love has ceased to be an emotion. It's just a word. It's mistaken usually for infatuation. Gone out of style, I guess."

Something in his remark affected Lucia queerly. She found herself wishing he hadn't been so cynical. She wished that he had contradicted that statement. Not that it mattered, but— A cold, worldly person he was, with a reluctant smile gleaming faintly through the ice in those blue eyes.

**T**HE jazz music that had been trumpeting through the garden gave way now to softer tones. Hushed melody, whispering something more than minor thirds across a fiddler's strings. Flinging something more than notes through a sleeping garden. A lyric was launched in smooth and sure contralto, making two people in that garden pause and listen.

*"I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should give my love,  
And it answered me with silence,  
Silence above.*

*I asked the darkened sea  
Down where the fishermen go,  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence below.*

*Oh, I could give him weeping,  
Or I could give him song,  
But how can I give him silence  
My whole life long?"*

There was a sharp laugh from Lucia, that matched the person that Lucia appeared to be. Lucia, whose heart had known the longing for love and fulfillment. Lucia, whose life had been thwarted. Was Aunt Liané right? Did one go about life differently, nowadays? Not with ear attuned to whispering melodies. Not with arms outflung to capture romance on the wing. Were all men alike? Was life a common-sense business proposition?

Let the dreamer heed that poignant love-call. Life was a gay thing, once you understood. Without struggle or pain. She must not let him see that the song affected her. She said flippantly. "If there's going to be a show, let's go up. Aunt Liané starts it out well. The singer person wasn't so bad, only her material is a bit dry," and she stepped off ahead.

They trailed up through the garden, jazz once more filling the air.

"Like to dance?" asked Darien Myles idly.

Lucia shrugged. "I'm fed up on it mostly. Gets tiresome." Lucia saying this, whose feet even now shuffled faintly to the irresistible rhythm of music on the terrace. But one must say those things. One must *never* seem keen about anything. Aunt Liané said it was fatal! And yet—she held her breath for fear Darien Myles would take her seriously and desert her for a more agreeable partner.

He said, "Oh, come on," a bit impatiently. "Everyone else is booked up, and I feel like dancing!"

Lucia shrugged again—and thanked Fate—and took his arm. She got to wishing, in this new game, that one didn't always have to profess an indifference for things she liked. Such as dancing, and this gay gathering, and that sentimental song the chap up beyond was singing while he strummed the banjo.

*"I might think of somebody else,  
I might dream of somebody else,  
Of somebody's smile, of somebody's voice  
I might but I never do.*

*I might long for somebody else,  
I might care for somebody else,  
But I shan't, for I can't  
See anyone else, but you."*

In fact she started to hum. She was happy. Dancing with Darien Myles made you forget smart phrases, arrogant gestures, superior criticisms. It made you want to sing under your breath. To press your fingers closer in the warm hand above. To say gay things—foolish things— And then she remembered

Aunt Liané's words. "Darien Myles is very sophisticated. Moves with a fast set. He isn't in the least sentimental or susceptible." And again, "If you find any man among the guests to-night who intrigues you, remember that the way to make him turn and run is to express yourself as you would in Torristory!"

"I often wonder," she attempted carelessly, after a moment, "whoever makes up the silly words to the songs these days. Must be dreadful bores. That one, for instance."

"I suppose so," shrugged Darien Myles glancing away. "Didn't listen to it, to tell the truth."

He was following a girl across the room with his eyes. You wouldn't think he felt an interest in anything. Aunt Liané was right about him, and yet Lucia had been drawn to him from the first. She didn't know why, but the continued indifference depressed her. It was all very well to assume an attitude which meant nothing. It was another thing to suffer through an evening of association with people who really were what they seemed. A surfeited, bored, sophisticated lot. With no interest in anything. No warmth. No feeling. She could have liked Darien Myles. But now—

COURTLANDT SAYRE cut in at that moment and took her away, saying, "Good music, what?"

"Fair—" she drawled. But her eyes followed Darien Myles. She noticed that he went at once to join Arda Baker. Now they were dancing together. Arda's face was animated. Arda Baker could afford to be natural, probably. She had established her reputation for sophistication. It was possible that she fancied Darien Myles. Her fortune gave her confidence, too, no doubt. An heiress, a beauty, with an enviable background, with French at the tip of her tongue. Being a member of the smart set here did not mean just a sophisticated manner. It meant years of training, of luxury, to give one the proper air.

"The Parsolans are giving a dinner at the Minnerode Club to-morrow night," Courtlandt Sayre was saying. "Want to come, beautiful?"

"But I haven't been invited," said Lucia.

"Elsa Parsolan is asking your aunt. I told her I wanted to bring you. They're a live crowd!"

"Perhaps," said Lucia languidly. "Oh, glorious—divine!" said Lucia's heart. "The Parsolans live in that Moorish palace Aunt Liané spoke of, and their servants wear turbans and things. It will be thrilling!"

"You'll come, all right," Courtlandt Sayre was taking it for granted.

And someone else snatched her away then. A handsome chap, with eyes too bright, who talked with a silly lisp, said silly things. He drew her away from the others when the dance was over, and tried to kiss her, and she said, "Oh, don't be stupid. I've been kissed a thousand times to-night. I'm tired of it." Which wasn't true in the least. No one had kissed her!

Darien Myles strolled by alone, turned at her voice, paused, and went on, smiling. She thrilled a little. She couldn't quite be sure if the smile was friendly or amused. He probably thought her clever. She was getting on beautifully. Aunt Liané, too, would approve. Who would ever dream this was Lucia West of Torristory? Who—indeed! There was a mirror among the massed flowers opposite, and she caught a glimpse of herself. It was a bit staggering. She had forgotten how she looked. Boyish head, long ear rings, slinky black satin frock wound about her body, skirts above her knees. She forgot, for the moment, to be thrilled at her progress among Aunt Liané's friends. It was going to take a little time to become accustomed to that reflection.

AUNT LIANÉ told her to sleep till noon. "You'll need to look fresh for the Parsolan affair. You're *made*, Lucia! The Parsolans are very choosy. And Courtlandt Sayre has shown a preference for you, which settles things. You'll simply ride the crest of the wave, the rest of the season. I was never so proud in my life! Stay in bed in the morning, and Elaine Stroh and I will decide what you're to wear to-night. Personally I prefer the Venetian green

crêpe for the Parsolan dinner. With onyx ear rings and bracelets. It would be perfect!"

So Lucia fell asleep, dreaming of her triumph. Well, it was a triumph, wasn't it? She asked the small persistent voice in her heart. Hadn't she pleased Aunt Liané beyond all measure? Hadn't Courtlandt Sayre thawed to the point of flattery? And hadn't she danced with Darien Myles—Darien Myles.

Perhaps it was that last thought that routed sleep after the sun began to sprinkle gold on her bed in the morning. Perhaps as Lucia wandered on the shore of another world, the sun touched her cheek, her hair, whispering, "Down at the foot of the garden lies the sea. Calling you, Lucia. Singing to you softly. There's a man taking his morning swim there, too. His name is Darien Myles."

It's barely possible that the sun whispered that to Lucia. For she sat up after a moment, as if she had heard the song of the sea. It had never ceased being a glorious wonder in these days since her arrival. She got out of bed swiftly and went to the window, the big, round-topped window with its blue and green and gold hangings. And she heard its call. Five minutes later, she was flying down through the garden in a red taffeta bathing suit, with little red satin sandals on her feet and a red satin cape over her shoulders.

Of course she didn't know how to swim! You can't learn to swim running up and downstairs in Torristown giving pills to your father on the odd hour and capsules on the even. Lucia had always wanted to know how to stroke the waves, how to dive and float. It would be fun to splash around in the water. She threw the red cape on the beach now and walked into the rather brisk waves as if she and Aphrodite learned the trick in the same school. She walked right out bravely, singing as she walked,

*"I might think of somebody else,  
I might dream of somebody else."*

And then a perfect whopper of a wave came sneaking up on her and snapped her off her feet in a second. And

churned her around in the waters and made her choke and snuffle and pray. She was drowning. She knew it. It wasn't sophisticated and smart to cry and pray, but she did both, after a fashion, and didn't care whether it was or not. Something caught her by the arm, whirled her around. It was shark, she knew! They ate you alive!

It wasn't a shark. It was Darien Myles. He had her back on the beach in a minute. He shook her rather violently, caught her chin in firm fingers and scanned her white face and said, "For Lord's sake if you don't know how to swim—what's the big idea? Trying to commit suicide?"

She collapsed to an unprotesting heap at his feet. She wanted, instead to throw herself in his arms. To say, "I'd rather be saved by you than be queen of England!"

But she said, "You're the answer to a would-be mermaid's prayer. I was just trying out my bathing suit and a wave took me seriously. Swimming is not one of my parlor tricks!"

"Bathtubs are safer," he told her. "If suicide was the motive, though, I'll say you went to your death nobly. Singing. And a sentimental song at that."

"If you were over on your part of the ocean, you wouldn't have heard me."

"If I'd been over there, you'd be a beautiful corpse by now!"

"Beautiful?" she questioned innocently.

He frowned and picked up her red satin cape and tossed it about her shoulders. "You interrupted a perfect dip, and I'll never forgive you," he told her brusquely. And he swung his arms back and forth. There was a chill in the early morning air.

"You shouldn't have been so chivalrous," she told him, as she got to her feet. But things began to go round. The trees stood on their head, and the fountains—

She was in Darien Myles' arms and he was saying, "Here, I'll carry you up to the house. You're weak."

**Y**ES, she was weak. With the shock of that wave, probably. With something else, too, probably. He car-





*"Girls are all alike," said Darien, "they pretend they're bored with the attention of men, but they eat it alive."*

ried her without the slightest effort, stalking along through the garden, while the sun played on his hair and shoulders and he looked like a pre-historic giant. Lucia wished the house was a thousand miles away.

And then, "Hey, there—Toto!" he was calling to his man who was cutting some roses at the hedge. "Get some hot coffee. Serve it under the apple tree right away." And he carried Lucia through the gate of that little green fence that Aunt Liané deplored. He placed her on a broad seat under the tree, snatched up a big Turkish robe and got into it. "It was here I heard you making up poetry yesterday," he told her, "and enjoyed

my breakfast in spite of it. A popular novelist would probably call me a healthy young animal."

"How do you know?" demanded Lucia, having established her equilibrium once more, and remembering what was expected. "You don't read them, surely?"

"To please Marj," he told her easily, as he lighted a cigarette. "Devotion, eh?"

"Marj?" repeated Lucia in not such a sophisticated voice. "You're—ah—married?"

"Not—yet," said Darien, with a laugh. "Ah, here comes Toto now. I'm starved, but of course you won't be. Girls like you are never hungry."

She was famished, but she wouldn't have let him know for the world. As a matter of fact, too, the last bit of information had left her gasping. Marj. "Not—yet—" She sipped her coffee languidly. She pictured Marj. She hated her! She wished that she was back in Torrystown—and that *he* was back in Torrystown, in her little garden, where people said simple things and admitted simple likes and dared be themselves. But fancy Darien Myles in Torrystown!

"I suppose you're going to the Parsolan affair," she said presently.

"Oh, I may drop in. I came here for a month's rest. No chance. Might as well be right on Broadway. Things going on all the time."

He was munching toast moodily, gazing out at the sea. He turned then, and looked at her where she sat opposite him in the red cap and suit and cape. No rouge on those cheeks this morning. No paint on those lips. A careless fringe of hair showing beneath the cap. He said quite unexpectedly, "Going with Courtlandt Sayre, to-night?"

"I suppose," she told him, shrugging, and got to her feet. "Look me up, won't you? Thanks for the rescue. 'Bye!" And she sauntered off idly.

You'd think she was talking to a gardener or chauffeur, so impersonal was her tone. The effort this morning was tremendous. She had to get away from that table—from Darien Myles. He'd be seeing in another minute that she was in love with him. And that would never do. To win him, she must carry on stoically. Without emotion. With magnificent indifference. That's the way people went about winning the one they loved. Aunt Liané knew!

Aunt Liané had seen all from her window. Lucia had scarcely gotten into her room when the older woman entered, stood with her back against the door and threw back her head delightedly.

"You darling!" she whispered. "How did you manage it? I couldn't believe my eyes. You've broken the ice with Darien Myles. Technique—finesse? Child, you are a past mistress. I may be able to hint—suggest, but the life you crave to live is natural to you. Who would have thought of such a way

to intrigue that woman-hater? A man always falls in love with a woman he rescues. It stimulates his ego, makes him a hero! Lucia, you *are* clever!"

And Lucia listened—and tried to force the truth on her aunt with a few "buts" and "listens," but to no avail. Liané Dugrenot chose to interpret it her own way. Lucia, she said, was like her own daughter. She was proud of her. She would have this smart summer colony at her feet before the week was out!

**I**F the Parsolan affair was any criterion, Lucia West had attained her goal. Men grouped about her. Women grudgingly conceded that she was a success. She wore the Venetian green frock, with lines thoroughly sophisticated and extreme, and onyx rings and pendants and bracelets. Courtlandt Sayre kissed her twice while they danced, and she hated him.

Darien Myles was there. He never cut in, though sometimes Lucia saw him standing at the edge of the floor quite alone. Other men cut in. Men who didn't matter. Asked her for a dozen dances, and kissed her hand because they didn't dare kiss her lips. That would come, though, their eyes said. And Lucia, struggling with herself to maintain the cool indifference toward such things, found herself experiencing a greater distaste of it all than she had ever imagined possible. She had brought herself with meteor-like swiftness to a realization of a dream, and she had to struggle with herself to keep up that vapid front.

Toward the end of the evening, Darien Myles asked her to dance. Piqued by his lack of attention earlier, she was half-tempted to refuse. She found it impossible. Summoning the wobbly hauter she took his arm.

Of course the orchestra would be playing.

*"I might think of somebody else—*

*Of somebody's smile, of somebody's voice,*

*I might but I never do—"*

and the orchestra leader was singing it—and she was moving in Darien Myles'

arms. He might have been dancing with a statue. It robbed Lucia of her poise. It made her want to beat her hands against his breast.

When the dance was over, he said, "Let's go out where it's cool. These big parties—close—" They went out on the veranda, and he drew two chairs into the shadows.

Music kept drifting out. Lizst's "*Liebstraume*." Set to the new dance rhythm. Its poignant beauty caught Lucia by the throat. She sat forward in her chair, her body still and tense as she listened. And soon she was conscious of a hand slipping over hers, holding it close—close. Darien's hand. Aunt Liané would have had her laugh now, but Lucia couldn't have laughed to save her life. The beauty of the love song, and Darien's hand over hers! Was it possible that he cared?

Courtlandt Sayre destroyed it all by coming up at that moment.

"This is ours, you know," he said rather irritably, but he glanced at Darien as he spoke, and led Lucia away.

That was the last she saw of Darien Myles that night. When that dance was over, she manouvered an escape to the corner of the veranda where she had left him, but other lovers had discovered it, and he saw nowhere about. The evening was over for Lucia. She went home that night remembering only a shadowy corner. An orchestra whispering the "*Liebstraume*." And Darien Myles' hand over hers.

**Y**OU can't very well hope to be rescued two mornings in succession from a sea where you've no business to be when you don't know how to swim. But that doesn't prevent you from studying the view from your bedroom window, getting the lay of the land, so to speak, and ascertaining whether a certain person who lives next door is indulging in his usual early morning sport.

In the case of Darien Myles, that morning—he was. In the case of Lucia West, she raced to her dressing room, swung open the closet door and surveyed the exquisite array of clothes for which the genius of Elaine Stroh and the generosity of Aunt Liané were responsible.

She got into a skirt of pale gray Kasha, adroitly pleated with complements of diagonal tucks, and a sweater of dark blue jersey, with clever inserts of striped silk jersey in effective color schemes—and a perfectly ravishing blue felt hat to match, with an attached scarf that came swinging down jauntily over her shoulders. And she lighted a cigarette and stuck it in a lapis holder and made her way down through the garden as if every morning of her life at six o'clock, she took a stroll like this.

He shouted a "Hello!" to her as he came racing up the beach toward the apple tree in his garden. And she turned, as though surprised, and waved casually and walked on to the next rose bush, sniffing at buds. From the corner of one eye, she saw Toto come down his master's garden bearing a tray. And then Darien Myles called out. "Come on over. Toto made popovers. They're usually good! Hey, Toto! Another cup."

She went, crushing out the cigarette on a fence picket as she passed through the little green gate. She wished that smoking wasn't the smart thing for a woman to do. She loathed the taste of cigarette smoke. It made her weak this morning.

"You're the first girl I ever knew who rose before noon!" he told her, as he drew out the little green enameled chair for her under the apple tree. There was a warmth in his eyes, a kind of gladness. A welcoming gladness. She was happy—happy! But because men like Darien Myles were said to run from a girl who expressed her true sentiments, she glanced away, shrugged and smiled vaguely.

"That's so stupid," she said to him. "Staying in bed until noon! You have the world to yourself in the morning. It's the only time one can move about without a lot of tiresome people cluttering up the place."

"Pardon the cluttering!" begged Darien Myles, bowing low.

She wanted to cry out to him. "You don't clutter it, Darien! You beautify it. I haven't slept all night because your hand closed over mine for a moment last night while I listened to the '*Liebstraume*!'"

But instead she said, with an unnatural laugh, "What perfectly stunning popovers! And hot! Shall I pour—do you take cream?"

Things like that, while your hand trembled and your heart trembled and your very throat ached with unsaid words. Oh, undoubtedly Aunt Liané was right! You would lose even this slight contact if you dared show in the least that you were human and natural—that you loved him.

He said, "I hope Tommy Brehmer didn't make himself obnoxious to you last night. He'd had too much liquor—but then, he always does. He falls for your type hard. He and Shotwell had a bloody combat over you out on the green, last night. Shotwell won!"

"Really?" She was thrilled but her tone was bland. Men fighting over her. It had been a triumph! Tommy Brehmer was the silly one who had tried to kiss her.

"You've got Courtlandt Sayre going rather strong, too. The old boy is hard as nails as a rule. Don't let him catch one of the thousand kissing you. He's quick on the trigger."

"What thousand?" asked Lucia, before she thought.

"The thousand you were telling Tommy about when I passed on the veranda last night." And he busied himself with a popover.

"Oh!" said Lucia. It was the faint irony in his tone that annoyed her. Apparently he was serious, but a kind of scornful smile played about the corners of his mouth. "The men at Swamps-cott are so childish. They don't know how to play. I've been bored to death since I came!" She stifled a yawn, sipped her coffee, and dared not yield to the desire to watch the way his hair came to a black peak on his forehead; the way his dark, impudent eyes rested on her.

"You seem to enjoy their attention just the same," he said with unexpected sharpness.

**S**HE looked up quickly. The fire in his tone thrilled her. If he would unbend for a moment, give her a chance to resume her natural manner! But he

was again distinctly impersonal. She might hurl her thoughts against the stone front of his reserve indefinitely. Without result. Why did she like him, she asked herself angrily. Why didn't she simply leave him here and walk away through her aunt's garden and forget all about him? She was beginning to see that you can't leave your emotions at home with your overshoes and umbrella. They go along with you always. And summoning a rather superior tone she said, "You're being funny, aren't you? Accepting attention—and enjoying it, are two different things."

"I've met lots of girls like you," he returned. "Pretend they're bored at the attention of men. They eat it alive. Never saw it fail. Women are all alike. They don't want to admit that they're flattered when a man tells 'em they're pretty—and all that bunk."

"I hate men to tell me I'm pretty!" she flared. "If that's all they have to say." She shrugged angrily and subsided to silence.

"Well, you aren't exactly," he told her. "Give 'em credit."

She whirled. "They have called me beautiful," she informed him coldly. "There's a difference."

"Certainly," he agreed. "But you're neither. You look like a boy dressed up in girl's clothes."

There was such a thing as carrying this game of Aunt Liané's too far. In another minute she'd be crying, and that would never do, Lucia knew. She got to her feet, knees trembling under her. She lighted a cigarette with a hand forced to steadiness. And she said, "I promised to breakfast with Aunt Liané. She'll be waiting. See you again!" And she was off, humming.

He called after her. "I'm giving a party, to-night. Just decided this morning. Will you come?"

She said, "Courtlandt Sayre is taking me to dinner at the Millers'. Sorry."

"Drop in afterward," he suggested. "It'll probably last all night."

"Perhaps," carelessly. And Lucia passed on.

She wished, as she walked along, that he was a poor clerk in Torristown. With a little flivver, and a dream in his heart,

and gentle words on his lips. With things to achieve, things to strive for. This game of being a very smart person had begun to pall on Lucia. This game of knowing how to smoke a cigarette, and shrug, and mouth the accepted patois of this fashionable group. She longed, just now, for a clasp of an honest hand, the smile of a genuine friend.

SHE found Aunt Liané waiting for her in the breakfast room. She was beaming, hands outstretched as she said to her, "You're simply precious, my dear! And you had the good taste to wear that Chantal sports ensemble! You never needed tutoring, Lucia. You needed only opportunity! To-day I'm making you my heir! That is what I think of Lucia West!"

And Lucia smiled and shut her eyes hard on grateful tears that mingled with tears of another sort entirely. Such as the tears of a lady in love. And she nibbled a muffin and sipped at coffee and worried the crisp curls of bacon on her plate, and decided she had never been so miserable in her life. What did a palace matter, a white marble palace with a garden that rolled to the sea, and fountains, and flowers? What did wealth matter, and lovely clothes, and the attention of men like Courtlandt Sayre and Tommy Brehmer, when men like Darien Myles lived but did not love? Aunt Liané chattered on and Lucia swallowed gulps, and smiled, and forgot that she was an heiress and remembered that she was a pauper, after all.

Until the telephone rang shortly after ten. It was Darien Myles.

"If you're not dated up with Tommy or Shotwell or Sayre for the rest of the day, would you like to take a spin up to Boston and help me select some tricks for my party? Like flowers, and favors—and things."

She despaired of managing a properly indifferent voice. She breathed a "Yes" across the space that separated them. "What time?"

"Now—if you can!" brusquely.

"I—can."

She got into the mountainous roadster that stopped a few minutes later before her door; with Aunt Liané's ecstasy

ringing in her ears; with another ecstasy throbbing through her heart. Darien Myles beside her, long, brown hands on the wheel, a reserved smile in his eyes. And the world whirled by.

It was the kind of a day when the sun seems drunk with its own brilliance, and the trees sing little songs to one another, and the birds practice all their special trills; when you'd think that St. Patrick himself had sprinkled that perfect greenness on grass and bush; and that St. Peter had put all the little slavey angels to work at dawn to sweep away the faintest speck from the blueness of that sky.

Lucia wanted to throw out her arms to the glory of it, to say some perfectly foolish, ridiculous thing. To laugh and talk as if she were human. To slide her arm through Darien's arm and sing, under her breath:

*"I might think of somebody else,  
I might dream of somebody else  
Of somebody's smile, of somebody's  
voice;  
I might, but I never do."*

She wanted to dream that he might blend his voice with hers in that song; that he might say, "Lucia, you darling! I've been in love with you since the first minute we met! Your hair is glorious! Your cheeks are like wild roses. Your lips are the red of cherries—"

And susednly she remembered. He couldn't say her hair was glorious. The color wasn't bad, but her head looked like a boy's head. Hair smoothed down to a severe flatness. And her cheeks weren't like wild roses. They used to be, but the lid of that little imported rouge box said something in French that meant, "Ashes of Roses." And her lips weren't the red of cherries. They were "Tangée"—if you knew what that meant. That's what the lettering on the lipstick said.

Kind of a silent person—Darien Myles. Didn't say much. But every time you looked at him, he was watching you out of the corner of his eyes. He might be reading her thoughts! And remembering Aunt Liané's admonitions, she took out her cigarette case and pro-

ceeded to help herself. He'd see she wasn't the sentimental sort!

**T**HEY lunched at an Inn above the bay, and Lucia forgot herself once or twice. Forgot to be scornful of everything. She'd say things like, "Don't you adore the smell of the sea? Seems as if I can never breathe deeply enough of it!" or, as they watched the birds, "I wish I were a gull! I'd spread my wings some night and soar up to a star. I'd like to hold a star in my hands!"

Darien Myles shook his head slowly. "Stars," he said, "might be like people. Diamonds in the distance—tinsel in the hand. Stars are symbolic of earthly ideals and yet, stars might just be tinsel, once you get close to them. Just as people are sometimes."

She wanted to think about the thing he had said, but he swept at once deliberately, it seemed, into a discussion of boats.

Boston an hour or two later. The florist's. The caterer. Delicacies for Toto to prepare for the party. Lucia preserved the proper manner throughout. Oh, what fun to have gone on an expedition of this sort with a Darien who laughed gayly with one, and enjoyed laughter! Who wanted laughter from her, instead of careful, studied phrases. But Aunt Liané must know!

Aunt Liané was lying down when Lucia returned, recovering from a slight heart attack. She waved her niece away. "It's getting late," she said in a whisper. "You must dress for the Miller dinner. Wear the violet chiffon, Lucia. And black slippers—and I've chosen some jewels for you. A daring set of Roman paste intaglios and jet. Distinctive and arresting. You wear bizarre things so well. How proud I am of you! Lucia, it is a comfort to know that when I'm gone, you will carry on here. It will be yours—"

"Please!" begged Lucia. "I don't want to think of you going. You've been so wonderful—and I do love you." brokenly.

"No tears! Nothing makes such ravages on a girl's beauty! At any rate, I'm satisfied that you'll never have to shed tears over men. They're your

slaves, dear child! Stop into my room to-night when you return from Darien Myles' party. And remember the things I've told you. He's practically yours. This gesture to-day of taking you to Boston proved it to me. When you're with Darien, pretend a preference for Courtlandt Sayre. And vice versa. Do you understand?"

Yes, Lucia thought she did. But it was such an empty game. And if success was her reward in the end, would she have to go on pretending like this for the rest of her life? She stood before the long mirror and viewed herself. A strange creature, this Lucia. Just as Darien had said. A boy in a girl's clothes. Like a picture out of a smart magazine. Without a feminine touch. Without a frill, a ruffle, a fan. But with Aunt Liané's weak but proud voice ringing in her ears, Lucia went down the stairs and let Courtlandt Sayre put her into his car.

The Miller affair was quite like the Parsolan dinner, and the majority of the crowd went on to Darien's place from there. Darien, it seemed, had foregone the dinner because of his own party.

And it *was* a party—if impromptu. Quite the most lovely dance orchestra Lucia had heard. There was a brightness in her eyes, an indefinable radiance in her smile. She loved—she adored. Darien might be unconscious of it, but that didn't matter. She was here in his garden. He was here in her world. Some day, perhaps— She was swept from partner to partner. She was lured through the moonlit garden to view a sleeping rose—and held there to listen to fiery outbursts of love.

**D**ARIEN MYLES danced with her at last. He talked of the orchestra and the crowd, at first. Of garden and seas, next. Of moon and stars, later. Of roses—and love, after that. Lucia was in his arms, his lips against her hair, and a kind of husky throb in his voice. He said, "I have fought against this thing since the morning I saw you hanging over my little green gate. I wanted then to gather you up and hold you close and keep you—here in my garden, alone.

Away from the world. But I knew, that night, it could never be, Lucia."

"Never?" she heard herself say

terror. She maintained the manner Aunt Liané had warned her was essential. And she laughed faintly. "Darren," she said,



"Lucia, if you ever cut your hair an inch shorter, or use a lipstick, or wear anything but this rose thing with ruffles and bows, I'll—I'll—" And Darren kissed her by way of a threat!

through the waves of sudden terror.

"No. Because, first of all. I love you too much!"

She fought against the tears, against

"You're such a serious person. Can't you ever play?"

"Yes," he said thickly. "But not when my heart is in the ring! You said one

time you wanted to hold a star in your hands. I've reached up to-night and plucked a star—and it's tinsel, Lucia. Lovely, glittering tinsel. But it won't light a man's path when he's old and weary. Tinsel won't survive."

His arms drew her close in a swift embrace. His lips met her lips; he breathed into her soul the fire of his love—and turned and left her standing there alone.

Aunt Liané had asked her to stop in for a minute before going to bed. It was hard—but Lucia had promised. She knocked softly and opened the door. The little bed light was shedding a faint glow over the pillow nearest it. The head that lay on that pillow had sunk down to a queer position. Lucia had found her mother that way five years before. She did not cry out now. She dropped to her knees and buried her head in the coverlet and whispered a prayer through her tears. It was over—all this—for Aunt Liané, who had loved Philippe too much. Her wealth had not compensated for *that!* And the taffeta hangings stirred faintly at the window as if a soul still lingered in the quiet of that room. As if, perhaps, Philippe had come to take her hand and lead her to the place where one cannot love too much—or too little.

**T**HE smart set with which Liané Dugrenot had surrounded herself stood by faithfully during the next few days. All except Darien Myles. Lucia sent a maid over to Darien with a note the very next morning. In that hour of loneliness and loss, she yearned for the comfort he could give her. But the maid returned with the news that Darien and his servants had left Swampscott by motor that morning, to catch the seven o'clock train out of Boston for the west. The old caretaker had again assumed charge of the place. There were no messages. The destination of his master was unknown to the old man. There was nothing else to say.

The pendulum swung to the opposite end of the arc now. A month of glory behind her—a lifetime of loneliness ahead. Liané Dugrenot gone. She had left Lucia a fortune; it wasn't a fortune

that Lucia wanted, but some one who loved her—someone who *cared*.

Darien. . . . To fly away without a word, without a tiny message, after that hour last night! That hour in his garden under the moon and the stars. She had, for that moment, reached up and caught a star in her hands, and held it close, for the duration of his kiss.

Liané Dugrenot's heiress! There were many brawls over her on the green after that, probably, but Lucia neither knew nor cared. Courtlandt Sayre urged an early wedding. He would take her to Paris. She could forget her grief there. They could be happy together. And she smiled at him sadly—and at Tommy and Bob, and refused them. She felt a very real grief for Liané Dugrenot, who was dead—an agony for Darien Myles, who was alive, and gone!

The cottage at Swampscott was closed and Lucia went back home, a triumphant return for one who had been snubbed by many, tolerated by a few and ignored completely by the social elect in Torristown, except for Rita Carstairs. Triumphant in a sense—humiliating in another. For when she walked up the steps of the West cottage, a person she had once known as Agnes Jenkins met her at the door. With a gloating smirk that certainly had some meaning. She couldn't imagine what it meant, first. She said, "Good morning, Miss Jenkins! They've brought my father home from Uncle Will's then—"

"Good morning, Lucia!" And the person inside the screen door showed her teeth as she smiled. "Mrs. West, if you please! Yes, I brought my husband home from Will's last week—the day we were married."

"Married!" whispered Lucia. "You—father—"

"Yes!" gloatingly. "Since his daughter saw fit to desert him and go gallivanting off to Boston to visit someone he despised—and had good reason to—I guess it's none of your business, Lucia West, if he got married. He's at least got someone to look after him, poor soul. He told me to tell you, if you came, that he never wanted to see your face again." And she slammed the door.

Agnes Jenkins. She had achieved her



life's ambition. She was Mrs. at last! The little cottage was home no longer. The queer unnatural attitude of Lucia's father had resolved itself into the same startling antagonism he had felt toward another woman he had once loved. Liané.

As Lucia went down the familiar path, an appalling sense of futility possessed her. Aunt Liané gone. Her father worse than estranged. And Darien—The Dugrenot fortune seemed unimportant now. What could it buy? Not love—not companionship—not happiness. You had a heart and you wanted someone—and you suffered accordingly, whether you were a princess or a slave.

**S**HE stayed at the Hotel Pelton that night. Familiar faces smiled at her as she passed along the street. With deference, with something like awe. The Dugrenot heiress. Little Lucia West! She wanted to get to her room—away from them—away from people and faces. Away from the world. She couldn't bear it.

News travels in places like Torrington. Toward evening, Rita Carstairs came to discuss her lost friend, with an honest tear, and a gallant smile, as she recalled sweet memories from the past. Lucia told her the truth about herself and her father, her indefinite plans for the future. And Rita Carstairs listened, as Aunt Liané would have listened, with that kind, understanding smile. She drew Lucia's head down to her shoulder and comforted her and stared off through the window thoughtfully.

That's how it came about that Lucia West and Rita Carstairs went off together to California for the fall, and on down to Florida for the winter. And all the smart weeklies got to mentioning Lucia West and her social activities, the things she wore, her friends, and to read the magazines and papers you'd think she hadn't a serious thought in her head. But she had. And all the jewels and gowns and admirers in the world didn't make the slightest bit of difference. The one serious thought stayed. And it was Darien. The one serious thought got between Lucia and certain men who wanted to marry her. Nice men, too. With lots of money—with an inexhaust-

ible supply of adjectives that meant beautiful—wonderful, and such; with sisters that were countesses and fathers that were czars—American, of course.

And things went on that way, until spring, when Lucia couldn't stand it any longer. And abruptly, one morning, she said good-by to Rita Carstairs and took the first train for Swampscott. She rounded up Aunt Liané's old servants, and got the boards down from the windows and the hedges trimmed and the bulbs planted. She was so busy that her hair outgrew the boyish cut and pretty soon Lucia began to look like a girl again. And when she went to the hair dresser in Boston, he said, "I'll cut, if you say, Mademoiselle, but the feminine length—ah, it is exquisite! Look, Mademoiselle!"

And Lucia looked—and saw herself and smiled at the old reflection. "I guess you're right, Antoine. We'll leave it." And she felt like herself again.

Same way with the lipstick and rouge. Messing around in the garden with Mateo while he dug and spaded and pruned, one was rather tired afterward. Cosmetics went by the board, and she forgot all about them, presently. Life was simpler. While you were spending half an hour shaping "*Tangée*" cupid's bows and finding the most logical spots for rouge, you could be playing a nocturne beside the open window while a robin trilled an obligato in a tree close by. You got rather tired, too, of the last word in a garden frock, an afternoon costume, a dinner gown. Those little simple silks and organdies and crêpes were so easy to slip into. So restful to look at. In shades of rose and orchid and green, with a ruffle here and a tuck there and a bow. Lucia didn't know it, but she was reverting to type. And after all, she was a decidedly lovely type.

**S**UCH a beautiful house Aunt Liané had left her! Such a great, big beautiful house. Such a lonely house. With a garden that sloped down to the sea that meant a place where a man had rescued Lucia one morning, oh, so long ago! The garden where she had strolled one time with him; a place where a little green fence marked the

boundary, in part, between Aunt Liané's garden and another garden. A little green fence with a gate. Lucia stood, sometimes, beside that gate, and looked over into that other garden. The apple tree. The little pebbled path where Toto had come staggering down with the big silver tray. Where someone else had come leaping down in the morning sunshine. Someone else.

The little garden gate was drenched with tears of a girl no longer sophisticated and haughty. Of a girl, with wistful, lonely eyes now, as she gazed up beyond at the deserted house. A garden with spring dancing through, spilling blossoms on the trees, and buds on the rosebushes, and hyacinths along the garden wall. Garden of dreams. Garden of memory. Where love had paused for a moment and gone on, leaving an ache in Lucia's heart, a need in Lucia's soul. Darien had thirsted, hungered for an ideal, and he had said that. Lucia didn't fulfill that need. He had gone on without her. He had held her in his arms—pressed his lips to hers. The tip of love's wing had brushed against her. That was all.

The moon, that May, was a reckless thing, prodigal in its fullness. It made the whispering sea a glittering carpet whereon a royal entourage might have passed. It made plain little old bushes stand out rather grandly, and made great, large splendid bushes look quite too magnificent. If you didn't look close, you'd think those were diamonds sprinkled along the beach—and pearls. It painted the little green fence an eerie shade, like the steel of a saber. And each picket was a sword—and there were a thousand of them, it seemed, pointing upward, at attention—in readiness lest Darien's garden be invaded by a girl who had failed to measure up to an ideal. The moon was a cruel thing, that May. It peopled Darien's garden with shadows. Darien in this mood—Darien in that—

**L**UCIA stood there one night and bore it as long as she could—and fled, at last, through the little green gate; ran to the apple tree and snapped off some fragrant, laden branches, and

buried her face in them beside the bench under the tree. "Darien!" she cried. "If you were here to-night—if you'd come back—I'd tell you then, whether you'd hate me or not. I'd tell you that I *loved* you, that I'll always love you—Dear God! Let me see him once again!"

But he didn't come back. And wearily, at last, she got to her feet, clutching the blossoms and turned blindly away, locked the little green gate and stood a moment remembering that other night—that kiss—singing softly:

*"I might think of somebody else,  
I might dream of somebody else,  
Of somebody's smile, of somebody's  
voice  
I might, but I never do—"*

"There's someone standing beside my gate," said a voice behind her. And she caught her breath sharply. Darien's voice! No, she must be dreaming!

"I'd say it was Lucia—but it can't be. For her hair is a girl's hair, soft and graceful and sweet. And Lucia's hair was like a boy's."

She did not turn. She could not. Longing for Darien had made her fancy this thing!

"There's someone standing beside my gate," went on the voice—more softly still. "With a rose silk dress—and a ruffle or two, and a little bow at the back."

The world swam before Lucia. She held the apple blossoms tight—tight.

"I'd say it was Lucia," went on the voice. "But she would laugh at such a dress—a little rose silk dress with a ruffle or two! Such a pretty little dress. I'd say it was Lucia," more softly still, "but she would be standing here in some man's arms—laughing at him, cruelly, because he told her he loved her—and she only wanted to play—"

"Darien!" She turned with a cry. Blossoms crushed to her breast. tears like jewels on cheeks pale now with pain.

"It's you, Lucia?" said Darien, with a queer catch in his voice. And he made no move. He stood just looking at her, as the moon silvered her arms, her face, her throat; as it lingered on the amber of her hair, and made it curiously unreal,

curiously beautiful. A new Darien. Thinner, and younger, somehow. His mustache was gone, and in his rough gray tweeds, he looked like a boy again.

"It's you who are laughing now—" she whispered, but her words then were buried against his shoulder, for he had swept her there as if she had been a ghost.

"Laughing!" he cried. "Perhaps! With the madness of a joy fulfilled. I came back here, Lucia, because I couldn't help myself. I love you—I've loved you from the first. But I went away last year, because I was afraid of love. I'm a kind of fool—a dreamer, Lucia. And I'd built an ideal in my heart, about a girl. And then I met you. Ideal or not—I loved you, and was afraid. I got to worrying about it. You'd laugh at me because I had other ideals, too. I wanted a girl who was real, down to the bottom of her heart. And you weren't, Lucia. You didn't look like the girl I wanted. You were dressed up by a French modiste. You were schooled in the smart patter of the day. You smoked and—well, you were different all around from what I'd dreamed of. And yet—I loved you. I wanted you. And so I went away. Didn't made any difference. You owned me just as much as if I'd been right here with you. There was something, Lucia—I had to come back for you. My life was incomplete. And then—to-night—I find you here like this—the image of the dream I've carried in my heart—"

**S**HE was laughing, crying, clinging to him in terror and joy. "Darien, the real *me* has always been like this. I

thought you'd love—the other kind. They said you were sophisticated and worldly—"

Kisses against her cheeks, her lips, her hair. Mad kisses of ecstasy. "It's a mask, I wear," he whispered. "I'm a great big sentimental fool. And the first time I saw you hanging over my garden gate talking to that robin, I knew I'd love you the longest day I lived. You were real then, Lucia. And I couldn't forget it. And I hated those black dresses and beads—and that fool haircut—and that lipstick and those cigarettes—"

"And I hated them, too, Darien! Poor Aunt Liané."

"I was sorry about her, Lucia, but I got away pretty early that morning. I knew it was flee then—or never! But you seem to have been having a rather gay time since, according to reports."

"I've been miserable," faintly.

"With a thousand men making love to you—"

"With the man I loved—hating me!"

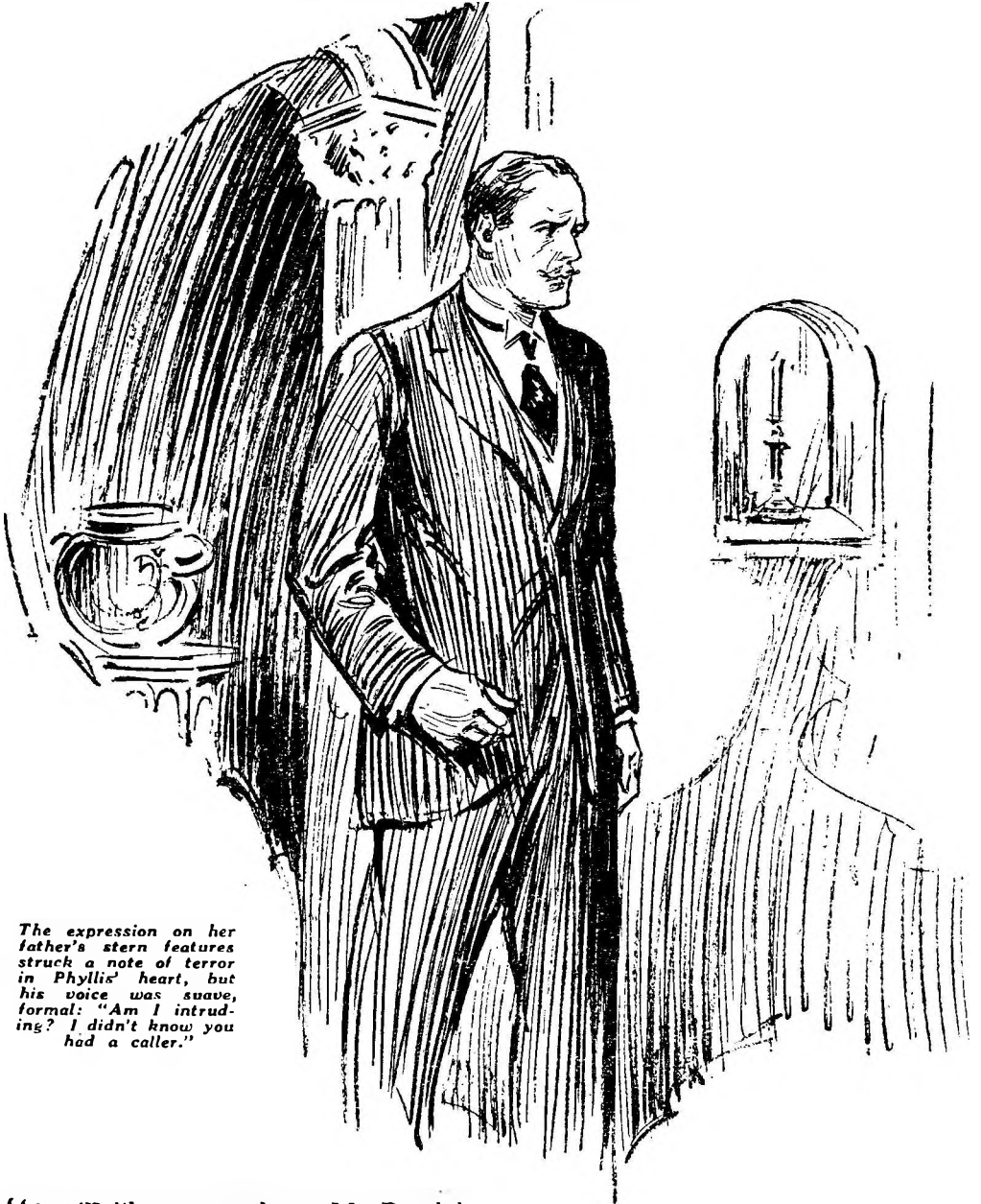
He stopped kissing her long enough to say, "Lucia, if you ever cut that hair an inch shorter or smoke a cigarette or use a lipstick or wear any other kind of a dress than a rose thing with ruffles and bows, I'll—I'll—" And he kissed her again, by way of a threat.

She could see the moon over his shoulder, beaming down at them with a guilty smile. She didn't mind the moon. It was making candles of that picket fence now. Great candles on an altar. It was flooding the world with silver—flooding her heart with ecstasy—making yesterday's garden of memory a paradise of to-day!



*Mary Frances Doner's new novelette "One Night in June" has a sparkle and youthful charm that will delight you. Don't miss this beautiful story—the feature of a forthcoming issue of Cupid's Diary.*

# Star Dust



*The expression on her father's stern features struck a note of terror in Phyllis' heart, but his voice was suave, formal: "Am I intruding? I didn't know you had a caller."*

“I ’D like—to speak—to Mr. Randal, please.”

The old door-man in charge of the stage entrance of the *Luxuria* stumbled to his feet and jerked off a soiled plaid cap, a mute acknowledgment of the beauty of the girl who stood before him in the box-like space, the

door leading into a cavern of darkness, with lights in the distance.

“Mr. Randal’s on the stage now,” he replied, his keen eyes sweeping appraisingly over the slender figure before him. Girls like this didn’t call at the *Luxuria* stage entrance—not even to see an actor

*By Beulah Poynter*



*"Mr. Randal, Father. He is going," she murmured. Kent flushed and stammered over his reply, but found time to whisper: "Tomorrow at one, at the Ritz."*

of Kent Randal's undeniable charm and popularity.

Her chinchilla wrap only half concealed her frock of delicate white chiffon. Her inky lustrous hair was combed severely back from a milky white forehead and small close-set ears and worn

boy fashion. Amber colored eyes fringed by amazingly long lashes, cleft pointed chin, small arrogant nose, tremulous scarlet mouth—the ensemble spelled aristocratic distinction. Park Avenue—Fifth Avenue—perhaps. The old man smiled.

"If you'd like to wait until Mr. Randal comes off, I'll tell him you're here."

"Thanks." Phyllis Ballard accepted the stool he pushed forward.

"Who'll I tell him wants him?"

She hesitated. "Just—a lady."

"Yes, ma'am."

He moved slowly, dragging one foot toward the door, and disappeared in the darkness.

Phyllis opened her vanity, a dainty trifle of platinum and emeralds, her father's gift on her last birthday, and looked at her reflection in the tiny mirror. Her heart was pounding, almost suffocating her. An impulse to flee before the old man returned seized her. She rose to her feet and then dropped back again. No! She wouldn't go! She had a right to her happiness, and how else would she attain it unless she went in search of it. Kent Randal could never come to her—the gulf was too great—the presumption too tremendous.

She hadn't stopped to analyze the urge that had impelled her to excuse herself from the other occupants of the box, to wrap the folds of chinchilla about her and to slip through the darkened auditorium to the alleyway outside, just before the end of the third act of *The City of Lilies*.

It hadn't occurred to her that this thing was not only unconventional but immodest and bold; that her action was that of a stage-struck flapper, not of a cultured, poised young woman of twenty-two; secure in her wealth, social position and family, who possessed a certain reputation for lady-like aloofness.

She only knew that something, the note in a man's voice, a gleam in his eyes, had touched a current of electricity in her heart; that she must meet this man face to face, speak to him before the night was over. It was the last performance of the season, *The City of Lilies* was closing, Kent Randal might leave New York, and their paths would never cross. Phyllis had known the moment he had stepped on the stage, the moment he had spoken, that he was the only man in the world for her.

Yet at the stage door she had hesitated. A chill passed over her. Her

knees felt strangely weak and shaking. Her hands were clammy. What would she say to him? That she was Phyllis Ballard, only daughter of Harrison Ballard, the banker—that she admired his acting—that she wanted to know him?

What did one say to a successful young actor, anyway? What could any girl say who deliberately forced her presence upon a strange man, who sought him uninvited? Many girls had been thrilled by the sound of Kent Randal's voice, the twinkle in his dark eyes, the mellow note in his laughter.

Would he understand her visit?

**A** THUNDEROUS burst of applause. The crash of the orchestra. Lights in the cavern—then footsteps.

Phyllis became conscious that she was not alone, that the old man had returned and someone was with him, a young man in evening clothes with shining russet hair, deep set, grave brown eyes, skin strangely bronzed with grease paint and cosmetics.

They stood for a second, facing each other, then he spoke in a queer, hushed voice. "I—knew you'd come to-night—I knew it."

Their hands met. The contact of his fingers, warm, trembling, set her pulses throbbing. The walls seemed to close in upon her. Embarrassment, ecstasy made her incoherent—incapable of speech.

"Come to my dressing room, please," he said. "We can't talk here."

Without answering him she took his arm and followed him across the stage, past the back drops, the property furniture and up a steep flight of iron stairs, then into a little room that seemed to overflow trunks, suits of clothing, shoes, hats and toilette accessories.

A Japanese valet, packing a wardrobe trunk, turned discreetly and moved out of the room as they entered.

Kent Randal laughed nervously. "You must pardon the confusion. It's closing to-night and with the packing the place is a mess." He pushed some clothing off a cretonne covered chair as he spoke.

Phyllis shook her head. "I can't stay. I've friends waiting. I must get back to them."

"You were in the right stage box," he

said eagerly. "Four of you—a blonde girl and two men."

"You noticed me?"

He nodded. "The minute I came out. Didn't you know it? Didn't you feel me begging you to come back? I almost went up in my lines, you hit me so hard."

"I—I felt something," she said slowly. "I've never done anything like this before—you know that, don't you?"

"Of course I do. Who are you, won't you tell me?"

"Yes. I want you to know; I came back to tell you." Her voice was low, tremulous, but the painful embarrassment was gone.

He lifted one of her hands and held it in both of his own. "I know you're the loveliest thing I've ever seen, that I was going to move heaven and earth to find you—if you hadn't come—but I don't know your name."

"I'm Phyllis Ballard, I live on Madison Avenue—12—"

"You're Harrison Ballard's daughter?"

"Yes."

A silence. Then he bent and pressed his lips on the palm of the hand he held. "May I call?" His eyes were shining as he raised them to hers.

"Yes."

"To-morrow?"

"Yes. At four." She withdrew her hand and pulled her cloak about her. "I must go. I've no excuse to offer my friends—I can't tell them the truth."

"I'll take you to the door."

At the stage exit she offered her hand again. "I—hope you—don't—think me cheap?" she said with a little catch in her voice, "that you realize—?"

"I realize that the gods have been good to me, and that—love can come like a bolt from the blue."

"Love!" Her eyes widened.

He smiled. "What else?"

"I don't know—only—good night. To-morrow at four."

## Chapter II

**I**N front of the theatre, Phyllis found her friends, Madge Patterson, Andy Craig, and Jimmy Munster. Jimmy was looking wildly about the throng pouring

from the lobby, in search of her, an expression of bewilderment on his homely, good natured face. Madge and Andy were frankly bored at the delay.

She slipped in between them with a little laugh. "Sorry I kept you waiting. Is the car here?"

Madge whirled. "It is. Jimmy has had three fits. He imagined you'd been kidnapped for ransom, or murdered. Where were you?"

Phyllis shrugged her shoulders. "In the lounge."

The other girl lifted carefully plucked eyebrows. "Tell that to some one who doesn't know you. Give me one guess and I'll tell you where you were."

"Then why ask me if you know already." She turned to Jimmy, a trifle breathless. "It's chilly, let's get out of the night air."

The young man's pale eyes searched her face hungrily. Everyone knew he adored her, just as they all knew that he could never win her.

"You're pale," he said. "Anything wrong?"

"Nonsense. Just these lights." She pulled away, half impatiently, and ran toward a limousine driven by a colored man in livery.

Before anyone could assist her she was inside curled up in a corner, her head resting against the dark maroon upholstery of the seat.

Excitement still set her blood tingling. She felt the pressure of Kent Randal's lips on her hand. She wanted to be alone and hug to her heart this amazingly beautiful thing that had come to her so suddenly.

"Where do we go from here?" Andy asked, easing himself into the seat facing her.

"I don't know where *you're* going—but I'm going home." Phyllis answered dryly.

Madge gave an exclamation. "So early! Oh, Phil! That's simply ridiculous."

"I knew something was wrong," groaned Jimmy.

"No, I'm just tired—a little headache. Drop me, won't you, like dears, then have Peters take you any place you wish."

**S**HE overruled all their arguments, and the car came to a standstill before the brownstone house on lower Madison that had been her home as long as she could remember.

A light shining through the grilled lower window to her right informed her that her father had not yet retired, and knowing his curious aversion to the theatre, which almost amounted to mania, she decided to use her key and if possible not risk any words with him over the way she had spent her evening.

Phyllis was inherently honest, she had no intention of deceiving her father, but she felt his prejudice against an amusement popular among all her friends was rather uncalled for, and there was no occasion to deny herself the pleasure of attending the theatre. Yet because of this prejudice she rarely saw a play, and had never seen Kent Randal until tonight.

There was little in common between herself and the taciturn, morose person she called Father. Sometimes she had felt that he merely endured her presence in his home, that he had no affection whatsoever for her. He gave her unlimited spending money, a car of her own, and had seen that her education was adequate, but there were days upon end when he did not speak to her, when he was so deeply engrossed in thought he seemed unaware of her existence.

In a measure Phyllis loved him. She at least respected and admired him. Harrison Ballard had a keen intellect, was meticulous in his honesty, widely read and traveled, and, when he desired, could be a fascinating speaker. She had seen flashes of brilliancy at the few dinner parties he gave, attended by his lawyer, Huntley Drake, a bachelor near his own age, his broker, a young Englishman, by the name of Horace Mellish, and Jasper Corwin, his family physician. All bachelors. No women other than Phyllis' friends ever entered the house.

She had sat at these rare occasions, a lonely, but interested little figure at the foot of the table, and watched the play of expression on her father's haggard gaunt face as he propounded theories on evolution, philosophy, biology, and political topics. Sometimes she had

wondered just what he had been like as a young man, if the austere features had been softened with youth, if he had been handsome, tender with her young mother who had died when she was born.

Of this mother she knew scarcely anything. Flora Ballard had died in Rome when Harrison Ballard had been stationed there in the diplomatic forces. With her death he had become embittered, quit the gay courts of Europe and returned to America and the somber house on Madison Avenue.

Phyllis had met no one who knew her mother, unless the lawyer did, and he never spoke of her. Her father never voluntarily mentioned her name, but once when the girl begged him to tell her what her mother had looked like he had told her to look in a mirror and she would see what she had been at her death.

**A**S a child she had shed many tears over her loveless existence. The vacations spent in school while other girls had gone home for the holidays, secure in the affection of both parents, but as she grew older she realized that nothing she could do or say would break through the shell of his reserve, and accepted in a philosophical way the fact that she was merely endured, and that if any love was to come into her life it would be from the outside, not from her father.

In school Phyllis had been very popular. The fact that she was by far the prettiest girl in her class, which ordinarily would have caused envy and jealousy, had aroused only admiration. She was so totally self-consciousless, so lacking in petty vanities, that her schoolmates took her beauty as something belonging to them and added their admiration to that of the young men who paid her court.

There was nothing of the coquette about Phyllis. The boys who at first offered her love remained by her side as friends. She was romantic. She hoped that some day she would be literally swept off her feet by a love that counted no costs. Love was too big, too vital a thing to be wasted in silly flirtations.

She knew herself capable of deep emo-



tion, but not until she saw Kent Randal had she realized just how great were her capabilities.

As she stood in the doorway and fumbled about in the satin lining of her jeweled evening bag for her key, every nerve in her body was tingling, every pulse throbbing through the brief contact with the boy of whom she knew nothing except that he had taken New York by

**B**EFORE she could insert the key in the lock, the door leading into the vestibule opened and a man stepped out. He drew back with a half smothered ex-



"I saw you the minute I came out," said Kent. "Didn't you know it? Didn't you feel me begging you to come back? I almost went up in my lines, you hit me so hard."

storm through his dominant magnetism and the force of his emotional ability in the strongest drama of the season.

clamation, then held the door open for her to enter.

"Good evening, Egan," Phyllis said

stiffly, showing her surprise at the butler's evident intention of leaving the house at that hour of the night.

He flushed, and quickly removed the derby which was pulled down over his sparse blond hair. He was a small man with fine, aristocratic features, a thin skin that reddened quickly, and he had a hesitant apologetic manner about him that had annoyed Phyllis from the first day he had entered her father's employ.

Just why she disliked him so much she did not know. He had come with the best of references, had proven himself thoroughly efficient, never obtrusive, and had managed the servants better than anyone who had preceded him.

Soft voiced, silent, noiseless in his movements, always on hand when needed, he irritated her immeasurably, and she resented her own attitude toward him, tried to analyze it and failed.

"Going out, Egan?" she asked coldly. In the dim light of the frosted wrought iron lamp hanging overhead the butler's features were not clearly discernible, but she saw that he appeared nervous, that he ran his tongue over his thin, too red lips, as though they were parched, and that his long pallid hands twitched as they locked together.

"Yes, Miss Ballard, to the drug store. Mary, the second maid, has—a bad headache. I'm—going for—some powders for her."

"Why not telephone?"

"It's quicker this way."

She stood for a moment after he had left her, then she shrugged her shoulders and moved quickly toward the wide mahogany staircase that led to the rooms above.

He was lying, of course, but what did it matter to her? She had been foolish to question him.

With her foot on the lower stair, Phyllis paused. The light from the transom of the library door where she knew her father was probably poring over some scientific book recalled to her that unquestionably he had heard her voice; if so, would wonder why she had not bade him good-night.

She crossed the corridor and tapped lightly upon the door.

"Come in," a toneless voice answered.

SHE pushed open the door and stepped into the room. Beside a library table with a massive volume spread out upon its polished surface sat Harrison Ballard.

Something in his attitude, his gaunt shoulders bent forward, his head with its closely cropped gray hair struck a chord of sympathy in her heart.

How old he looked. His face lined and yellow, like parchment, his eyes hard and bright under their beetling gray brows. Some day he would be gone—she would be alone! Why had it never been possible for her to get close to him? Why had he always shut the door of his heart to her?

Her eyes moved uneasily about the room, the low rows of book shelves that lined the three walls, the wide stone fireplace set between them, the French windows, screened from the street and light by heavy brown velvet hangings.

An ugly room without a note of life or color, without harmony, that not even the million printed thoughts of masters of literature could give a touch of peace. The unhappy brooding moods of its occupant seemed to invade it like a tangible thing.

Harrison Ballard closed his book and turned. He passed one hand wearily across his forehead. Then noting the evening cloak, the soft folds of chiffon draping her slender body, he said tersely: "You've been out?"

"Yes, Father. I stopped in to say good night."

"Is it late?"

"Almost twelve."

He rose. "I lost track of time. Where were you?"

"At the theatre." Her voice trembled a little, but apparently the word "theatre" made no impression on him.

He kissed her perfunctorily upon the forehead and pushed her gently into the hallway. "Time we were both in bed," he said. "I've a hard day before me."

"Father." She touched his sleeve timidly.

"Yes?"

"Nothing." Sudden tears filmed her eyes. She could not speak of Kent. How would he understand when his heart was but a husk, an organ that pumped blood

to an active, overworked brain? Love had died twenty years ago, and was buried too deep for its perfume to reach him.

Slowly she climbed the stairs and let herself into her room. A sleepy eyed maid rose from the chaise longue at her entrance and silently took the chinchilla cloak from her shoulders.

"You needn't wait, Delphine," Phyllis said softly. "I shan't go to bed yet."

### Chapter III

**A**FTER the maid withdrew Phyllis crossed to a window opening onto a balustrade, and drew the yellow satin curtains that hid from her view the moon soaked garden below, then she unlatched the French windows, and leaning her head against the casement, let the breeze play about her cheeks.

The air was warm for April, with a hint of rain, though the sky was cloudless and dotted with a myriad little diamonds. The grounds, small and enclosed with a grilled iron fence, were flooded with light. From the distance came the vague indefinite rumble of many sounds, the incoherent voice of a city that never sleeps.

Against the shimmer of the yellow satin the girl's hair shone like ebony, and her unustal golden eyes were luminous, glowing under their shadow of sooty lashes.

The momentary hurt at her father's coldness had vanished, and she was bathed in the warm haze of first love, more beautiful because it had come in so sudden a fashion, like a searchlight thrown upon the screen of her heart.

The house was noiseless, silent with that thick, enveloping silence of sleeping things and people. The tick of a little enameled clock on her dressing table sounded metallic, clear.

She sighed deeply and raised her slender, round arms, firm and ivory tinted over her head with a gesture of abandon. She felt a need of movement, something to give vent to the emotion that surged through her.

How wonderfully Kent Randal had accepted the situation! "I knew you would come!"

Love! Yes, it was love. Let the world scoff at love being born of the moment. She knew that had their hands never touched, their paths never crossed, she would have loved him always. It wasn't a question of propinquity, of time—it was a matter of souls. His soul was joined to hers, and had been for aeons, and it only needed a word to make them one.

She breathed his name aloud, and quivered as the word escaped her lips.

Then she became conscious of a moving shadow in the garden, the elongated shadow of a man in a derby hat and top coat.

Half curiously she leaned forward, pulling the curtains about her as she did so, to hide herself from view.

Another shadow merged into the first, more indefinite—a woman's. A man and woman were evidently standing on the veranda that skirted the side of the house, unaware that their presence was disclosed by their shadows thrown upon the grass plot.

Phyllis laughed softly. "Egan! And his sweetheart! Fancy that dried up, yellow-faced man in love!"

It was curious that he choose this hour to meet a woman outside the house. Curious, and not quite what a well behaved butler should do. A cheap rendezvous, like a nursemaid and a milk man—but it was no affair of hers.

**H**ER train of thought broken, she pulled the curtains without closing the window, and undressed. She was sure she would be unable to sleep, but scarcely had her head touched the pillow, her lids closed, than consciousness vanished.

She awakened early with the feeling of something momentous pending. For a moment she did not know what it was, then memory came, and with it the elation and ecstasy of the night before.

To-day Kent Randal was to call upon her. It would be a century until four o'clock. She wished she had been able to sleep those hours away. Why had she made the hour so late?

She should have told him to come at two—better still, twelve—or for luncheon.

Suppose he failed her? Decided not to come at all? In spite of his protests to the contrary, he might have decided she was a silly girl, and not worth knowing.

She had lashed herself into a panic by the time she descended the stairs for breakfast, and if her father hadn't been so preoccupied he would have seen something was worrying her.

He was already seated at the table in the oak-paneled room, with iced grapefruit, and a morning paper before him. He nodded gravely, and continued to read the stock market as she seated herself opposite to him.

Egan served her silently, but once she felt his eyes studying her. When she glanced up quickly, his gaze shifted.

"Is—did Mary get rid of her headache?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Ballard?" Egan bowed.

"Eh, what's that? Mary?" Harrison Ballard laid down his paper and attacked his fruit.

"She was ill, and Egan went for some medicine for her just as I came in last night." To her annoyance, Phyllis felt her cheeks flush.

"Too bad. Where did you say you were, Phyllis?"

"I went to the theatre with Andy Craig, Jimmy Munster, and Madge Patterson. We had a box for 'The City of Lilies'."

Harrison Ballard's brow met. He coughed, but did not reply. He had never reprimanded her before servants, but Phyllis knew he was displeased. She wondered if his disapproval of the theatre included the members of its profession, but thought it wiser not to inquire.

Breakfast was finished without further remarks, then abruptly the banker pushed back his chair and rose.

"I shan't be home to luncheon. Possibly not to dinner. I've a conference that may detain me well into the evening."

**S**OMEHOW the hours passed. Phyllis dressed and undressed several times, trying to decide which frock was the most becoming. The right setting for this first meeting alone was of vast importance.

She had an appointment with her modiste for a fitting, but telephoned to cancel it. Kent Randal might come earlier than she anticipated and she would miss him, or he might telephone saying he was detained until later. She could not risk leaving the house.

The drawing room was the most attractive room in the house; furnished in carved darkly stained oak, upholstered in a deep rich red that gave warmth and color to the girl's Latin beauty. Several of its chairs and tables had been brought from Rome, the chest, the great beveled mirror that stood between the two French windows, rare antiques, the cabinet filled with ivories, reputed to have belonged to one of the Borgias. The walls, covered with dull gold satin damask, were relieved by three paintings, a Da Vinci, a Bellini, a Botticelli, rich old blue, purple and Venetian red, masterpieces that Phyllis loved as living things.

It was in this room that Phyllis decided to receive Kent Randal. If their first meeting had been unconventional, she felt that their second should be formal. Their intimacy of her private sitting room would be more charming, but that would come later, when they knew each other better.

She informed Egan she wanted sandwiches and tea at five, then at last having made a choice of a gown that blended in with her surroundings, dressed herself in a straight lustrous silk whose amber sheen rivaled the color of her eyes, and waited the coming of Kent Randal.

Four o'clock! Waves of alternate heat and cold enveloped her. She ran a comb nervously through her hair, dusted powder over her cheeks. Started toward the doorway, then dropped back into her room again.

From below came the insistent clamor of the door bell. It required an effort not to flee down the stairs and admit him herself. What was keeping Egan? The tap of heels on the polished floor informed her a maid had answered the summons.

She tiptoed into the corridor, and leaned over the head of the stairs. She heard the creak of the door as it swung open, and a murmur of voices, then she

saw Mary, the maid, coming toward her, and drew back into her own apartment again.

Mary must not realize how much that call meant to her. She let the girl climb the long flight of stairs and knock upon her door; but she stood with one hand over her heart, swaying dizzily.

"Mr. Randal calling, Miss Ballard. I've shown him into the drawing room."

"I'll be right down."

She felt certain that Mary noticed her excitement as she passed her and descended the stairs, that there was a quizzical gleam in the girl's blue eyes, and made an extra effort to regain her composure before she pushed open the double carved doors that led into the drawing room.

**H**E was standing before the fireplace whose light threw a glow over the already darkening room.

He turned slowly as she entered, and advanced toward her.

A little set smile broke the mask of her face. She extended her hand. "It's nice to see you again, but what a horrid day to drag you out in," she said in a tight voice.

"The day doesn't matter—when I see you," he answered.

"I wasn't certain you'd come," she stammered, "that you remembered my name—or the address." She sank into a deep seat before the fire and adjusted a crimson cushion behind her head.

He laughed. "You didn't think that at all. You knew I'd come."

The next moment he was beside her, on a foot stool at her feet, his arms about her.

"Phyllis," he whispered huskily, "do we have to wait? Go through all the mockery of formality and convention when we love each other, when since the beginning of time we've known and belonged to each other? I love you—I've not slept—nor eaten—since we met. I've thought of nothing but you. I adore you."

She struggled a trifle. An exquisite feeling of drifting into nothingness seemed to hold her, to carry her away from the present and out of her shell of being, and she quivered, relaxed, and

almost against her will her head bent until her lips touched his, clung there until breathless, trembling with the overpowering ecstasy that invaded her, she drew away, shuddering.

**"D**EAREST!"

He caught her hands and pressed them against his mouth. He kissed her forehead, her closed eyes, the cleft in her chin, the curve in her throat, then with sudden humility stooped and kissed the arched instep of her small satin clad foot.

A sob escaped her. "Don't!" she choked. "Don't!"

"I've no right. You know nothing about me. I'm just an actor—fairly successful—but you—"

"You're famous and popular," she protested.

"Perhaps, in a way."

"While I—" She laughed deprecatingly. "I'm nobody—but the daughter of a rich man."

"I can't give you anything like this—" he said slowly. "But if you'll marry me, I'll devote all my life to making you happy. I'll—" He stammered, unable to continue.

"You want me to marry you?" she asked, tremulously.

"Yes. I know it's presumptuous—but—"

"I hadn't thought of marriage, only love. But love means marriage, doesn't it?"

"It can mean nothing else. Now that I've found you I'll never let you go! Never!" His arms held her tight again.

"I don't want you to ever let me go. I've never had love in my life, and it's beautiful. Do you want to marry me soon?"

"Soon! To-day, to-morrow—"

She laughed. "Not quite that soon—I must tell Father, then we can decide upon the time."

"He will object, of course, if he knows the truth that we've only just met. And his objections would be natural. No one could understand—but if we had been together daily for years, I couldn't love you more than I do now—you couldn't belong to me more if all our lives had been spent together."

"Perhaps we had better wait—a little while," she said breathlessly. "After all—we are young—how do we know that this isn't infatuation?"

His grave brown eyes met hers reproachfully. "You don't believe for a moment that it is. I've been infatuated—perhaps you have too—"

She shook her head negatively. "I've never loved anyone before."

"Neither have I, truly. There have been girls who attracted me—I won't deny it, but the feeling I have for you is different. It's devastating, volcanic, something undreamed of. As if I'd been existing with half a body, half a soul, and then suddenly I found the other half of me. Do you understand what I mean?"

She smiled timidly. "I feel the same way. I'd go anywhere with you, be satisfied with a crust on a desert—"

His eyes filmed. "Nothing—your father—my profession—money—fame—must come between us. This is too beautiful a thing to be spoiled, dear. Phyllis—I'm soaring—I'm in a dream! It's unbelievable."

**T**HE ache in her throat was maddening. The pound of her heart, stifling. A desire to crush that bronze head against her heart, to hold him there forever, smothered her. The beauty of it, and the pain—and the marvel!

Yes, she understood.

"Your father may say I'm a fortune hunter," he said after a brief silence, "but I can prove that I'm not. I've made some money, and invested it rather cleverly. Not actually rich, you know, but comfortable—secure. I've no family, but my record as a man is clean."

"It doesn't matter," Phyllis said slowly. "If you were poor I'd be poor, too, if you have no family, I don't want any. If you hadn't been good—my love would make you so."

"My people shall be your people," he quoted huskily.

The shadows in the room deepened. Against the window the rain beat in a torrent. The mellow glow of the light from the fire threw a halo upon the face of boy and girl, forming a picture as beautiful in coloring and poignancy as

the masterpieces hanging upon the wall.

There was a discreet knock on the paneled doors, and half unsteadily Kent rose to his feet.

"Come in," Phyllis said; adding, "it's tea. I'd forgotten it."

The butler entered noiselessly with his table, placed it beside her and as noiselessly withdrew; yet in that brief moment Phyllis was certain that Egan had taken in every detail of her caller, and had stamped Kent's features indelibly upon his memory.

"Lemon or sugar?" she asked a trifle breathless, her white fingers trembling as they touched the priceless ware.

"Lemon," he answered. Then they both laughed. Tea, after soaring on the wings of the gods.

The sandwiches were untouched, the tea became cold, but in the hour that followed, they gauged the depths of the other's mind, learned the tastes they had in common, laid the plans for their future, and reluctantly decided it was best to wait a little while before they were married.

"It's for your sake," Kent said. "I'm entirely alone, without a single relative, but you have a father and position to consider."

"No mother or father?" she asked sympathetically.

"No one. As a matter of fact, I don't know who I really am. A blessed soul I called Aunt reared me, but she was not a relative. She took me from an orphanage when I was a child, gave me what education I have, then passed on."

"Oh, Kent!"

"Does it matter much?" he asked eagerly.

"That you've struggled up alone and made yourself what you are! Of course not. I love you more."

"I must go, dear. It's after six." He rose and stood uncertainly, still loath to leave her.

"I'd like to ask you to stay to dinner, but my father is peculiar. I'd rather the invitation came from him, after he knows you." She flushed.

"I understand."

"I'll let you out myself."

"And I'll see you to-morrow—you'll have luncheon with me?"

"I'd love it."

Just as they reached the door, it opened and Harrison Ballard stood on the threshold.

#### Chapter IV

**P**HYLLIS' face drained of its color. The expression on her father's stern features struck a note of terror at her heart, but when he spoke the tension snapped.

"Am I intruding? I wasn't aware you had a caller."

"Mr. Randal, Father," she said softly. "He is going."

The older man offered his hand and murmured the conventional greeting. The boy flushed, stammered over his reply, then followed Phyllis into the hallway.

"To-morrow at one, at the Ritz," he whispered.

"Yes." As he bent to kiss her she drew back and glanced over her shoulder. He nodded and departed.

"I—didn't think you'd be home, Father," she said re-entering the drawing room.

For a second Harrison Ballard did not reply. He stood before the fireplace, his hands clasped behind him, his shoulders hunched forward, a tall, angular figure with a certain grace even in his slouched attitude. Then he turned slowly and stared at her.

"Who was that young man?"

"Kent—Kent Randal. I met him last night."

"Who is he?"

"Why—" Her hands plucked nervously at the folds of her gown. "He's the star of 'The City of Lilies!'"

"An actor?"

"Yes."

"You know what I think of the theatre?"

"I know you are prejudiced against it," she swallowed painfully.

"And all its people." His voice was hard, brittle.

"Mr. Randal is a gentleman—an artist."

"On the surface. A waster—without morals, underneath. No associate for a cultured, refined girl."

"You've no right to say that, Father, when you don't know him."

"I know his type. I'm older than you, and am a better judge of character than you. A polished exterior and a suave personality do not make a gentleman. Actors and the whole theatrical crowd are notorious scoundrels and rotters—vicious, unprincipled, unbridled—" His voice rose stridently.

Two vivid spots of crimson burned in the girl's cheeks. She was trembling violently, shaken with anger and terror at the threat to her unhappiness.

"Father! You're unjust! Unreasonable! The theatre may have been like that in your youth; to-day it is different. Its people are accepted everywhere."

"That will do. When this man calls again, he is not to be admitted. Do you understand that? Not to be admitted."

"But, Father—"

"You heard what I said. I won't have you knowing such a scoundrel!"

"Scoundrel!" A half hysterical cry escaped her. "How—how dare you say—that?"

"Because I know men." His face was so stern, his eyes so like smouldering coals that Phyllis recoiled.

Then as though the matter was finished and of no more consequence, Harrison Ballard rang for a brandy and soda and opened his newspaper.

Quivering, hurt, and fearful, she watched Egan enter and leave, then she slipped away to her room.

Such an unjust attitude, such a childish aversion to a profession and its people was ridiculous. She wanted to laugh with hysteria, but instead she burst into a storm of tears, ashamed at her own emotion.

At least if Kent had been forbidden to enter her home her father had said nothing about her meeting him outside. A quibble for truth, certainly, but when love and happiness were at stake, what matter truth?

Phyllis snapped her fingers, dried her eyes and determined to win a victory against prejudice.

**I**N a secluded corner of the restaurant she faced Kent Randal and told him a part of what her father had said.

Kent smiled, crumbling a bit of roll between his fingers. "He isn't altogether alone in his opinion of us, dear," he said quietly. "Many a father would raise a row at giving his daughter to an actor, not because he is a scoundrel, but because of his irresponsibility and his mercurial temperament. It's up to me to prove to your father that first of all I'm a man—then an actor."

"But if you can't prove it to him," she answered, her golden eyes darkening. "He's stubborn, and will refuse to be shown anything."

"Then—" His hand closed over hers. "You've said nothing can come between us—"

"Nothing."

"You'll marry me without his consent?"

"Yes."

"If he cuts you off without a penny?"

"Yes."

"I want you to know where I live in case you need me. Something may come up that you will want to reach me in a hurry. Usually you can find me at the Lambs' Club, but I've a little studio on West Twelfth."

He took a notebook from his pocket and a fountain pen, and after writing down the address and telephone number, tore out the slip of paper and handed it to her.

She glanced at the written words and put them in her vanity.

"Some day we'll have tea there, shall we?" she asked. "Since you can't come into my home, I'll go to yours."

"You do love me, don't you?"

"Kent," she breathed. "It isn't love—I am *you*—as you are *me*. One can't really love oneself—can one?"

"You darling!" said he, his eyes caressing her beautiful, flushed face.

### Chapter V

**K**ENT'S studio was a charming little two room apartment, up three flights of stairs in a remodeled red brick family house. It was furnished with exquisite taste, and its tiny kitchenette with the electric grill called forth exclamations of delight from Phyllis upon her first visit there. There was a win-

dow box filled with geraniums, a huge, lazy, sleepy eyed tortoise shell cat that Kent called Buster, and a pair of love birds who chattered and kissed from morning until night.

"Oh, Kent, it's adorable!" she cried. "Can't we live here when we're married?"

"It's a far cry from a stone palace on Madison Avenue," said Kent, boyishly pleased at her enthusiasm, "but you can have it all, if you'll take me, too."

"Oh!" Phyllis' eyes were bright with happiness and her breath came in little puffs. "Any place with you would be heavenly, and you're included in every moment of my life—from this minute—if you want me."

He smiled and drew her down beside him on the lounge. "I want you dearest, but I wish we could have your father's consent. I don't want you to ever regret marrying me."

"I shall regret nothing," she answered seriously, "except the years of my life that I didn't know you. Oh, Kent, don't think me lacking in modesty and pride—but I can't hide my love—I can't play with you. Like Juliet, I would like to 'frown and be perverse and say thee nay'—but it's impossible. I only want to be in your arms, close against your heart, and nothing—nothing else in the world matters."

She wound her arms about his neck and pulled his head down until it rested against her own.

"And nothing matters to me but you," he answered. "Nothing."

"I'd love it here," she said after a little, disengaging herself, "I'd be in heaven fixing little dinners for you, straightening up the apartment, mending your clothes, making my own."

He laughed indulgently. "The spirit is wonderful, sweet, but you've known nothing but luxury all your life; I'm afraid as a cook or a seamstress you'd be a failure."

"That's all you know about it. Some night, soon, very soon, I shall come early, and cook a little dinner on that grill and show you just how clever I am."

"I know you're wonderful, adorable—beautiful—you don't need to prove anything to me."



What an amazing amount of tastes they had in common, books, music, the opera, flowers—travel. Dreams and plans for the future. Love! No need to seek amusement outside. All the joy of the world within four walls; in the clasp of warm hands, in the pressure of clinging lips.

**P**HYLLIS' friends, Andy and Madge, and the boy, Jimmy Munster, who loved her, saw little of her these days. She was never at home when they telephoned, and the maid could give no in-

formation as to where she was.

Phyllis herself lived in a dream world that was reality only when she was with Kent. She knew that there were breakers ahead, that when the time came her



"Ken, this place is adorable," was Phyllis' delighted verdict. "Can't we live here when we're married?" "You can have it all," he replied, "if you'll take me, too."

formation as to where she was.

Her father, occupied as usual with his own affairs, did not inquire into her goings and comings. If she did not appear at the dinner table, he dined alone and asked no questions. He had apparently forgotten all about the actor whom he had forbidden his home. Since he did not see him again he concluded Phyllis

father learned of her love there would be bitter dissension, but she was so happy, she determined to let the future care for itself.

She wanted to marry Kent at once, and tell her father about it afterward, but he displayed a streak of stubbornness in an otherwise pliable nature. Nothing could tempt him to do what he considered dishonorable.

He had nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of, since what a man was and did were all that really counted; he was clean, decent living, respected, and he loved her.

He was capable of supporting her, not so lavishly as Harrison Ballard, perhaps, but with a certain amount of luxury. Once her father found they had known each other long enough to be certain of their love, there was no reason for his objecting to their marriage, and Kent wanted his consent for the sake of their happiness afterward.

"But you don't understand Father," Phyllis sighed. "I don't myself. He can be utterly unreasonable, without cause. He loathes the theatre, why, I don't know, since he doesn't object to cards, has wine on the table, and in most things is very worldly. I feel wretched at deceiving him, Kent, but what else can I do?"

The answer came in an unexpected manner.

**T**HERE was nothing malicious in Jimmy Munster's make up, but he was in love, and with love jealousy goes hand in hand. After being unable to get in touch with Phyllis for over two weeks when usually he had seen her at least every three days in the past year, he began to wrack his memory for something he had done that would cause her to cut him.

He did not believe it possible that she was always out when he called, and felt certain that she was annoyed with him. And in thinking strenuously, something that taxed him a great deal, as he was not given to serious moments, he recalled her disappearance on the night they had gone to the theater to see Kent Randal act.

Kent was a *matinée* idol, beloved of women, who sent him letters and flowers, sometimes gifts, and Jimmy was aware of this popularity. It startled him to associate thoughts of Phyllis with girls who haunt stage doors, yet that seemed the only solution of her disappearance and subsequent elusiveness, for certainly he had done nothing to anger her.

If what he suspected was true, she might be seeing the actor daily and

cutting her old friends to do it. Jimmy's face whitened with anger at the thought. It was not like Phyllis to lose her head, to let an infatuation take away her sense of balance, but Randal was good looking, his magnetism had swayed even *him*. Jimmy could understand how the vibrant notes in Kent Randal's voice, his persuasive manner might thrill a young girl.

He'd heard nothing detrimental to the actor, rather a quiet sort of chap, who had struggled up from a line of juvenile parts of inconsequence, then had suddenly blazed forth in a glory on the strength of his tremendous emotional power in a vital drama of metropolitan life.

**H**IS suspicions were confirmed a few days after his deductions had brought him to this solution.

An occasion to buy a box of candy took him into a tea room and confectionery shop much patronized by theatre crowds on *matinee* days, and there he saw Phyllis and the young actor.

Jimmy was too startled and hurt to approach them, to intrude on a privacy that enveloped them in spite of the publicity of their meeting place. He saw their hands clasped on the table, the light in Phyllis' amber eyes as they smiled into Kent's, and with pounding heart he seized his purchase and stumbled out upon Fifth Avenue.

Did Harrison Ballard know? He was certain he didn't. Ballard's aversion to the theatre was well known to all Phyllis' friends. It was hardly probable that he would accept an actor into his friendship—and shouldn't he be told?

Jimmy hesitated. It was all very well to want to save Phyllis from indiscretion, but scarcely the part of a gentleman to play the tale bearer, especially when he was in love with her. He decided to write her a letter, tell her he had seen her with Randal, and ask her if her father knew of the friendship.

He was striding up town on the Avenue as he came to his decision, his hands thrust deep in his pockets, his sandy eyebrows knitted in a furrow over his nose—and he made the Plaza his objective.

Just as he entered the lobby he came face to face with Harrison Ballard. The banker greeted him with unusual cordiality, since more often than otherwise he was oblivious to the young people who entered his home.

"Haven't seen much of you lately, Munster," he said, pausing to shake hands with him. "I suppose you and Phyllis are too busy with social engagements to spend an evening at home."

Jimmy swallowed painfully, conscious of the fiery tint of his skin, then he blurted out, not weighing consequences, nor the honor of it; "I've not seen Phyllis for weeks, Mr. Ballard. She hasn't any time for me since she met that actor!"

The instant the words left his lips he regretted them; they were childish, cad-dish, like a petty revenge.

Their effect on Harrison Ballard was astounding. His face became ashen. "Actor!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "What actor?"

"Why—" Jimmy tried to laugh, "I don't mean it—er—exactly the way it sounded—I'm—just sore because Phyllis dropped me—and I saw her with Kent Randal at Schrafft's just now—and—I—I—" He floundered hopelessly, becoming more confused with each word.

Ballard did not answer; unceremoniously he brushed by him, strode out of the hotel and entered his waiting limousine.

Jimmy whistled. He felt weak in the knees. "The fat's in the fire! I hope he doesn't tell Phyllis I spilled the beans—if he does—I'm off her calling list for life!"

AT ten o'clock that night, Phyllis let herself into the big house on Madison Avenue, humming a little song under her breath. The dinner prepared in the kitchenette, cooked on the electric grill, had been a huge success. Kent had pronounced her as fine a cook as she was wonderful in her beauty. She was inexpressibly happy.

She turned cautiously and closed the hall door behind her, for she had seen a light burning in her father's study and she did not wish to have her glow of ecstasy banished by a scene with him.

But noiseless as were her movements, the man who had paced the long somber room for hours, heard them and before she reached the stairway, he flung open his door and in a stern voice commanded her to come into the library.

"Where have you been?"

She hesitated, weighed her answer, knowing well that her whole future was at stake. "Dining with a friend, Father."

"What friend?"

Her lips trembled, her face became as white as his own, but her eyes met his unflinchingly. "I don't think you have any right to use that tone with me, Father. I'm not a child. I'm old enough to choose my friends without accounting to you."

"Since you accept my support and my roof," he retorted, "you'll answer to me for your actions. Don't try evasive replies. Who was the friend?"

"Mr. Randal." Her gaze faltered.

"The man I forbade this house?"

"Yes," just a whisper.

"After—after—and you disobeyed me!"

"I have not disobeyed you!" She flung up her head defiantly. "He has not stepped across this threshold since that day, but—since—you have made it impossible for me to see him in my own home—I've been compelled to see him outside of it—"

"A mere quibble on words! You knew I wanted all friendship between you to cease when I refused to let him come here, didn't you? Answer me, didn't you?"

"Yes, Father."

"You deliberately—disobeyed me—"

"Father!" she interrupted. "I'm twenty-two! This is your house, in it I must do as you say, but outside of it I'm my own mistress. I'll choose my own friends, live my own life—and I think I'm old enough not to disgrace you!"

"You defy me?" His eyes grew black with passion. "You defy me because of this actor—a nobody—a scoundrel—a—"

"I love him! I'm going to marry him!"

"Marry him!" He staggered back against the table as though she had struck him a blow in the face. His

hands groping for support on its polished surface struck at a tray of glasses and a decanter and crashed them to the floor. His mouth twitched convulsively, and his eyes became menacing.

"Marry him!" he repeated.

"Yes, Father. With your consent, if possible. Without it—if necessary."

"You'll neither marry him with or without it. Go to your room."

"I will marry him."

"I'll see you dead first!"

"Father!"

"Do you hear me! Go to your room!"

He pulled himself from his slumped position with an effort, and caught her roughly by the shoulder, attempting to push her into the hallway.

**W**ITH a lithe movement Phyllis jerked herself from the grip of his hands.

"Don't you command me!" she sobbed furiously. "I've done nothing wrong! I love him! He's clean and honorable; he loves me—you never have! You've always disliked me, just endured my presence here, when I've hungered for affection—for happiness. He offers them to me and I'm going to take them—I love him and I'm going to marry him. You can't prevent it—no one can!"

For a second their glances clashed, then he laughed stridently. "You fool! You poor little infatuated fool! So the glamour of the theatre has destroyed you—just as I knew it would! You are right! I can't prevent your marriage to this man—you are of age—your own mistress! All right, go ahead, make a ruin your life—throw away your future—on your head be it, but when he has deserted you—when he flings you aside for another fresher—prettier face, don't come crawling back to me—begging for forgiveness and help, for I won't give them."

"I never shall!"

"Go to your precious lover! See whether he wants you without your money, for I warn you not one penny will you get—not one cent! Go! From now on—you're no kin of mine—"

"You mean—that—"

"You're free to go your own way—to make your bed—but the moment you leave this house—to go to him—the doors of it are closed on you forever.

Their heavy breathing was the only sound that broke the silence. For a second Phyllis closed her eyes. Her hands tightened together, then she moved toward the door.

"Good-by, Father," she said quietly.

"You are going to him?"

"Yes, Father—to-night—"

"Knowing that I shall never speak to you again?"

**T**EARS blurred her vision, a sob in her throat choked her; something in her breast pounded with agonizing irregularity; the room swam with her.

In a haze she saw the hard, stern feature of her father, saw him standing tense and uncompromising beside the table, his face a gray mask.

"Father," she stretched out her arms, "won't you try to understand? You were young once, you loved my mother, you know love is the strongest force in the world. You know what it means, its bliss, its pain, Father, please don't let us part like this! When you know Kent—"

"You've made your decision! Go!"

She bowed her head, and slowly passed out of the room.

The man heard the street door slam, then with a stricken cry, slumped into a chair by the table and buried his face in his trembling hands.

For ten, twenty minutes he stayed in that position, sobs shaking his gaunt frame, then slowly he relaxed. He raised his face, his eyes searched the room, then with tense tight lips, eyes gleaming, he reached for the telephone.

He gave his number in a curt staccato voice.

"That you, Drake?" he asked abruptly. "Come over, won't you? I want to change my will. . . . No—to-night—can't wait until morning— I know it's late—but I want it settled now—all right, I'll be looking for you."

A smile curled his thin lips as he hung up the receiver.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

# The First Absence

By Mary Carolyn Davies



WE'VE said "I love you" in so many ways  
    With tears and jesting,  
We've said "I love you" in those carefree days  
    Before life's testing.  
And yet for all we've felt, I never knew  
All that "I love you" meant till now, did you?

Till now, when, oh, it isn't just a week  
    That we must wait until we touch and speak.  
It's long, long weeks and months that we'll be lonely.  
    I don't mind, only  
When other lovers pass, and I can hear.  
    A man's low, tender tones when he says "Dear"—  
When I can see  
    Him look at her the way you looked at me,  
It's then that I can hardly bear to be  
    So far! Oh, when  
We meet we'll care so much more, won't we, then?

We've said "I love you," but I never knew  
All that "I love you" meant, till now, did you?

# A Poor Young Man

**B** EING the secretary to a famous woman writer may be, as Sara Jennings had discovered, neither inspiring nor pleasant; but in a world of poorly paid jobs it was the best thing Sara had found, and she stuck to it gamely, despite the very evident drawbacks. Corella Hesper herself was the first of these, nearing forty, and nursing the remnants of a once devastating beauty with a fervor and bitterness that made her unconsciously dislike any young woman who was under twenty-five.

Corella was the first drawback, and the most important—but there were others. Corella's publisher, who had a bright eye for pretty girls, and who had tried, more than once, to make love to Sara. Corella's old, rude, imperious personal maid. Corella's young men.

Sara herself had been added to the Hesper establishment only after the publication of "The Bright Blue Fan." Eager readers had devoured the pages of "The Bright Blue Fan," and it had run into nearly three hundred thousand copies, before it faltered off into the last dribbling sales that mark the end of a best seller. Corella had outdone herself in writing that book, and her agents had outdone themselves in pushing it, and it had been one of the best sellers of the season. At dinner, the people at your right and your left said either, "Have you read 'The Bright Blue Fan' and don't you love it?" or, "Haven't you seen 'The Bright Blue Fan,' and isn't it terrible?"

But no one, by any chance, missed it. It made tea table talk and book history, and it made Corella aware that she simply had to have a secretary—not too attractive a one.

Sara was not too attractive. She had tried, on her first job, going to work in pretty clothes, with her dark hair fluffed, and smelling of perfume, and she had discovered that even the most austere employer may become interested. With her second job, she had taken to straight dark dresses with white collars, a hair line severely back from her forehead, no powder on her straight nose,



and a generally untouchable expression; and that had proved so efficient that she had carried it with her even when she had left Henry Jenkins and his law office, and gone to work for the famous Mrs. Hesper, who would certainly not be interested in her, however she might be about some other people. About her young men, for instance.

Corella's young men were something that every one took for granted. There had been, in the first place, Jimmy Gordon; and after Jimmy, who had made a name for himself in the musical world, there had been Mark Masterton; and after Mark, there had been Willy Durand, and John Gamble, and also Peter Smith.

Young men very much at home in Corella's house; young men who came with graceful and inexpensive gifts of violets, and who made sonnets, and who took away, casually, gold cigarette lighters, and things like that. Young men who unobtrusively seemed to help Corella receive her guests, give her parties, and plan her frocks. Young men who escorted Mrs. Hesper to dances and to dinners, at which she always initialed the check. Poor and promising young men, who, one by one, paused, and then went on.

## By Dorothy Dow

**G**ERRY MORAN was the latest. He wrote bitter, realistic stories and sold them occasionally to the high-brow magazines. The waits were long, the checks small, and Gerry sometimes wore a lean, hungry look that spoke of too few meals, and night-long sessions over his typewriter, and money spent for

books that should have gone for a new overcoat.

Gerry had appeared almost at the same time as Sara, and Gerry, so people said, would probably never get away from Corella. He had dark eyes and a Galahad profile, and the most musical voice in the world, and it was the general opinion, that Mrs. Hesper, verging on forty, was fully aware of these charms. People said that Mrs. Hesper would marry Gerry. They added, poor boy!

Sara Jennings, who had not beheld, but who had heard of, the long line of Gerry's predecessors, regarded him with a disdain that had none of the Poor Boy



*"If you dislike me so much for no reason, I'll give you one," said Gerry gravely. He kissed her twice, and laughed at her for struggling. The light flared on above them, and there stood Corella Hesper. Staring at them. FURIOUS.*

echo in its depths. She overlooked, almost sublimely, his eyes, which were very dark, and his smile, which was probably the nicest she had ever seen; and she stared through him and past him when they met on the stairs, thinking, bitterly, "Ugh, Grafters," which was hardly fair.

It was true that Gerry was very poor, and Corella was very convenient. Every one knew that Gerry had no money. Every one knew that he wrote very good stories, and might some day be famous, or might not; that he dressed very well, considering his small income, that by belonging to only one not very select Club, and by living at home, he managed to have cigarette and tip-money. Everyone knew, too, that he was almost too attractive for words. If he had been rich, he would have been fatal; being poor, it was still said of him that girls lined up before him with their hearts in their hands, and he went along the line, saying, "Not you. Not you."

Apparently, coming to Corella Hesper he had said, "But you—"

At least, it looked like that.

Only Gerry knew, as some five or six men had grudgingly known before him, how attractive Corella could be. Only Gerry knew how effective was her particular line, which Sara was never permitted to hear, and which went, after a fashion, like this:

"You dear boy. You're really too wonderful. I think it's marvelous of you to be interested in me. Most young men aren't interested in people who have achieved anything. You're different. I'm different, too. I'm getting old, dear boy, and lonely. If I had a son, I'd like to have him be like you."

Corella's line. Other young men had fallen for that, too.

**Y**OU had to grant that she was famous enough to boast about. Meeting her at a dinner, and being asked by her to a tea, had gone, not amazingly, to young Gerry's head. He had gone to the tea, and somehow, had gone back the next day to show Corella some of his stories. And had been going back ever since.

Corella's drawing room, all violet velvet, and large divans with rose cushions; all old gilt mirrors in queer frames, and small three-legged tables and stiff small chairs that stood against the gray walls, filled with a scent that was neither jasmine or violet, but somewhere between the two, was rather an intriguing place in which to sit and read your own stories. And Corella, especially in the light of her own dim candles, was rather an intriguing person to read the stories to.

Green eyes. Red hair, drawn Madonna fashion into a knot on her neck. Very white skin, and a painted mouth that seemed redder than any paint. Gowns of silver, purple, lacquer green, and black. Very little feet, very slim ankles. And a certain way of looking at one, that pretended to be motherly, and very decidedly was not.

That was Corella.

Sara Jennings, who was almost twenty years younger, and whose skin was pink and white against her straight blue frocks, called Corella, unfairly, an old hag, silently. Aloud, she was the perfect secretary. "Yes, Mrs. Hesper. No, Mrs. Hesper. I'll have it attended to at once." That sort of thing.

She never seemed to look at Gerry when he came, and she never seemed to see him when circumstances forced her to speak to him; but she knew perfectly well how his mouth curved, and what a good-looking nose he had, and how like Galahad's was his interesting profile.

Sometimes, carefully typing Corella's manuscripts, or letters to her publisher, or correct personal notes, Sara found her mind wandering around to the Galahad profile, and then her fingers slipped, and queer jumbles of words shot out on the white page. Sara would tear the paper out of her typewriter, reduce it to scraps, and toss it angrily in the wastebasket. She told herself that she hated Gerry Moran; hated him with a vehemence that is apt to be the case with a young woman who works for money and a young man who plays for it.

But she really didn't hate him at all!

As for Gerry, he scarcely noticed her. Cross-looking girl, he thought at first; pretty, in a pink and white sort of way,



but not interesting. Later he found himself wondering at odd times what made Sara always look so cross. But only at odd times, because most of the time his mind was taken up with Corella Hesper, who was rich, brilliant, beautiful and famous. By this you can see that Gerry was young, even for his twenty-eight years.

**Y**OU can't live in a house, and not see some one who comes to it every day. You can't come to a house every day and not see some one who lives in it. By the time Sara and Gerry had been meeting on the steps for seven months, he had discovered that she really might be a pretty girl, if she wore the right kind of clothes, and she had found that he was really too handsome for any man, especially a poor one. She sniffed at handsome men and not politely.

"Sara," Corella said, in one of the rare moments when Sara was in the same room with them. It was a pose with Corella to call her secretary by her first name, as though she was very friendly with her, but that pose never fooled Sara for a moment. "Sara," said Corella, "Don't you think—turn your head, Gerry, dear—that Gerry looks a little, just a little, like Charley Grammar?"

Gerry blushed hotly, because Charley Grammar was a motion picture star, and all young men, for some reason, dislike being told they resemble actors.

"I've never noticed," Sara said rudely. "Probably he does. All pretty men look much alike."

She looked past Gerry as she said that, and her mouth was a thin red line, Gerry looked at her, and wished that he might spank her. Corella only laughed. She could see that Sara despised the sort of man she considered Gerry to be, and that suited Corella perfectly. She wasn't going to have any secretary take one of her young men away from her.

"You can take those letters into the other room, Sara," she said, with languid kindness, and Sara went away, leaving the two together.

It was amazing how Corella seemed

to change, after Sara had gone. She softened, she glimmered, she sighed.

"To-day," whispered Corella, through becomingly misty smoke from her especial brand of cigarettes, "is one of the days when life seems dust and ashes. One of my bad days, dear boy. After all, life—"

Of course it didn't mean a thing, when Corella murmured, "After all, life—" but to Gerry it seemed to mean a great deal. He was sure that everything she said meant a great deal, because she was such a fearfully clever woman. And he was sure that she was terribly unhappy—and he wanted to help her.

He moved closer, and somehow, either he was holding her hand, or she was holding his. He was not quite sure which it was.

"Dear boy—" she sighed.

"I hate to have you feel so unhappy," Gerry stumbled, very boyishly indeed. "Why—I—well—"

"I'm alone, bitterly alone," Corella sighed, again, exquisitely, the perfumed ghost of a sigh drowning in her throat. "People come to see me, talk to me, because I'm a celebrity. But they don't care about me, they envy me, they hate me, they none of them love me. Life has been very cruel to me, Gerry—"

He swallowed, and said, boldly. "Oh, Corella, you know you don't mean that. Everyone's mad about you. Why I—"

"Yes—" she prompted.

"I—why—"

Somehow, her head was on his shoulder and she was looking at him in such a way that there was really only one thing to say. "I love you," he said it. And found himself kissing her, and tasting the very expensive lipstick that she had ordered for just this moment.

"I—love you," said Gerry, again, because what could a fellow do?

**P**EOPLE read in the papers that Corella Hesper was to be married on such and such a date, quietly; and people talked. They said:

That Corella would have a very handsome husband, and that it was certainly a shame.

That Gerry Moran was just like all the rest of the young men nowadays.

marrying for money where and when they could.

That Corella had proposed to Gerry.

Mostly, that it was too bad, since now Gerry could never have a career of his own—that he'd always be just Corella Hesper's husband.

Forty, if she's a day, said other women, remembering Gerry's smile across the dinner table.

Smart boy, said other smart boys.

Bitterly woman, said ever so many girls bitterly.

People talked. But then, people always talk.

**G**ERRY himself, thinking the matter over, was inclined to agree with the people who said he was lucky. After all, he had been poor all his life, and if his stories never sold better than they were selling at present, he would probably continue to be poor.

Corella was horribly rich—for a woman. Corella was beautiful. And—he loved her.

Maybe not madly, but enough.

Corella herself was radiant, smiling glamorously on a world that had given her finally its last glittering toy. Corella ordered marvelous dresses by the score, and wrote one story after another, at breath-taking rates, for all the American magazines. Corella, walking down the street with Gerry, hoped that he looked older than his age and was sure that she looked younger than hers.

While Sara—Sara did nothing. She said nothing, not even wishing happiness to Corella, which passed unnoticed; and she began passing Gerry on the stairs without speaking, which did not, naturally, pass unnoticed. He stopped thinking, cross girl, and began to think: "Wonder what she's got against me?"

He began to make occasions to meet Sara, to see if she was ever going to speak to him; he began to ask her things in Corella's presence, so that she would have to answer him. He began to think about her soft, dark hair and her pretty, stern eyes, as he walked away from the house in the moonlight.

She was a mystery, and Corella Hesper should have guessed that, and let her go at once, since a mystery is the

most dangerous rival any woman can have. But Corella was too happy to notice.

**O**NE evening, in the hour between tea time and dinner time, Corella had dismissed Gerry to go home and dress, since they were going out to dance in the evening; and Gerry had strolled blithely enough, and whistling "Sweet Little Stranger," through the drawing room, and out into the hall, and toward the curved stairway that led to the first floor, where the outer door and his hat waited.

There was no one about as he went down the first step, and the second—but as he paused on the third, and just at the moment that Corella was relaxing for her beauty sleep, Sara appeared at the bottom of the steps, going up. She was very beautiful and appealing in her simple dark gown, and she looked much younger than Gerry had ever seen her look. She almost looked alluring, but that was because she was sure she was alone, since no one had lighted the lights in the great hall, and Gerry stood in the shadow on the third stair, his whistle stilled.

Perhaps she had not heard that whistle. Perhaps she had been absently thinking, and had heard it, but not heeded it. At any rate, she came on up the stairs, toward him, and it was only when she had reached the seventh stair from the top, that she saw him. She frowned, and looked at him as if he was not there.

"Good evening," said Gerry. He said it very nicely indeed, but she was too rude to answer, and only came on, and would have passed him, except that he stood in front of her.

"Let me pass," she said, because that was what she wanted to do, but Gerry only laughed at her.

"Why are you so rude to me? Why do you hate me?" he asked, curiously, and she flushed a dark rose.

"Let me pass," she said, again, defiantly, and she was breathing quickly, as if she had been running.

"But I don't want you to pass," said Gerry, looking like a naughty boy. "Until you've answered my question."

He put a hand out, and touched her arm, and she shivered away from him.

"Why don't you like me?" he insisted, and she laughed at him coldly.

"Why should I like you," she retorted, and for a moment he could think of no answer to that. Presently he said, with admirable candor. "Because most people do."

She tossed her head, and he realized that she was better than beautiful, she was dear.

"I'm not most people," she said. "And I dislike you."

"You dislike me, do you," Gerry said, queerly, "but I haven't done anything to you, have I—ever?"

"You've existed," she said, coldly.

"I—see."

For a moment she was sure that he was not going to say anything more, he was so still and so thoughtful, and she tried to pass him again, but again he stopped her, and this time his hand stayed on her arm, though she tried to shake it off. He said, like a hurt child: "You dislike me—for nothing?"

"Nothing," she sneered. "Nothing—oh, if it was nothing—"

"You should have a good reason for everything," Gerry told her, gravely. "You dislike me, with no reason. I will give you one."

He caught her to him, he kissed her mouth till it was dark pink, dark rose, bright red. He kissed her throat and her eyes, and laughed at her for struggling.

And just as he was about to set her free, the light flared on above them, and there stood Corella Hesper.

Staring at them. Furious.

**I**F Corella had been wearing her silver negligée, and her latest lip salve, there would have been a scene, but in the moment's passage she remembered that she had neither, but only an old flannel dressing gown, and much cold cream on her face, and, with the strangled cry of a furious woman she turned and fled back toward her bedroom, leaving the two young people looking at each other.

For a moment they looked, and then Sara very quietly turned, and went

down the stairs again. In the hall, her little plain hat lay, and her trim dark coat, and she put them both on without a word. Gerry watched her put them on, and suddenly he thought, with no reason, of all sorts of things. A little apartment, cozy breakfasts in the morning, kisses at night, bus rides, moving pictures, pink round-faced babies. He thought also of Corella, with cold cream on her face.

"What," he asked, reasonably, "are you going to do?"

"I'm going to stay with a friend over night," she said, angrily, "and look for another job in the morning. What did you think I'd do, now?"

Gerry made no answer to that, but stepped toward his own coat and hat. His face was very serious, and she scoffed at him, from the door. "You won't have to go," she mocked him. "Just tell Mrs. Hesper it was my fault. She'll be only too glad to believe you. You can stay."

She opened the door, and she went out, leaving it, for no reason at all, wide open behind her. Gerry stood in the doorway, and he saw her go, not too quickly, down the street. His lips burned, and when he remembered that her mouth had been as fragrant as a rose, he scarcely heard, overhead, a very faint call:

"Gerald—dear—"

He did not know, but it was so, that by this time Corella had wiped the cream from her face, and donned the silver negligée, and waited, up there in the violet drawing room, for him to come and explain things to her.

He did not know that she had lighted the candles, and that her hair was as bronze as an autumn leaf in that light; that her lipstick had made her mouth a sophisticated scarlet curve.

He did not stop to think that he was a poor young man and would probably be a poor young man all his life.

"Gerald," called Corella, not so faintly this time.

**H**E did not hear her. He was never going to hear her again. He was striding as fast as he could to overtake a girl's figure. A slim figure in a dark,

plain coat, shoulders squared, head set sternly, that was disappearing in the dusk.

Before she reached the second corner, he caught her.

"Sara!"

Her eyes were mutinous, and they said only too clearly, "What do you want?"

"That reason—Sara—was it enough? Still dislike me?"

A vigorous nod of the stern, dark head.

"Want another?"

Another nod, quite affirmative, and a suspicion of a smile flickering behind her gravity.

Twilight fell kindly, and even a busy city street can sometimes be conveniently deserted. It took at least six kisses for Sara to relent and whisper, "I love you!"



## *Lilac Time*

WHEN lilacs bloom, their fragrance lights an ember  
 That in my heart has slumbered all the year,  
 When lilacs bloom, in sorrow I remember  
 How swiftly passed the days when you were near.  
 And I, who've boasted honors years have given,  
 And I who've vaunted wealth that magic grew,  
 Know both are chains that never can be riven,  
 I'd give them all for one sweet hour with you.

When lilacs bloom, each breeze that perfume bears me,  
 Croons soft a song of by-gone summer nights,  
 And weaves a net that in its mesh ensnares me,  
 A net made up of memories of delight.  
 There has been ample time for full forgetting.  
 But oh, to-night I only wish I knew,  
 When lilacs bloom, do you half sigh, regretting.  
 Those golden hours I used to spend with you?

*L. Mitchell Thornton.*

# The Dollar Princess

By Corinne Harris Markey



*"You've made a great mistake," said Vivian, tears choking her voice, "the letter wasn't intended for me. Please let me go!" She avoided the hurt, baffled look in Gene's honest brown eyes.*

**O**N board The S. S. Ecuador a Philippine orchestra strummed "In a Little Spanish Town" with heart-breaking sweetness, but for once Vivian Reynolds' little short vamp

pumps didn't tap in rhythm, her slim body didn't sway, and her eager young voice didn't hum the air.

"I can't see why you don't want to go ashore," she murmured to Frank Nor-

ton, "I'd love to see Cartagena by moonlight—the oldest city in South America, just think of it!"

"You'd be bored inside of half an hour," he shrugged his well upholstered shoulders. "Nothing to see there in the evening; no night life, that is, none fit for a lady."

"But it's the people I want to see." She looked longingly over the side of the ship where dark skinned men and women were ranged along the wharf proffering their wares for sale, strange new tropical fruits, woven baskets, bright green and magenta fabrics, screaming parakeets and parrots—and baby monkeys!

Frank tapped his cigarette nonchalantly on the rail. "All of these South American cities are alike, hot, squalid, smelly. There'll be time to see all you want to-morrow. Besides," he glanced at the daintiness of her coral frock, "you'd ruin that dress."

"Oh, I can change the dress! It won't take but a second, if you'll wait—"

"Oh, Vivian, don't act like a romantic school teacher on her first tour! Is slumming any more thrilling by moonlight than in the daytime?" His voice was heavily sarcastic.

Vivian said nothing. She devoted herself to hating Frank Norton, his sleek sandy hair, his pink skin, his smugness. She wouldn't plead with any man to take her anywhere, but it did seem that if Frank were as fond of her as he pretended to be, he'd grant this—the very first wish she had expressed.

*"In a little Spanish town,  
It was a night like this—"*

The strings of the orchestra throbbed and thrummed incessantly. Vivian's eyes swept over the lovely land-locked harbor, the wash of blue and silver waves against the shore, the tropical orange moon that was just rising.

"A night like this!" The lure of the city's silhouette, half-hidden by a high wall, was like a spoken charm: the swaying green fingers of the palm leaves seemed to beckon her.

"But I won't be silly!" she said to herself. "Just because I can't have what I want when I want it is no reason for

hating Frank. Especially when he's been so nice to me."

Aloud she said, "If you'll excuse me I'll run down to my cabin."

"Surely!" His response came a shade too quickly.

"Surely!" she repeated to herself. "It sounded almost as though he were glad to get rid of me. Perhaps he was afraid I'd coax him to take me ashore this evening." She tossed her head proudly. "Well, he needn't worry!"

**B**UT she didn't go to her cabin. Instead she hunted up Mrs. Mowbray and asked casually, "Have you made up your shore party for this evening?"

"Yes, dear, we have. Why?"

"I wanted to join you—if I might?"

"Well—I don't really see how we could manage it," reluctantly. "There are six of us, all such whales, and the driver will make seven. Still, we might squeeze you in—somehow."

"Oh, no! I wouldn't think of letting you do that! I'll find a way to go."

"I'm sure you will! Just let young Mr. Norton know you want to and he'll see to it," with a meaning smile.

Vivian merely laughed at this and shrugged her shoulders.

"Let's see—there are the Danes—maybe I can wish myself on them," she mused as she crossed over to the other side of the deck. "I'm going ashore this evening or die in the attempt! Think of staying on the boat like an old woman! . . . Oh, there they are!"

But as Vivian drew near she overheard Mrs. Dane saying, "There are the Hall girls, and Mr. and Mrs. Barnes, and Helen Warner, and you and me—that's seven without the driver. Do you think we can be comfortable, Joe? It's a terribly hot night."

"Sure!" Mr. Dane was optimistic. "Can't expect to be too comfortable in the tropics, Fannie. Hello, Miss Reynolds! Going ashore?"

"Of course she's going ashore," his wife answered. "And she won't be crowded in with a dozen other people, either! That's what it is to be young and pretty and have a boy friend like Frank Norton." Mrs. Dane sighed in mock envy.

Vivian made her way on to her stateroom. Her cabin-mate was up on deck, and she was thankful for that, because she wanted to think. Still, she was too disappointed to think. Too angry. It wasn't fair for a man to put a girl in the position Frank Norton had put her in and then leave her stranded like this. Everybody on the ship expected him to take her ashore to-night. She'd told him she wanted to go and he'd calmly said he'd take her to-morrow! He put his wishes ahead of hers. He was mean and selfish! And she hated him!

Throwing herself down on her berth she cried stormily, resentfully. Then she got up and washed her face in cool water. Dexterously and with pleasing effect she ran a wet comb through her honey-colored bob. Patted her nose and chin with a powder-puff. There—she felt better! She'd go up on deck. Something might happen.

She hoped Frank wouldn't talk to her—before dinner at least. There he was up near the front of the boat interestedly watching the unloading of freight. After all perhaps she wasn't quite fair to him. He had been mighty nice to her, had shown her every possible attention. Together they had had a daily swim in the pool. Together they had played deck sports and bridge. In the evening they had danced together. Although the other young men often claimed her for a partner, Frank didn't dance with any of the other girls. He was a wonderful dancer, too. Such a good, firm lead.

And he was generous. Of course there wasn't much a man could spend money for on board The Ecuador. Candy and drinks. Limeade for her and ginn fizz for himself. He was always proposing a drink, and she had three unopened boxes of chocolates in her stateroom.

After eleven o'clock at night, when the deck lights were turned off, they would sit and watch the moonlight on the water. Or stand by the rail and peer out into the darkness for a passing ship. Or stroll around the deck. Sometimes they would pause in "Lovers' Lane."

It was then that Vivian always felt that there was something amiss, something for which she couldn't quite account. She was young—not quite twenty

—and pretty—her mirror and her friends left no doubt of that in her mind. And attractive. Men told her she was attractive. Men made love to her. Frank Norton had told her in a hundred various phrases that she was a darling. Yet even with the assistance of moonlight and water he didn't succeed in making plausible love to her. It was as though one impulse were checked by another. As though he wanted to but was curiously inhibited. Or didn't want to and tried to force himself into it.

Well, it had never mattered until to-night. And it didn't matter to-night except that it, whatever it was that came between them, had cheated her out of her excursion. It was almost dark now. She saw the lights of Cartagena come on and twinkle alluringly. Cartagena, the oldest city in South America! And she wasn't to visit it until to-morrow. It was a shame! A miserable shame!

WITH angry eyes she gazed across the deck at a big white ship—The *Tivives*. *The Tivives!* What an intriguing name! What did it mean? Where did The *Tivives* come from? To what far-away strange countries was it bound? Who were its passengers? It looked so new and shiny, as though this were its first trip.

A Philippine boy playing a tiny xylophone passed down the deck, for it was in this musical manner that the passengers of The S. S. Ecuador were summoned to their meals. That meant the dressing call. But nobody would dress for dinner to-night. There'd be no dancing. Everybody—that is everybody but the background crowd—would be going ashore. The background crowd! Wall-flowers, old men with rheumatism, old ladies under doctors' orders who had to go to bed early, like Miss Meyers, her cabin-mate. And to-night she was in the background crowd.

She didn't dress for dinner. An hour later, still wearing the coral frock, she again stood by the rail and watched group after group of her friends descend the companion ladder, make their way past the freight cars, and disappear from sight. Some of them, looking back, waved to her.

"They never dream that I'm ordered to stay right here all evening," she told herself. "Well, I'm thankful for that." She tried to smile, but as the last group left the ship, big tears welled up in her eyes, slid down over her cheeks, and splashed onto the rail.

"It's a shame! A miserable shame! I'll never forgive Frank Norton!" She looked about her. "I wonder where he is? Well, wherever it is I hope he stays there! I won't talk with him this evening. I'll go to my cabin and shut the door and read a magazine. Read a magazine when I'm in my first South American port! And it'll be hot in the cabin. Well, I don't care if it is! I won't stay on deck and advertise my—(sob)—my—(sob)—unpopularity. No one will know I'm in my cabin. (sob—sob—sob.)"

She turned, crossed the deck, entered a corridor, and went down a short flight of stairs. It was from this floor that the companion ladder led to the dock. She decided to peep out, just to see how it looked—how it would seem to be going out and down that ladder and off to romance and adventure.

**T**AKING a step forward her little spike heel caught in the runner and she lurched forward—and into the arms of a young man. A young man who had come bounding up the ladder. A strange young man. Tall. Slender. And dark. Was he a Cartagenan?

"Are you hurt?" he asked with well-rounded American r's.

"Oh, no! Not at all!" she gasped.

"Are you sure? Hadn't I better call the doctor?"

"A doctor? No, indeed! Really I'm not hurt a bit."

"But—you're crying?"

"Yes, I'm crying," she brushed away her tears. "But not because I'm hurt. Physically," she added.

The tall young man looked at her quizzically. There was a twinkle in his big brown eyes and a kindly note in his voice. The most vibrant, most stirring, most beautiful speaking voice Vivian had ever heard.

"Homesick?" he queried.

There was an answering twinkle in her

blue eyes and something plaintive and appealing in her low voice as she answered, "No, not homesick—just disappointed. I wanted to go ashore."

"You wanted to go ashore! Well, why didn't—why don't you go?"

"Why don't I? How can a girl in a foreign country go ashore, especially at night, without an escort?"

The strange young man looked baffled. It was ridiculous for an attractive girl, a girl as sweet and pretty as this one, to be crying because she had no escort.

"But surely—" he began, then stopped.

"Surely—what?"

"I just started to say that surely if you wanted an escort you could have one."

"Surely nothing of the kind! I do—I mean I did—want an escort and I couldn't have one."

He gazed at her uncomprehendingly. "You couldn't have one? Wouldn't your maiden aunt or whoever you're traveling with allow you to have an escort?"

She laughed gaily. "There aren't any maiden aunts with me. I'm traveling alone."

"Alone?" He regarded her thoughtfully. "Aren't you awfully young to be traveling alone?"

She glanced up at him archly. "You needn't think I'm going to tell my age to—a perfect stranger."

"A stranger! That's right," he agreed, "I am a stranger to you. But I never think of myself as a stranger."

"Neither do I," she answered, so seriously that he laughed at her.

"Well, I'm Gene Howard. Engineer by trade. Originally from St. Louis; but also claiming Hong Kong, Madagascar, Singapore, and points east as my stamping grounds. At present from The S. S. Tivives."

"Oh, are you from that ship? The shiny new one?"

"Yes. And you?"

"I'm Vivian Reynolds, originally from Chicago, and—that's all."

"That's enough! *You* don't need a glamorous background to make you interesting! And now, little Miss Vivian, since we're properly introduced, why not go ashore together?"

Looking up into his steady brown eyes,



and making a swift appraisal, she countered gaily, "Why not?"

"No reason in the world that I know of," he stated. "Skip along and get your bonnet and your pass."

Vivian skipped. On swift, joyous feet she sped down the corridor, her heart singing with happiness. She was going ashore! Going ashore with the handsomest young man she had ever seen. A Prince Charming, who had come in a great white ship to rescue her from her loneliness, from a dreary, tearful evening in her cabin.

A FEW minutes later she made her way down the ladder which was swung along the side of the ship, handed her pass to the Quartermaster took her hero's arm—and they were off!

Down the railway track they went, until they came to a place where a number of automobiles were parked, ready to take passengers to the city. At their approach the drivers flocked about them chattering volubly in Spanish. And it was in Spanish that Gene Howard arranged for a car. Vivian admired the ease and fluency with which he spoke the language. Probably he spoke Chinese and every other language, too!

When he assisted her into the tonneau, took his place beside her, and gave directions to the driver, she stole a glance at his finely chiseled profile. At the sweep of smooth dark hair. At the straight nose, the sensitive lips, and the strong chin. "He's wonderfully good looking," she told herself. "And he's dear and sweet and precious. I'd a hundred times rather see my first South American city with him than Frank Norton. A thousand times! A million times!"

They entered Cartagena through the wall she had seen from the ship. Centuries old it was, Gene said. They drove down streets lined on both sides with houses that had little iron balconies. The streets were so narrow that neighbors chatted across from gallery to gallery. Their laughter was as liquidly musical as their language.

They drove down other, wider streets. The arched entrances to the houses were wide open. The windows too were open, and through them one could see families

talking, eating, singing. Sometimes they saw the palms and exotic shrubbery of a patio, festive and colorful.

IN the poorer neighborhoods naked babies and small children played on the streets and in doorways. Pigs and goats and cats and dogs ran about unrestrictedly.

On they went, Vivian and her Prince, from the old city to the modern city. They saw beautiful cement bungalows that in the moonlight looked like marble palaces. Palaces surrounded by high cement walls.

The night was warm, the air heavy with the perfume of tropical flowers, but as they left the city and drove along a palm bordered road a cooling breeze sprang up and fanned them, tossing Vivian's soft blonde curls this way and that about her piquant little face. The moon glided across the heavens high above them. The tall slanting palm trees were silhouetted against the sky.

Vivian's pulses beat fast, a queer, tense feeling of excitement holding her. A premonition of something momentous, something delightful about to happen. The young man by her side too was tense, rigid, alert. Had she communicated this feeling of excitement to him? Or had he communicated it to her? Suddenly, from out of the silence, he asked,

"Do you believe in love at first sight?"

"Why—why, I don't know. I never thought about it. Do you?"

"I never did until this evening. I always thought it was the bunk! I've even argued about it. I insisted that love could be analyzed. Nothing mysterious about it. A mixture of admiration and respect, that came with long and intimate acquaintance.

"Probably you were right," Vivian conceded, unenthusiastically. "At least it sounds reasonable."

"It is reasonable and it may work out—for some people. But that kind of love is a tame sort of thing compared with the mad, glorious, wholly irresistible emotion that simply sweeps a fellow off his feet! That would make him go through fire and water! Make him move heaven and earth! Inspire him to do something great! To do *anything*,

everything necessary to win the right girl!"

Vivian's sapphire eyes sparkled. Her lips parted and her dimples came into play. "The right girl?" she questioned.

"Yes, the right girl! And when he meets her he recognizes her immediately. He knows she's better and finer and sweeter and nobler than any girl who ever lived. That she's the one woman in the whole world for him." He paused and gulped helplessly.

"I believe that," she said. "A girl feels the same way when she meets the man of her dreams. She knows right away that he's kind and chivalrous and honorable. That she can always depend on him. Always be proud of him."

He reached over and took both of her hands in his. "Vivian, do you honestly feel that way, too? Would you recognize your lover when he came?"

"I surely would," she declared solemnly.

"And would you go to him? With him?"

"Yes."

"Anywhere?"

"Yes—anywhere."

"You darling!" His arms were about her. His lips on hers.

Her soft young arm stole about his neck. "You precious boy!" she said when she could speak.

**F**OR a long moment he held her close. Then releasing her, he looked lovingly, tenderly into her eyes. "Vivian, sweetheart, it seems incredible that I should have found you—away down here in South America. You on one ship and I on another."

"Ours weren't ships that passed in the night, were they?" She laughed, a delicious, happy trill.

Again she was in his arms. "They'll never be that, dear. Where you go, I'll go. Your ship will be my ship."

"Do you mean that, Gene?"

"Do I mean it? Of course I mean it!"

"Literally? Do you mean that—that—"

"That I'm going to transfer my luggage to The Ecuador and go on to California with you? No—I don't quite mean that. I would if I could—but I

can't. I'm an engineer, you know, a construction engineer. And I have work to do. I'm on my way now to take a job. I'll be down in this country for eighteen months. But why can't you have your luggage transferred to The Tivives and go with me?"

"Oh!" she gasped. "How could I?"

"Why couldn't you? We can be married to-morrow and then I'll take you right along with me. What about it, love-bird?"

She gazed at the tall, slanting coconut palms that marched in a row by the side of the road. At the moon that was so much bigger and yellower than North American moons. She breathed deeply of the perfumed air. It seemed too fantastic, too marvelous, altogether too delightful that she, little Vivian Reynolds from Chicago, with its hurrying crowds, its clanging elevated trains, its heavy traffic, its noise and din—that she was in this quiet, far-away, tropical country, in this old, old city.

That she was with this adorable boy, whom until a few hours ago she had never seen. And now he had held her in his arms. Had told her of his beautiful love. Had asked her to marry him. And she, who had always been so proud, had scorned cheap caresses lightly proffered—she had given this stranger her kisses, her love, her promise. It was for this she had waited—this ideal love. They knew nothing of each other—he might be a prince or a pauper. She might be—anything. Yet their love had not questioned. Perhaps it was too perfect to be real. A dream. A rarely beautiful dream from which she would awaken and find herself in her berth, her face buried in a tear-dampened pillow, her heart sore with disappointment.

She laid her hand on Gene's arm. She ran her fingers across his cheek and up over his smooth dark hair. "You are real, aren't you? I haven't imagined you, have I? I can scarcely believe it!"

"Can't you, sweetheart? That's the way I feel about you. It's almost unbelievable that I should have found you—you adorable darling! And having found you, that you should care for me. I'm nothing, nobody! I don't know what I've ever done to deserve a girl like

you. But from now on I'll do my best to be worthy—I promise that, Vivian. Vivian—that's the loveliest name I ever heard. And it suits you, dear. You're so breathlessly bright and beautiful!"

Now they were back in the city. There was the plaza with its tingle of stringed bands. There was a cabaret where beautiful, dark-haired señoritas and their handsome escorts could be glimpsed through the windows. And more familiar figures.

"Oh, there are some of our passengers!" cried Vivian. "They told me there wasn't any night life in Cartagena?" Then recalling what Frank Norton had said, she added, "That is, none fit for a lady to see."

"You were told right. That place"—with a wave of his hand Gene indicated the cabaret they had just passed—"certainly isn't a fit place to take a lady. Oh, darling, how can I tell you good-bye, even when it's just for one night?"

**W**HEN she reached her room on The Ecuador, Miss Meyers was in bed and asleep. No one but a Miss Meyers could sleep on a night like this! The night was warm, and their door, like many others, was opened wide and hooked back. Vivian quietly undressed by the lights that twinkled through the window from the water outside.

After she had slipped into her berth she lay awake, re-living in retrospect the amazing events of the evening, from the moment she had been catapulted into Gene Howard's arms until she had said good-night to him. Then in anticipation she lived through the morrow. The morrow that was all arranged for.

After breakfast Gene was to call for her and take her over to see The Tivives. Then she would return to The Ecuador and secretly pack her things. That would keep her busy until nearly luncheon time. Luncheon was served until one o'clock. At one-thirty Gene was again to call for her and take her over to Cartagena where they'd be married.

To-morrow was to be her wedding day! When they returned to The Ecuador she'd announce it—not before. Her luggage would be transferred to The Tivives and at five o'clock she'd sail away with

Gene—her husband! At this thought her heart almost stopped beating.

"I'll not take anyone into my confidence," she had told him. "Not a single person. There's no one very near or dear to me on board. And I've a superstition, a fear that if I told anyone he—or she—might do something to spoil our plans."

"I think you're right," he had said. "I'll not tell anyone either, not even the Captain, although he's a prince! He's keen on romance, too, and he'll be delighted to have my bride aboard his ship."

She lay remembering all the dear things he had said. Once, "Do you realize, sweetheart, that you haven't asked me where we're going? Where we're to live during the next eighteen months?"

"Haven't I? Well then I'll not ask you and I don't want you to tell me. It will be more romantic not to know where I'm going. Anyway it doesn't matter—so long as I'm with you."

At that he had kissed her almost reverently on the forehead. Then he had said, "Vivian, I wonder if you have any idea what your confidence means to me?"

The next morning, fifteen minutes before the time set, the little bride-to-be stood by the rail of the ship in a bright blue frock and watched for her lover. She didn't have long to wait. Almost immediately he rounded a box-car, ran along the side of the ship, waved his hand in greeting, and bounded up the companion ladder.

Clad all in white, with his smooth dark hair gleaming in the sunlight, his dark eyes sparkling, and his white teeth flashing, he seized both of her hands in his and said,

"You darling! All set to explore the Tivives?"

"Aye, aye, sir," she saluted, and gaily followed him off the ship.

At ten o'clock she was back on The Ecuador and in her cabin busily packing. It was such a job! There were so many more things than would go into her wardrobe trunk and suit-case. She had never done her own packing before. And then when she wasn't nearly through there came a tap on the door. Shoving the suit-case under her berth, she called,

"Come in."

It was Miss Meyers, her cabin-mate. "I've such a headache, I thought I'd lie down until lunch," she said.

Bother! Miss Meyers *would* get sick just now!

"What are you doing?" The gray-

at his watch. "It's only eleven-thirty."

"All right," she agreed. "I'll get my pass."

AS they left the ship they met Billy Davis, one of their fellow-passengers. "Going ashore?" he queried so-



*"Love isn't a tame sort of thing," he said. "It's a mad, glorious, irresistible emotion that sweeps a fellow off his feet—that inspires him to do anything to win the right girl!"*

green eyes were curiously fixed on her.

"Oh, nothing special," Vivian looked out the port-hole. "I think I'll go up on deck awhile."

"That halts the packing!" she told herself as she strolled through the smoking room. "Oh, well, if I hurry I can finish in a short time after luncheon."

"Hello, little blue-bird! Where have you been hiding?" called Frank Norton. Then overtaking her, continued. "What about going ashore? Are you ready?"

She thought: "If I refuse to go he'll think something is up. Anyway I can't finish my packing now." Aloud she said, "How long would it take us? Could we be back for luncheon?"

"Surely—if we want to." He looked

ably. Then giving Frank a prodigious wink, added. "Didn't you see enough of Cartagena last night, Norton?"

"Guess you got your lines crossed, Billy!" Frank spoke playfully, but he shot the boy a silencing glance.

Vivian was pretending not to hear the remarks, but a flush of comprehension and indignation crept up the sides of her neck and spread over her cheeks. So this was why he had refused to take her ashore last night. Quickly the feeling of annoyance and disgust passed. What did it matter what Frank Norton did or didn't do? She had seen Cartagena by moonlight—with Gene!

They drove through the ancient wall. They drove on top of it. They saw the

homes in it—long rows of dwellings. They saw the pigs and chickens and goats. The cats and dogs. The naked children. Saw them in the glaring sunlight. Saw the Plaza. But there was no tingle of stringed bands. No cooling breeze. No softening moonlight. Only the heat and humidity. The squalor. Even the fragrance of the tropical flowers was submerged in the odor of fish.

The automobile came to a stop before an ancient church where the driver spoke to Frank in Spanish. Frank turned to Vivian, "He says this is the Temple de San Pedro Claver, erected by the Fathers of the Compania de Jesus, in virtue of a royal order of Phillip III, King of Spain, issued October 25, 1603. Do you want to see it?"

"Yes, I'd like to," she decided.

A kindly priest conducted them through the Cathedral and in precise English told them in unbelievable detail the story of Peter Claver. Told of his love and efforts on behalf of the negroes. How he had converted more than 300,000 slaves. How in 1650 he was a victim of the plague that harassed the Antilles. He showed them the chapel where the saint had died, a chapel whose walls were silent witnesses to forty-five years of apostolic zeal. Showed them the table and Cibary of the Main Altar under which the sacred remains, placed inside a precious chest of gold and glass, were carefully preserved.

Vivian was awed by the cool, damp antiquity of the old church and fascinated by the venerable Spanish priest. Then there came an idea—an idea that caused her to catch her breath with a sharp intake. If it were possible she'd have this dear old man perform the ceremony that would make her and Gene man and wife. Perform it to-day.

This brought her up with a start, and she glanced at her wristwatch.

"Gracious! It's half past one! We must hurry!" she murmured to Frank.

He nodded his head, but continued to listen to the Father. Vivian too listened as patiently as was possible. She couldn't rush away rudely from a priest. But she slowly led the way up to the entrance of the church.

"Frank, it's ten minutes of two," she

stated as they took their seats in the waiting car. "We'll have to hurry back to the ship."

"Ten to two! Luncheon will be over on the ship. We'll have something to eat here."

SHE opened her lips to protest against having luncheon at all. But realizing the futility of this with Frank, who ate enormous meals and ate them at regular intervals, she didn't speak. She wouldn't order much, and she'd hurry back to the ship as soon as possible.

Frank seemed to order everything on the menu, and the meal, with one course following the other slowly, methodically, lasted forty-five minutes. "Oh, Frank, can't we cut this and run along?" cried Vivian in desperation.

"What's the rush? I'd like to have my coffee."

He had his coffee.

"Now let's travel!" she said when they were again in the car.

Frank turned shrewd, slate-colored eyes on her flushed and eager face. "What's the hurry to get back to the ship? Why not see the town while we're here? There's another cathedral—a gorgeous one with a golden altar and some famous paintings."

"I've seen enough of cathedrals—enough of everything! Anyway, I'm terribly hot."

"It won't be any cooler on the ship—while we're docked."

"Whether it is or not—I want to go back," she said firmly.

"All right!" he conceded, and spoke to the driver in Spanish.

With a sigh of relief she settled back in her seat and paid no attention to where they were going, her thoughts traveling faster than the machine in which she rode. In imagination she was already on The Ecuador. In her cabin. Her trunk and suit-case were packed. Gene had called for her. They were in the ancient cathedral, standing before the altar and the benevolent old priest who was reading the marriage service.

Gene, garbed in white, was so distinguished looking! And she—what would she be wearing? Strange, but until this moment she had not given this impor-

tant subject a thought. A bride should wear white. She had a white dinner gown. Sleeveless, of course. But she couldn't put it on in the middle of the day without giving things away. She had a white sports frock. But she didn't have a white afternoon gown. A georgette with long sleeves. That would be just the thing! Well, it didn't so much matter. She'd wear the sports outfit. It was pretty and it was freshly laundered. She was glad of that.

Then something unfamiliar in their route caused her to look about her. They were on a country road. "Where are we? Where are we going?" she asked sharply.

"I'm going to show you a sight worth seeing," Frank told her.

"Oh, but I haven't time—that is I don't want to see anything more—now!" she cried. "Take me back immediately!"

Frank spoke to the driver, who turned the machine off onto a cross road.

Then to her, "What's the hurry to get back? Want to see that fortune-hunter from The Tivives?" His tone was sarcastic.

She flared up at this. "What do you know of the young man from The Tivives? And why do you call him a fortune-hunter?"

"I know plenty. And I call him a fortune-hunter because he is one. He knows you're The Princess and he's making a play for your money."

Her blue eyes widened in surprise. "The Princess! He thinks I'm The Princess?"

Frank laughed sardonically. "He not only thinks you're The Princess, he knows it. Everybody knows it."

"Everybody knows it? Everybody—that includes you?"

Frank flushed uncomfortably. "No use in being disagreeable. Of course I know it. But I was interested in you before I knew it. And I haven't tried to kidnap you since, have I?"

**V**IVIAN didn't bother to answer. She was busy reviewing the past week in the light of what she had just heard—that everybody, which meant everybody aboard The Ecuador, thought that she was The Princess.

Since he had raised the question—just when was it that he had begun to show her especial attention? They had left New York on Saturday at noon. It wasn't on Sunday. Nor Monday. Nor Tuesday. That is, very especial attention. Of course he had been agreeable to her on these days and had played games with her and danced with her. But then he had been just as agreeable and danced just as much with the other girls. It was Wednesday—she remembered now—Wednesday that for the first time he had devoted himself to her exclusively.

It had been only five days since Wednesday. But a day on shipboard as far as a friendship, a flirtation, or a love-affair is concerned, is worth a month on land.

So he thought she was The Princess! Ah, that explained his attitude when they were alone on deck after the lights were out. When they strolled along Lovers' Lane and he didn't quite convince her of his love for her. He wasn't really fond of her. He had merely pretended to be because he thought she was The Princess. He was a fortune-hunter himself. And she hated a fortune-hunter, more than anybody else!

The Princess was the Ship's Mystery Girl. It was rumored that an heiress to a vast estate, the only daughter of a Commercial King of the Middle West, was aboard The Ecuador, traveling incognito. A girl wishing to test her own charm, was posing, not as being exactly poor, but in such modest circumstances that no man would marry her for her money.

There had been many conjectures as to which was she. After they became pretty well acquainted the girls all accused one another of being The Princess, as they had dubbed the unknown one. In the Canal Zone, when they had stopped and when the girls displayed their purchases of embroidered shawls, perfume, carved ivory Buddhas, ebony elephants and trays and jars of brass, there were many allusions and good-natured gibes.

As Marjorie Merton showed her lovely red shawl embroidered in white, someone said, "That's all right for you,

Marjorie. I couldn't possibly afford one shawl like that, but if I were The Princess I'd buy them by the dozen."

Vivian now recalled that when she had confessed to not having bought any perfume one of the girls had remarked, "Why should The Princess bother to buy perfume where it's cheap? She can afford to pay full price for it." Perfume, according to the shoppers, cost about half in Panama of what it did in the States.

So they all thought she was The Princess! She smiled—a wry smile. Well, what did it matter what they thought? Gene didn't think she was The Princess. He didn't know there was a Princess aboard The Ecuador. It was impossible for him to know it. He hadn't talked with anybody but her. She was the first person he had met as he came up the ladder. Again she smiled—a happy smile.

Frank assured her in a grumbling voice that they were taking a short cut back, but it was twenty minutes of five when they reached the dock, and Vivian was trembling with nervousness.

She'd have time only to cram her things into her trunk and have her luggage transferred to the other ship. They could be married by the Captain. Still she had read something in the papers about the authority to marry having been taken from sea captains. Well, in that event, they'd wait until the next stop. And if all the staterooms were taken, why Gene could give her his and he could double up with someone else. Gene would find room for her.

**B**UT as she got out of the car she saw that something was amiss. Even before she realized what it was she was assailed with a sickening sense of defeat. Then she knew. *The Tivives was gone!* It had sailed away! Sailed away with Gene on it—and without her! No! No! Not that! It was too dreadful! It couldn't be! It simply couldn't be! Gene would be on The Ecuador—waiting for her.

Disregarding both Frank Norton and the Quartermaster, she ran up the companion ladder and on down the corridor to her cabin, where she looked about

expectantly. How silly! Gene wouldn't be in her cabin. He'd be up on deck. Without so much as a glimpse of herself in the mirror, she rushed from the room and up on deck. Along one side and then along the other she went. Into the Social Hall and into the Smoking Room. Then down to the Barber Shop. But Gene Howard wasn't aboard The Ecuador.

Limp with disappointment she sank into a steamer chair to think things over. Gene had gone on without her—on their wedding day. It was incredible! Why the ship wasn't to sail before five o'clock! A ship couldn't sail before the hour set. But it had!

Then with a numb feeling of frustration she realized that she didn't know Gene's destination. Didn't even know the next stop of The Tivives. Why hadn't she asked? Why hadn't she learned his address? Why hadn't she given him hers? He knew she was going to California. But how could he find her without an address? It would be utterly impossible.

Then came the question—the hateful question—did he want to find her? Couldn't he have waited? If that were not possible—business was business—he might have to go one with The Tivives—at least he could have left a message for her. Perhaps he had! She wouldn't inquire, exactly, but she'd put herself in the way of getting it if he had left one.

Captain Hunter came up and seated himself by her side. "Tired out from sight-seeing?" he queried.

"Yes, I'm a bit tired and warm. It was suffocating in Cartagena."

"We're in the tropics, my dear young lady! You can't expect to be cool."

"No-o—of course not."

For a moment conversation lagged. Then she asked, "Captain, does a ship ever sail before the hour set? I don't mean when it's starting out on a voyage, but just at a port of call?"

"Yes, if the freight has been loaded and unloaded and the passengers are all aboard there's no reason why a ship couldn't sail," he answered.

"I see."

Before she went to bed that night it

was evident to Vivian that Gene had left her without even so much as a note. Well, all right! If he could forget so easily—so could she. She'd never make any effort to find him. Was he insincere? He was awfully handsome, and handsome men were notoriously insincere. Had he really trifled with her? Had he never intended to marry her? Was it only the moon and the romantic setting? Did he know the ship was to sail earlier than he had told her? Did he think she was a cheap little girl whom he could love and leave? She tingled all over with indignation.

Then another angle of the situation presented itself. Perhaps he was hurt and disappointed to learn she had gone ashore with Frank Norton. Perhaps he thought she regretted her promise and had gone away to evade him. Had purposely remained away until after the ship had sailed.

She wished with all her heart she had never met Frank Norton. Wished she had been firm and insisted on being taken back to the ship without luncheon. She wished and she wished. She surmised and resolved. She cried and then dried her eyes. Until she couldn't wish or surmise or resolve or cry any more—just suffer—her head and her heart both aching, her hands hot and feverish. How could Miss Meyers snore so peacefully on a ghastly night like this?

THE following morning a wan looking girl stood by the rail as The Ecuador sailed into Puerto Colombia. Shore parties were animatedly discussing the side trip. And just as at Cartagena, everybody took it for granted that she would go ashore with Frank Norton. But this time she didn't care what they thought. She didn't care to see Puerto Colombia, to take the train ride through the jungle to Barranquilla. She didn't care for anything. She thought she would never again care, no matter what happened, that sorrow could never again move her, or joy touch her.

Earlier, while on her way to breakfast, she had met Frank in the corridor and had refused to talk to him, or to listen to his plea to be reinstated in her good graces.

"I'll never speak to him as long as I live!" she said to herself bitterly. "It was all his fault! He spoiled everything. I hate him!"

At this point in her musings she looked up and saw a great white shining ship. And as she continued to look her blue eyes widened, her lips parted, her dimples came into play.

"The Tivivies!" she breathed rapturously. "The Tivivies!"

Then, without knowing why, she turned. And there, coming toward her across the deck was—Gene! His dark eyes sparkling, his white teeth flashing, and his eager hands outstretched in greeting.

"Vivian!"

"Gene!"

With the light of love on their young faces they stood entranced, gazing into each others eyes. Then Gene led her a little apart from the crowd and asked, "Darling, where were you yesterday?"

"I was over in Cartagena. I just *couldn't* get back! I'll tell you all about it sometime."

"All right! But that's past history. Now you're here and I'm here and we can be married to-day, right in Puerto Colombia. We won't have time to go to Barranquilla. The Tivives sails at four o'clock and the train doesn't get back until five."

"Yes. But, Gene, how *could* you go off without me—yesterday?"

"I had to, sweetheart. We sailed earlier than I thought we would. I hung round The Ecuador all afternoon—not on the ship, but on the dock. I was nearly crazy when you didn't get back. Then I left a note telling you I'd meet you this morning—it was all I could do."

"You left a note for me? With whom?"

"With your deck steward. Why? Didn't you get it?"

"No, I didn't get it. I'll ask him about it." She turned to the deck steward who happened to be near by. "Marcella, what did you do with the letter this young man gave you for me?"

"I took it to your cabin, Miss Reynolds," replied the Philippine boy. "You weren't in and so I left it with the other lady."



"Miss Meyers? She must have forgotten it!"

Then to Gene, "Wait—I'll be right back." She hastened away.

"Miss Meyers had a thousand apologies. She said when the boy brought it she put it away intending to give it to me when I got back. Then she forgot it. I do wish I had got it last evening. But it doesn't matter now." She gave him a radiant smile; then looked down at the envelope in her hand.

"Miss Vivian Reynolds, *The Princess*," it said.

AND as she looked the smile faded from her face. Her eyes grew hard, and in spite of the heat of the day, her whole body grew cold. Even her voice, when she spoke, was chilled and unnatural. Handing the missive to the astonished young man, who took it uncomprehendingly, she said:

"You've made a mistake. This isn't for me. And now, Mr. Howard, if you'll excuse me, I'll run along and get ready to go to Barranquilla."

She turned and would have left him if he hadn't grasped her by the wrist. "Vivian, what do you mean? We won't have time to go to Barranquilla—The Tivives sails—"

"I don't care when the Tivives sails," her tone was hostile, her manner frigid. "Please let me go—"

Frank Norton chose this moment to stroll past them. With a hurt, baffled expression in his honest brown eyes, Gene relaxed his hold on the girl's wrist.

Vivian, fairly numb with misery, boarded the little train that ran up to Barranquilla. Everyone was complaining of the stifling heat, but she was oblivious to it, to everything. Outside were strange sights, foreign people, and unusual vegetation, a growth of such variety and denseness as she had never dreamed. Yet with unseeing eyes she gazed out of the window. All because the address on Gene's envelope had read:

"Miss Vivian Reynolds, *The Princess*."

Because Gene Howard had proved

himself to be as much of a fortune hunter as Frank Norton!

Barranquilla, too, with its little houses of pink, bright blue, jade green, and yellow, its narrow sandy streets, its ox-carts, and its women carrying burdens on their heads, should have interested her—but it didn't.

Her one thought was to avoid her fellow passengers. To this end she was driven to a hotel where she remained until noon. Then she slipped out to visit the shops. She was strolling about aimlessly gazing at the wares displayed in the windows, when she espied Mr. Lorenz, the purser of *The Ecuador*, in a large green car.

"Shopping, Miss Reynolds?" he asked. "Can't I give you a lift?"

"Why, yes, thanks—that would be lovely."

As they drove along the quiet streets Vivian tried to be gay, but her mouth would droop, and once a tear splashed onto her blue frock.

It was then that Mr. Lorenz said:

"Miss Reynolds, I have an errand at the Hotel Moderno—would you mind waiting in the car a minute?"

"Not at all," she answered. Hardly aware of his presence or absence, Vivian gazed dully into the busy street.

In a few minutes Mr. Lorenz returned, and with him was—Gene!

She stiffened. This was an outrage! Trapping her like this! Her heart beat almost to suffocation and she felt the hot color rising in her cheeks.

UNINVITED, he followed Mr. Lorenz into the tonneau of the car, and without preface or apology said, "Vivian, when you threw me down this morning, apparently without reason, I went directly to Mr. Lorenz and put the case before him. A purser knows everything!" He flashed an engaging smile at the young man, brave in his white uniform with its gold and black epaulets. "I showed him the envelope that seemed to give such offense, and he asked how I came to address you as *The Princess*. I explained that when I asked the deck steward if he knew Miss Reynolds he said, 'Sure! Everybody knows *The Princess*!' And thinking *The Princess* an ap-

appropriate title, I got out my fountain pen and added it to the address. Then Mr. Lorenz told me all about the mythical princess."

"Mythical?" she queried coolly.

"Yes, mythical. There's no princess aboard—she's just a fictitious creature, the product of someone's imagination—someone who is having a good time at the expense of the passengers."

"Oh, I see," Vivian replied dryly. "Well, a purser ought to know who's aboard his ship and if he's convinced you that there's no princess—"

"Then you're convinced that I'm not a fortune-hunter?" interrupted Gene.

She nodded her head demurely.

"Good! Now what about being married?"

"But—The Tivives? It's to sail before we can get back to Puerto Colombia?"

"A ship doesn't sail without its captain!" he stated triumphantly. "And there's Captain Rogers"—he indicated a white coat and the glowing tip of a cigar—"waiting to be invited to our wedding. I brought him along purposely. I wasn't taking any more chances."

While the obliging Mr. Lorenz went to get Captain Rogers, the bride-elect slipped her arm through her fiancé's and asked, "Gene, are you sure you want to

marry—just any little girl from Chicago?"

"I wouldn't say that. But I do want to marry a very special little blue-eyed girl from Chicago, Vivian Reynolds."

But it wasn't Vivian Reynolds whom Gene Howard married less than a half hour later. It was Helen Shields.

Just as soon as the ceremony that made them man and wife was over, the groom grasped his bride by the shoulders and in an awful voice demanded:

"Vivian, are you *the* Helen Shields of Chicago—the heiress?"

"Yes," she said defiantly, laughing up into his honest brown eyes, "I'm Helen Vivian Shields—and Reynolds is my mother's maiden name. What are you going to do about it?"

"Good Lord!" he groaned, "What in the world shall I do with an heiress, a spoiled and pampered darling, in Santa Marta! Lorenz, you let me in for this. You assured me there was no heiress aboard The Ecuador."

"I think you're mistaken. I told you there wasn't any princess on board."

"Well, you were wrong about that—there was!"

"And she found her Prince," said Vivian.

The Prince caught The Princess in his arms, and crushed her lips with his kiss.



## WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

*If all your life you'd yearned for a film career, but, instead, had had to be content as a lady's maid to Inez Villers, the most glorious star of them all—*

*If love had come—Carter's love—and the little heaven that his love meant—*

*And then—the amazing offer! The chance for stardom, luxury, fame! What would you do?*

Read Dorothy Dow's story "The Little Heaven."

In the next issue of *Cupid's Diary!*

# Crossed Confessions

By Berton Braley



"I, too, am a disappointed person," he said, "I was supposed to meet a friend, but she's failed me. It may look suspicious, but—" "Auspicious, you mean," laughed the girl.

HOWARD WESTCOTT sank uneasily into one of the overstuffed chairs in the Peacock Alley of the *Waldoria*, and envied the proprietary assurance with which the other occupants of the Alley held down their seats.

Had he known that three-fourths of them were as far from being registered guests of the hotel as himself he might have been more comfortable. As it was, he watched the procession of gayly plumaged birds from Sioux City and Davenport and Milwaukee and Bridge-

port with feigned idleness but some anxiety, a little fearful lest someone might suddenly protest at his presence and have him removed as an intruder.

No one, just to look at Howard, would have doubted for an instant, his right to occupy this expensive space. He was a handsome youth, tall, black-haired, broad-shouldered, his face healthfully tanned to a shade lighter than his clear eyes; and his clothes cut in a fashionable manner.

But in spite of his metropolitan clothes and citified air, Howard was just small-town enough to feel a bit of guilt at occupying private property without paying for it.

For fifteen minutes he lounged idly, gradually conquering his sense of intrusion, and lapping his soul a little in the atmosphere of luxury and sumptuousness which breathes through every corridor of the *Waldoria*.

Then he looked at his watch, rose, and strolled up and down the Alley, surveying the various chair-warmers with quick glances. He wandered into several of the other lounges and gave them the once over, then returned to his chair. Presently he bought a magazine at the newsstand, and resumed his chair, in which he had left his hat, little realizing how long a chance he was taking of finding it on his return.

Twenty minutes more and he again looked at his watch, and with an impatient exclamation, put it back in his pocket. The story in the magazine wasn't particularly interesting and the wait was growing lengthy. He glanced up and down the alley, and as his eyes swept the row of chairs they came back to the one opposite—and lingered there.

If that girl had been in that chair all this time, he thought, he had indeed been wasting precious moments reading a silly story. New York was a city of pretty girls. You didn't have to be observant to note that fact, when it was made visual a thousand times a day.

But here was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. Fluffy, adorably blonde hair, thick and fine and bobbed by a barber who knew his business. A low, broad forehead, eyebrows straight and dark. a pair of startling brown eyes, a straight

nose with the slightest possible tilt relieving its classicism; a small mouth of enticing kissableness; a firm, but not too firm chin, and a lovely soft, white throat.

Clothes—very smart. A crêpe ensemble in pale *bois de rose*, with bindings and coat trimming of leather in rose and tan. Her felt hat, pulled low over her blonde hair, was the same pale rose, and tan alligator shoes and a bag to match, completed the picture.

SHE looked up from consulting her little wrist watch and met his eyes. She blushed a tiny bit, and Howard suddenly realized that he must have been staring at her for at least five minutes. He felt a shamed flush spreading over his cheeks and dropped his eyes to the magazine again. He couldn't keep them there. He raised them—and met those of the girl. But hers turned away instantly and searched up and down the alley again. She glanced at her wrist watch and gave an impatient shrug. Howard's eyes also searched the alley expectantly, then he consulted his watch.

For fifteen minutes more something like a repetition of this business went on. The girl seemed to grow more and more anxious and impatient, and Howard himself about came to the conclusion that it was useless to wait longer. After all, an hour was long enough to wait for anybody. He decided to go.

He took out a cigarette, tapped it on the case and lighted it, noting as he did so that the girl had taken out her vanity case and was powdering her nose.

As Howard got up and put on his hat the vanity case dropped from the girl's hands and fell to the floor. Her box of powder rolled to Howard's feet, her lip stick and other paraphernalia were scattered.

He gathered them quickly, captured the empty case, and handed them back to the girl. "Oh, thank you, ever so much," she cried, in a voice that, while vibrant and young, had a delicious sort of coo in it, "silly of me to drop it, but I guess I'm a little nervous and upset."

"I don't want to be impertinent and all that sort of thing," said Howard, "but—if I could be of any assistance."

The girl looked him up and down, a cool, steady, appraising scrutiny.

"Why, I don't know," she said, "perhaps you could, Mr.—"

"Westcott," supplied Howard. "Howard Westcott, late of Madison, Wisconsin, now of New York, New York. Address at present the Gotham Club."

"Thank you, Mr. Westcott. I'm Daphne Wayne, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. But I've been at school in New York for a year. Fact is, I'm in school now, but I stole away for the evening as a lark. I was to meet a boy here, Don Parker, and we were going out to dinner and the theater. Then he was to get me back by eleven-thirty.

"But I don't know what has become of him—he's more than an hour late, and I wouldn't know where to telephone him. I certainly don't want to stay in here all evening, waiting."

"Couldn't you take a taxi and go back to the school?"

The girl laughed rather ruefully. "Not very well," she said, "you see I'd fixed up a perfectly beautiful story about spending the evening at the home of a girl friend, and if I come back too early it will spoil my story and I'll be in very bad. Besides—" she hesitated.

"Oh well, the truth is I've had a perfectly gorgeous time doing candy stores and tea-rooms and, of course, I thought Don would be here and he'd have money and so I—"

"And so you're broke," said Howard.

"That's easily remedied. If ten dollars would help, you might have your dinner and theater and taxi back at the zero hour—all by yourself. Only—"

"Only?" repeated the girl.

"Only strangely enough, I am also a disappointed person. I too was to meet somebody and dine and go to a show. And she has failed to appear. It may look suspicious, but—"

"Auspicious, you mean," laughed the girl. "I won't take your ten dollars, Mr. Westcott, but boldly and recklessly and without further introduction I'd love to dine with you and go to a play. If you'd care to. After all, there isn't much adventure in going to a party with a boy you know. I'm sure you'll be more interesting."

AS Howard Westcott and Daphne Wayne strolled into the grill room of the Hotel Waldoria, the diners smiled upon them admiringly, approving their youth, their appearance and their "class" as wholly in keeping with the general atmosphere of the *Waldoria*.

Howard ordered—and they talked. They talked of her school and of his college, of house parties in the Thousand Islands, of dances at country clubs, of motor tours east and west. They talked of Miami and Palm Beach, and Howard talked of Nice and Monte Carlo and Paris—during the war and since; and of Tuxedo and Bar Harbor and Newport with knowledge and authority.

"You *have* been about a bit, haven't you?" asked Miss Wayne. "When I've finished school I expect to travel a lot, too. Up to now I've never been out of the country."

"Well, it's all been rather cut and dried and conventional," said Howard. "I've gone to the places everybody goes in the way everybody goes. Even during the war I was only doing what a million or two other boys did, and the Riviera was a leave area, you know. You may not believe me, but meeting you to-night is the first romantic thing that ever happened in my ordered career."

"I'm the first girl you ever met—this way?" she smiled.

"Absolutely," was the prompt response, "and my last."

"Oh!" she gasped. "I don't think that's very nice. Never before in my young life have I spoken to a man I didn't know, and the first one I do speak to tell me he's disappointed."

Howard chuckled.

"As I was going on to say when I was so rudely interrupted," he continued, "you're such a complete success that I see no reason for risking disappointment in subsequent trials. So, unless you eliminate me from your future, my first shall be my last."

"Deftly said," Miss Wayne replied, "and I thank you. I was just thinking that we two ought to be very good friends."

"Everything points that way," he replied cheerily. "Let's dance."

There is much controversy of late as to whether or not jazz is an art. But art or not, it is an intricate and cunning craft, and nowhere is there an orchestra more skilled in the subtleties of syncopation than the *Waldoria's*. A postman, after a rush day during the Christmas season, might slump into his Morris chair and nurse his aching feet and calves with agonized relief; but if his wife happened to turn on the radio when the *Waldoria* orchestra was broadcasting, it's an eight to five bet that he would attempt to fox-trot with her whether he knew how or not.

Daphne and Howard were neither old nor weary, and they knew how fox-trots were done. Howard had been the best dancer in Madison and Daphne danced as well as Marilyn Miller and Joan Sawyer rolled in one.

They did not go to a show—they danced. They didn't eat very much—they danced. And if Howard held Daphne's hand a little closer as the evening grew later, and took his arm from about her waist a little more reluctantly after each dance it wasn't wholly his fault. Daphne wanted her hand held closer and was reluctant to have that arm removed.

AND then she happened to look at her wrist watch and gave a little shriek of dismay. It was eleven-thirty.

"Can't you stretch it a little?" pleaded Howard. "I'm having a wonderful time with a wonderful girl," he quoted.

"So am I," answered Daphne, "but Cinderella has to be back on the stroke of twelve. Put me in my taxi like a good boy, and send me home to school."

"But I want to see you again," said Howard, as he summoned the waiter, "I want to see you again very soon—and often."

"It can't be either too soon—or often," sighed Miss Wayne, "the rules at Miss Faraday's school are awfully strict."

Howard paid the bill and they left the dining room. As they reached the entrance of the hotel a taxi slipped up to the curb at the door-man's signal.

"Please," said Howard, while the door-man held the taxi door open, "when shall I see you again?"

"Let's call it an interlude in our lives and let it go at that," said Miss Wayne, and Howard didn't see the impishness of her smile.

"Not on your life," he cried. "I won't let this taxi go until you've promised to see me again."

Daphne Wayne climbed in and sat down. The door-man still held the door.

"Well," giggled Daphne, "inasmuch as I'm still broke, perhaps you'd better get in and see that I get home safely."

Howard leaped into the taxi and the door-man slammed the door, rather viciously.

"Drat these lovers," he grumbled to himself, "they always forget the poor workingman."

Howard wasn't going to take any chances on spoiling a perfect evening by being too impetuous. He would not, he told himself, obey that impulse to put his arm around Daphne. And he had no intention whatever of kissing her, however much he wanted to.

Daphne Wayne hoped that Howard wouldn't spoil a lovely evening by trying to grow familiar. She trusted that he was gentleman enough not to put his arm around her. And if he tried to kiss her she would not speak to him again. He did have a nice mouth and to be kissed by him probably wouldn't be any hardship, but she would hate to have her judgment of him spoiled by the attempt.

So they sat primly apart and said nothing for the first ten minutes of the ride to Miss Faraday's school. Then the taxi began to take a part in the proceedings.

The driver swerved sharply to avoid a truck that shot out of a side street, and the lurch threw Daphne against Howard, and his arms were around her, and he was kissing her. Also she was kissing him, which "wasn't the least what the lady meant"—or rather not what she had intended. Only the fact remains she was kissing him.

And Howard was murmuring strange things about being mad over her and her being his sweetheart and his darling and his loving her, and these things seemed to call for more kisses, many more kisses.

DAPHNE was dimly conscious deep down in her heart, that these kisses meant more to her than anything she had ever known, and that if there was really such a thing in the world as love, it had happened to her.

But suddenly she was free of Howard's arms, and he sat beside her, his face stern.

"Forgive me, Daphne," he said, "I—I shouldn't have done that, I didn't mean to—it just happened."

"But I—liked it," said Daphne. "Perhaps I shouldn't say so, but I did."

"But I had no right to do it," said Howard.

"You're not—m-married are you?" she asked, tremblingly.

"No—but—well, I shouldn't have kissed you."

"Why not?"

"Well, I can't tell you. But I shouldn't have."

"You said you loved me," wistfully murmured Daphne, "didn't you mean that? I—I loved hearing you say it."

"Oh, Daphne, you're making it awfully hard for me. I can't tell you now, but if you can get away Saturday and have lunch with me I'll try to make you understand. Can't you meet me somewhere and have lunch?"

"Well, I can't see why you can't tell me now what you might tell me then, but if you won't—yes, I'll have lunch with you Saturday. Maybe I'll have something to tell you, too."

"And now the taxi is almost there. You mustn't get out when the taxi stops, somebody at the school might happen to see you."

"Will you kiss me good-night?" Howard asked, humbly.

She kissed him good-night.

THERE are a half dozen ways in which this story might be continued:

(1) The man is poor and pretends to be rich.

(2) The girl is poor and pretends to be rich.

(3) The man is rich and pretends to be poor.

(4) The girl is rich and pretends to be poor.

(5) Both are poor and pretend to be rich.

(6) Both are rich and pretend to be poor.

This is one of those six stories—and the only surprise in store for the gentle reader is which one of the six this is.

I append two letters as evidence.

One was in an envelope addressed:

Miss Daphne Wayne,  
114 W. Blythe Street,  
New York

The contents follow:

My dear Daphne,

I shall be at Giloti's Saturday, but I doubt if you will. I'm a bluff and a hollow sham. I'm not the traveled young collegian I pretended to be—but a clerk in a Broadway furnishing store. All that stuff I pulled was due to assiduous reading of society pages and to travel books.

The only true thing I said was that I loved you. I do, I will always. The rest is silence unless you appear Saturday.

Howard.

P. S.—Howard Westcott is my real name.

Letter No. 2:

Mr. Howard Westcott  
The Gotham Club  
New York

Dear Howard,

I doubt if I'll see you at Giloti's Saturday, after you've read this. Because I'm not what I pretended. I'm not a young lady in finishing school, but a dress model at Stein's on 37th Street.

But I'll always love you whether you show up at Gilotti's or not.

Daphne Wayne.

P. S.—Oh yes, Daphne Wayne is my honest-to-goodness name.

They met at Giloti's on Saturday.

And the light in their eyes when they saw each other in the little lounge was good to see.

They shook hands, they opened their mouths and spoke.

And what they both said was:

"Did you get my letter?"

And what they both answered was:

"What letter?"

Which was natural enough, because if Miss Daphne Wayne did not go to Miss Faraday's school she wouldn't have received Howard's letter, and if Mr. Howard Westcott was not a member of the Gotham Club, he wouldn't have received Daphne's letter.

So verbally they had to tell what they had written, and it was rather a painful process, which Howard, who began it, stammered a good deal over, looking down at his plate. And when he had finished confessing that he didn't have any date with anybody at the *Waldoria*, and that he had been simply lounging there because he liked the atmosphere of wealth and fashion and had a yearning to be a young man about town, he looked up to find Daphne's eyes brimming with laughter.

**S**HE reached over and patted his hand. "Now, my turn," she said.

And she too admitted that she had simply been a chair warmer at the *Waldoria*, and that she was a dress model.

"And what's worse and more of it," she said, "I dropped that vanity case on purpose. You really did look awfully nice to me. But—was I honestly the

first girl you ever met—in that way?"

"No," said Howard, "but you were my best."

"How about you?"

Miss Wayne blushed.

"I—I've lunched with a couple of college boys, I guess," she confessed.

They laughed and that was that.

But they told each other again and again that the "I love you" part of their stories was true, and neither one of them doubted that for an instant.

At two o'clock Daphne said:

"Howard, will you take me home now? I have a class at three."

"A class? Where?"

"At Miss Faraday's, goose. And you needn't try to look surprised about it, for I know all about your telephoning up there to find out if I was really a student. Just as you know all about my telephoning to the Gotham Club to discover if you were really a member. And if you haven't my letter in your pocket this minute then I haven't yours in my bag. And I have, you see. Funny we should both try the same stunt, isn't it?"

"A taxi," said Howard, "is too public for what I want to say to you. I'll take you back in a hansom cab. And let's drive through the park."

"Let's," said Daphne Wayne. "I don't believe you could ever talk quite enough to suit me—especially on a certain subject."



### WATCH FOR THIS ONE!

*You'll be enchanted by Carleton Montanye's captivating romance—"Honey Minds Her Business"—a feature of the next issue.*

*You've never read a better love story!*



# The Heart of Fleurette

By Jane Hurrle



*Fleurette's cry was a prayer that came from the depths of her soul. The cloth that she held was Norman Bruce's scarlet coat!*

## AS THE STORY BEGAN

**F**LEURETTE JOURNAL, the Little Flower of the North Woods, is to be married to her lover, Norman Bruce, of the Mounted Police, but on the eve of her wedding, Mark Wolf, a villainous trapper, whose love she has repulsed, and whom she has branded with a red-hot poker, reveals

that she has aided Dan Marceau to escape the law. She considered him innocent, and pleads with Norman, but he says that it is his duty to arrest her, and that instead of being his wife, she is to be his prisoner. She flees, unseen by anyone except Wolf's little dumb stepson, but Norman finds her trail, and overtakes her. She threatens to kill him if he makes her surrender, and as he ad-

vances toward her, he is shot. But not by Fleurette's gun! She turns to find Mark Wolf in the doorway, revolver in hand. He tells her everyone will believe she is guilty of the murder. She escapes from him, and stumbles into a hut where Rose Tranor gives her food. Wolf has started looking for Fleurette, and he sets Rose's husband, Ned, on the girl's trail. In her excited escape, Fleurette travels in a circle, and she accidentally encounters Wolf. But he cannot harm her now—he has been struck snow-blind, and is calling for help. By disguising her voice, and telling him she is Jeanne Rabelle, a half-breed girl, she keeps him from recognizing her, and comes close enough to avenge the murder of her lover. She slowly aims her revolver at Wolf's heart!

**T**HE sound of the snow, crunching beneath Fleurette's feet sent fear into Wolf's heart, and he began to whimper: "You're not going away? Don't leave me! Can't you see I'm blind—helpless?"

Out of the timber forest came a long drawn howl, a plaintive wail that blanched Wolf's sun-scorched face.

"Girl—girl, don't you hear that? Where are you?" and he started groping for her with shaking hands.

But Fleurette remained silent. Outweighing that warning cry of the wolf, was the vow she had made in Lone Man's Pass, the vow that she would avenge Norry's death.

Again came the hungry wail of the wolf, and she covered her ears to shut out the harrowing sound.

"Help! Take me away from that!" he cried hoarsely.

With the sight of the helpless man before her and the cry of a stalking wolf in her ears, Fleurette fought hard to retain her grim purpose. She thought of Lone Man's Pass with its sorrow written there. She thought of the future, of which Wolf had robbed her. But in the face of all she could not leave a human being to such a fate.

Her face was white and set as she turned and asked quietly, "Which way shall we go?" For the moment she had forgotten her assumed accent.

"Where you live?" she hastily corrected herself.

But Wolf hadn't noticed, for he was too frantically concerned with his own safety, and he eagerly directed her.

"Turn left hand to setting sun—then go straight ahead, due north. Give me your hand!"

Fleurette shrank away from him. "No! You walk ahead. I mak' you go right way!"

And so a strange procession started, that of a hunted girl mercifully leading her hunter back to his home.

**A**S soon as Ned Tranor entered the cabin, Rose noticed the troubled expression on his face. There was a squareness about his jaw that was never to be seen unless something had gone wrong at the traps or on the trail.

But she did not force his confidence. Instead, she set an appetizing meal before him and waited.

But he did not unburden himself, and the lunch was consumed in silence.

This was no ordinary worry. Even the loss of a fox could not have made Ned ignore Rose this way, and yet she was reluctant to be curious. When she had cleared away the dishes, and he had not yet spoken, she could no longer endure the suspense.

"Ned, what is the matter?"

The man turned toward the fire.

"Oh, nothing for you to bother about, Rose."

"Now don't try to put me off. You can't fool me. The minute you came in, I knew something had gone wrong. Tell me what it is."

Ned brushed a few crumbs into his hand and tossed them in the fire.

"It's nothing you could help me with, so why worry you with it?"

Rose came up back of him and laid her hands on his shoulders. "Is Wolf putting on the screws again? Is he forcing you to do something you don't want to do?"

Ned turned slowly. "There's not much use in trying to keep things from you, is there? You seem able to read my mind," he answered with a weary smile.

"I thought that was it. Well, tell me about it, Ned."

The man reached into his pocket and pulled from it the photograph Wolf had given him.

"Rose, I've got the meanest job a man ever had!" and he held the picture toward her. "Wolf is sending me out to find that girl."

Rose slowly took the photograph from his hands.

"What's the matter? Do you know her?" Ned exclaimed.

"No," but Rose did not raise her eyes from the picture. "Who is she?"

"All I know is that her name is Fleurette Journal, but Wolf calls her 'Flower of the North.'"

"Flower of the North," murmured Rose. "What does Wolf want her for?"

"He wouldn't give me the particulars, so of course there is more to it than appears on the surface."

Rose's eyes gleamed. "Well, you can bet he means no good. That girl isn't the type to be around Wolf."

"Just what I think, and that is why I hate to hunt her down."

"Don't do it, Ned. It's not like you to track down a woman."

Ned shrugged his shoulders. "What can I do? When I told him I wouldn't he threatened to turn over those papers to the Winnipeg authorities."

"But you're working to square all that."

"Yes, but until the whole thing is settled, Wolf has me like a rat in a trap. If I don't hunt her, he'll send me down the river, and what will become of you?"

Rose didn't answer. Neither did she tell him that the girl of the picture had been there that very afternoon!

"Well, the sooner I get started on this hunt, the better," said Ned, starting toward the door.

"You'll take the team?"

"Yes. I'm going out to feed the dogs, and get them ready."

Rose came to his side. "Ned, suppose you don't find her? Surely Wolf can't blame you for that."

"I don't know whether he will or not. But I'll do my best to find her," and he stepped from the cabin.

For a moment Rose stood gazing at the photograph, troubled lines settling about her mouth as she stared at the

lovely face. It was in her power to aid in the capture of the girl, and thereby insure Ned's safety from prison by telling the direction she had taken. But Fleurette Journal had been such an appealingly childish looking girl, with her great dark eyes and pretty, trembling mouth. Nothing more than a baby, and so frightened and alone.

As she stood there, her own baby opened its eyes, and at the sight of its mother, gurgled its delight, and reached up tiny arms. No—no—no! She could not help in the capture of that girl! Ned would have to say that he hadn't seen her. She lifted her baby from its bed, and clasping it tightly, seated herself in a chair by the fire.

A sense of peace stole over her as she rocked the child, a little tune on her lips as she gazed through the window at Ned feeding his dogs.

His work did not take him long, and when he returned to the cabin, he began to get his things together.

"How long do you expect to be gone?" Rose asked.

"Haven't any idea. But I'll be back as soon as I can."

**Y**OU say there's no sign of my cabin yet?" Wolf half turned to the girl who was plodding wearily along behind him.

"I don't know. Maybe. Ees very dark. But I see black shadows ahead," Fleurette answered in her carefully disguised voice.

Words between the two had been few since they had met back there on the trail. Wolf had made several attempts to draw the girl into conversation but beyond the necessary words of guidance, her replies to his questions had been the monosyllabic type of the close-mouthed Indian.

"You say you see black shadows," Wolf rubbed his aching eyes trying to pierce the curtain that had fallen before them. "I guess that means you're seeing my shacks, though nobody ever called them black shadows before."

"But that is what I see M'sieur. Shadows like ghosts!"

"H'm. Like all the rest of your breed, aren't you? Superstitious."

"Perhaps, M'sieur," was all she would say.

They trudged on silently in the darkness of the night, wrapped in their own thoughts, and if Wolf's were venomous and bitter at the blow Fate had dealt him, Fleurette's counterbalanced them in deep thankfulness.

Her relief had been so great that she had been able to bear up in spite of her exhaustion. Several times they had stopped to rest, for Wolf, suffering from fatigue, insisted upon it.

"I'm in a terrible fix! Here I am with a pair of eyes that's no more good than a pair of glass ones. Ever been snow-blind?"

"No, M'sieur."

"Everything goes red. And it's like you have two balls of fire in your head." Fleurette pulled her hood lower, and sunk her chin deep into the collar of her coat, for the wind had risen and was sending flurries of snow into their frost-bitten faces.

"You know why I'm blind?" Wolf had stopped again to rest.

"M'sieur forget. You blind when I meet you back there on the trail."

"A girl is to blame. A vixen if there ever was one. Maybe you know her—Fleurette Journal?"

"I not know many people," she replied.

They started forward in the teeth of the wind, Wolf growling and whining over the pain of his eyes.

Gradually the shadows began to take definite shapes, and to her intense relief Fleurette saw that they were a group of cabins—Wolf's settlement!

A swirling mist of snow enveloped her, taking away the material things of earth and leaving her like a shadowy spirit of mercy.

She raised her eyes to the vault of diamond-studded blue.

"Dear God, I have tried to give thanks for Thy goodness. I have brought my enemy home."

**A** SOUND of barking dogs swept along on the icy wind, and Wolf cried with joy: "Why didn't you tell me we were here? Oh, I'm glad to get home!"

Fleurette gazed at the three buildings

that constituted his settlement. "Which belong to you?"

"The middle one," the man answered.

A light was burning inside, sending its rays through the windows in square patches upon the snow. Great shining icicles with the sharpened points of daggers made an icy fringe across the front of the cabin unbroken except at the dark entrance where they had been torn away.

Fearful as she was to enter the house, Fleurette knew that she must have food. Besides, the plans she had made to carry her away from Wolf's settlement included a dog team which she intended to borrow.

The door opened under the man's fumbling hand. Stumbling across the threshold, he motioned her to enter.

A fire was burning in the kitchen stove, and Fleurette, for a moment, bent over it, chafing the hands she dragged from stiffened mittens.

In the corner she saw a pair of moccasins slightly larger than her own. She knew they belonged to Pierre. They appeared so dry, so warm, that her feet ached the more in their damp gear, and tempted her to exchange her own footwear for the boy's. But that would not be a fair exchange, for the youth would be unable to wear hers, and the recollection of his little pinched face, his shrinking body as though he were always half frozen, kept her from her desire.

Wolf had dropped into a chair, seemingly caring about nothing in his relief to have escaped that icy trail, so Fleurette was undisturbed in her survey of the kitchen.

To her delight she saw that a meal was already upon the table. Pierre no doubt had expected Wolf to return at any moment, and had prepared food for him.

But she did not stop to eat, so eager was she to get away.

She made a small bundle of the bread and meat and then went back to the large room.

Wolf heard her steps.

"You been fixing something to eat, girl? I'm starved." He started to rise heavily from his chair.

"Your supper is all on the kitchen table," Fleurette answered, a sense of re-

lief running through her. "I bid you au revoir, M'sieur. I come this way again some day!" and her hands rested on the gun beneath her coat.

Her words roused Wolf, and he wheeled about blindly. "Here, come back! How can I get along alone? I need you," came the exasperated cry as her hand touched the latch.

"You need me?" Fleurette's lip curled. "You forget, M'sieur. I have things to do. I goin' be very busy."

"What business have you to do? I bet you have a sweetheart you want to get back to."

Fleurette started toward him, throbbing with anger, but tears suddenly welled up in her eyes and dampened the flame of them.

"N—no. I no got any one! Somebody take him away."

"Some girl, eh? Well I'm glad she took him from you. Now you've got no excuse to leave me. It's settled. You're staying."

"No, M'sieur!" Fleurette turned to leave. "*Bon soir!*" she flung at him, and opened the door triumphantly.

But the triumphant gleam faded from her eyes. The elation that had quickened her pulses turned to cold fear, for there upon the threshold stood a man. A man beneath whose open fur coat gleamed the buttons and the brilliant red of a uniform!

"GOOD evening, Mademoiselle!"

In the half-lighted doorway, the man could not see the apprehension that his appearance had roused in Fleurette. It was like a hand reaching out of the dark, winding its fingers about her throat, and stifling her voice.

Fortunately, Wolf broke the silence. "Who is it—what do you want?"

Though the man glanced beyond Fleurette to Wolf, his eyes came back to the girl as he spoke. "I am Sergeant Macley, and I am seeking information concerning Fleurette Journal."

"What—what you want her for?" Fleurette asked, fear dragging the words from her lips.

"Rather a bad charge, Mademoiselle. She has murdered one of our men. Sergeant Norman Bruce."

Wolf had dropped into a chair, and hunching himself low over the fire, called out in a disagreeable snarl, "You don't think she's here, do you?"

"No. I only stopped to ask if you knew anything concerning her. This part of the country, you know, hasn't such a good reputation, Wolf, and we have located more than one murderer around here," the policeman answered in a way that made Wolf change his tone to one of ingratiating smoothness.

"Yes, I know it. As soon as I heard about the murder, I sent my men out to look for her. You haven't seen her have you, Jeanne?"

Fleurette remained motionless beside the door, her hand still clutching the latch. "Mc no see stranger—all day, M'sieur."

The officer was plainly puzzled. "It's a strange thing that I can't find a trace of her or the man she killed."

"Not strange if you knew the girl," Wolf called from the room. "She's got it in her to do most anything and cover her tracks. She's clever."

Fleurette stood there, scarcely breathing for fear the policeman would realize her deception.

Had he known that Wolf was snow-blind, and had not seen the face of the girl who stood in the doorway, Macley's suspicions would have been instantly aroused, but as it was he merely shook his head in bewilderment.

Seeing that Fleurette wore coat and hood, and carried a bundle in one hand, he asked, "Are you going out?"

For a flash that was too brief to be noticed, she hesitated; then mumbled in her guttural tone, "No, I jus' come in."

Wolf turned toward the door.

"Sure, she just came in, and she's not going out again, are you, Jeanne?"

It was not necessary for Fleurette to answer for Macley turned on his heel.

"Well I must be on my way."

"Are you the only policeman on the job?" Wolf asked slyly from the shadows of the room.

"I should say not. There are men on all the trails. She hasn't a chance to get away. But I am determined to find her myself."

"So am I—so am I," Wolf's whisper

reached Fleurette's ears but not the officer's, for he had turned away from the cabin.

She stood swaying in the doorway. Which way could she turn? If she fled from Wolf, she would run into the arms of the law. If she fled from the law, she would run into the arms of Wolf's half-breeds. And a moment before she had thought freedom stretched before her!

"Girl—Jeanne, where are you?" Wolf called, his hands outstretched before him.

**I**T was not the man's voice that made her foot pause as it started across the threshold, but a thought so daring that it rooted her to the spot. A thought that was like a glorious ray of light showing her the way out of her darkness. Here—in this very house—the home of the man who was searching for her, she would be safe! Safe as long as he remained blind. Safe from Wolf! Safe from the law!

Safe! Safe! Safe! It rang through her brain, bringing such relief that she swayed weakly against the table. As though fearful that he might withdraw his invitation, she spoke quickly:

"All right, M'sieur, I stay!"

"Now you're talking. Not that I didn't know you'd stay. Just wanted to be coaxed some, eh?"

She ignored his remark, pulling off her coat and hood.

"Better fix up that fire, Jeanne. It's none too warm in here."

As Fleurette bent at her task, Wolf sank into a chair, and shaded his eyes with his hand.

"The last woman who stirred up a fire for me, made a bad job of it."

"She not know how?" Fleurette asked in her monotonous voice.

"H'm! She knew too well. When you get through poking at those logs, take the iron out of the fire, Jeanne!"

"Yes, M'sieur!" Fleurette stared at the man a long moment, then she gave her undivided attention to the blaze.

"And hurry up, girl! I've got to have my supper, and then I want my eyes doctored."

Fleurette shuddered at the ordeal before her.

"Pierre! Pierre!" Wolf twisted in his chair. "Where is that boy? Never around when he's wanted, and always in the way when he isn't. Pierre!"

A slight noise in the doorway announced the boy's entrance. He came, a slinking figure, creeping quietly into the room.

"That you, Pierre?" snapped the man. "After this, you move faster when I call. Now hurry and get the eye lotion. I'm snow-blind."

But the dumb boy did not move. He stood transfixed, staring at Fleurette.

"Pierre! Wait 'till I get my hands on you!" Wolf roared, for there was no movement toward the kitchen where the lotion was kept. He started to struggle to his feet, but Pierre roused himself, and darted from the room.

Fleurette's breath came quickly for she saw that the boy had recognized her; that her presence in a cabin was something that he could not understand, and she wondered if in some way he would reveal her identity to Wolf. Could she make him understand that his stepfather did not know who she was? And if she did, would he become her ally against the man, or would fear tie him to Wolf? Her security hung on a small thread, and she realized that she must immediately convey the truth of the situation to Pierre.

So when he came from the kitchen she placed her fingers to her lips, pointing with her right hand, first to her own eyes which she closed for an instant, and then to those of Wolf.

For a moment Pierre stood silent, as though he were translating those actions, and Fleurette was at a loss to know if he had understood the message. But she was not long left in doubt. Understanding dawned in the dark luminous eyes, for to one whose language had always been pantomime, the actions of others spoke as plainly as words. Timidly he raised his hand and pressed his fingers to his lips.

**W**OLF'S voice, like a discordant note, crashed through the room, demanding attention for his eyes, and threatening Pierre if he did not hurry. But when the boy approached and at-

tempted to put the bottle in Wolf's hands, the man thrust it back.

"Don't do that! Give it to—*to Jeanne!*"

Fleurette took the bottle from Pierre's hands, and gazed at the label. She had never attended a case of snow-blindness, and knew less about it than the boy, but with the directions to guide her, and Pierre eager to be of assistance she undertook the task.

At first Wolf winced as the medicine touched the eyeballs, but little by little he relaxed in his chair and gave himself up to the soothing ministrations of the girl. Pierre stood by, alert and ready to be of assistance, but his gaze was not upon the man. He continued to stare at Fleurette in a sort of bewildered amazement that anything so beautiful could have come to Wolf's home.

In his temporary relief, Wolf's temper improved.

"Jeanne, girl, you're a good nurse!"

Again she bent over him. This time with bandages that Pierre had made from an old towel, but when Wolf felt the cloth go over his eyes, he pulled away, and tore them off.

"You think I'm going to go around like an invalid? Letting my breeds have the laugh on me? Not much. Any way my eyes feel too hot to have them smothered in rags."

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the door swung open, and the face of a half-breed framed itself in the doorway.

Though he stared at Fleurette in surprise, there was no recognition nor suspicion in his eyes.

"I come over to tell you, dat Joe start beeg fight wid Jules. Already dey smash chairs. Bad fight!"

"I sent both those men out after Fleurette Journal," Wolf growled.

"Sure, but dey no can find."

"Well, remember that some of you hit the trail every day in search of her. Now get out. And tell those men that if they don't stop fighting, I'll come over and make them stop!"

As the door closed upon the breed, Wolf started to get to his feet.

"Pierre, we're ready to eat now. Set our supper in here."

HAVING made her decision to remain under Wolf's roof, Fleurette knew she must not arouse suspicion in any way, and though she would by far have preferred to go without food rather than to sit at the same table with him, she ate her meal under the blinking eyes of the man she feared.

Wolf was too hungry to pay much attention to anything except his supper but occasionally while fumbling for sugar or bread, he would speak.

"Warm here, isn't it, Jeanne?" he asked.

"Yes, M'sieur," she answered briefly. As the meal progressed, Fleurette began for the first time to take note of the cabin she was forced to make her home. Doors were placed in either wall, entrances to the wings she had noted from the outside. One she knew opened into the kitchen, the other she judged must be the entry to Pierre's room, or Wolf's. Her eyes took in the furnishings. Near the fireplace that was set in the wall at the far end of the room, was a built-in bed over which was spread bear skins. Scattered here and there over the rough floor were animal skins, while about the walls hung marabou, wolf and fox. Keen-edged hunting knives pierced the rough walls as though thrown there in a fit of temper. A steel trap evidently used for snaring small animals, was thrown in a corner. How well suited was the room to the man who occupied it!

Reaction was setting in, drowsiness was making her eyes heavy in the warmth of the fire. But the grating sound of Wolf's chair being pushed back, roused her.

"Now, Jeanne, you can draw your chair up to the fire and talk to me," he said in his matter of fact way.

"Please, M'sieur," she protested. "I am tired. I like to go to sleep."

Wolf's brows lowered.

"You half-breeds, always complaining, aren't you? Well go on to bed!"

Fleurette looked at him, then glanced at the bed, but before she spoke, a hand slipped into hers, and she turned to find Pierre at her side.

He led her across the room to the door that, so far, had remained closed. Cold air struck her as it swung open under his

fingers, but she did not care that the room was unheated.

In the flame of the candle that Pierre lighted, she saw that the room contained a little cot.

She turned to examine the door, for unless it could be fastened from the inside, she would not dare to sleep. A heavy bar of wood with notches at either side of the door to slip it through insured perfect safety the moment it was shot in place.

"You are good to me, Pierre." She thanked him with a smile, and then leaning close, whispered, "Remember, Wolf

WOLF seemed in no hurry to go to bed. When Pierre came from the girl's room, he asked the boy to find his tobacco, then a match.

The child's last duties at night were



*Fleurette passed the candle back and forth before Wolf's unblinking eyes. There was not the slightest flicker of recognition.*

must never know who I am!"

The boy shook his head. The expression of his dark luminous eyes amounted to a sacred vow.

Fleurette hastily slid the bolt. In all her life, she had never been so exhausted. Bones, muscles, nerves and brain were worn by the fight she had been through. A fight that was not ended but **just** begun.

always a series of tasks for Wolf's own personal wants, and he had become so accustomed to them that he went about them automatically. So as usual he helped the clumsy figure out of its heavy outer clothing, and brought a soft though dirty fur-lined robe. When he had, with difficulty, put the man's arms into the sleeves and pulled it about the broad chest, he bent to undo the mocassins and



replace them with slippers which he warmed at the fire.

This done, he started to move away, but Wolf's hand caught him.

"Now, Pierre, I'm going to give you some orders. While I'm blind, you must keep a look-out on the traps. You're young and haven't much sense, but you know that if you don't do as I say, I'll beat the life out of you. And remember, when you tend to the traps, you haven't much time to hang around the house. I want—"

Fleurette's voice at that moment interrupted his words. His hand clutched the boy's shoulder, and he strained his ears to catch what the girl was saying, but all that he could get was a soft jumble of unintelligible words. Curiosity was aroused.

"What's she doing, Pierre? Go see what she's doing," he whispered cunningly. "Hurry, do you hear?"

The boy unwillingly crept from the cabin. Outside, he plodded through the heavy snow to a tiny window that faced the frozen landscape, and standing as close as the icicles would permit, he looked in upon the girl who was kneeling beside the cot; praying for protection from harm.

His large brown eyes kindled with a light of adoration as they dwelt upon her, and not until she had completed her prayer with the sign of the cross, did the youth steal back to Wolf's side.

"Well, what's she doing?" again came the man's eager inquiry. But as silence met his question, his rascally temper burst forth, and he gripped the boy's arm in his strong grasp. "What's the matter? Are you getting so dumb that you don't know anything? I said, what's she doing?"

Pierre looked at the dark face with its unseeing eyes for an instant, then his hand reached up and he made the sign of a cross on Wolf's forehead.

"H'm, praying," he mumbled. "Well, don't you put a prayer on me!" and he shoved the boy aside with a hand that was not quite steady.

"Tell me, Pierre," he said slyly, when he was once more seated in his chair by the fire. "What does Jeanne Rabelle look like?"

A startled expression crossed the boy's face.

"Is she pretty?" the man suggested as the dumb boy gazed at him silently.

The smile on Wolf's cruel face grew pronounced. "You don't have to tell me. I know that she is!"

**F**LEURETTE awoke to the sound of Wolf's ugly voice. It crept through the cracks of the door as if determined that she should not forget for one minute the sinister shadows that hung over her.

With the law outside searching the trails, and Wolf's half-breeds scattered around the outskirts of the settlement hoping to trap her, she must stay secluded in the cabin.

Though sleep had greatly refreshed her, Fleurette was still stiff and sore.

The water in the pitcher was crusted with ice, but she bathed her flushed face in the frozen water and felt refreshed.

There were heavy footsteps at her door.

"Aren't you awake yet, girl?" It was Wolf's voice. "Better hurry. I want my eyes fixed up again."

Upon entering the room, Fleurette found him standing expectantly near the table.

"I am ready, M'sieur," she said quietly.

"Wait 'til after we eat. I'm hungry." And then in an effort at a little pleasantry, he asked, "Sleep good, Jeanne?"

"Yes, M'sieur," she answered as Pierre came from the kitchen with a heaping plate of hot cakes. Her eyes met those of the boy in silent greeting.

"Like to be taking that trail again to-day, Jeanne?" Wolf continued.

"No, M'sieur."

A few minutes elapsed in silence while Pierre prepared his stepfather's meal, and saw that his selfish wants were satisfied.

"I'm glad you're here, Jeanne," said Wolf. "My eyes hurt terribly all night. Did you hear me stirring around?"

"No, M'sieur."

"Pierre isn't much of a cook though I've tried to teach him. Still I always say a woman is a better cook than a man. You can cook, can't you, Jeanne?"

"Yes, M'sieur," again came the mono-

syllabic reply, and Wolf looked toward her with his blind eyes, a sullen expression settling on his features. He wanted to talk, but a one-sided conversation was not to his liking.

**W**HEN another cake had gone the way of the first two, he said, "Now that you're here, you can give us some real nice meals, like you cook at your own home down the river."

Each cake increased the man's loquaciousness. "Half-breeds aren't much on looks as a rule, but they can cook. Are you pretty, Jeanne?"

Fleurette and Pierre exchanged glances, then she answered softly, "No, M'sieur."

"Ugly like most of them, eh? Take that gang of mine. You couldn't find a worse bunch of lookers. And oh, how they can fight! But I guess they won't be doing much of that for awhile. Won't have time while they're searching for Fleurette Journal. Do you think they'll find her on the trail, Jeanne?"

Fleurette bit her lip, then a brave smile brightened her face.

"No, M'sieur!"

Wolf's fist came down on the table with a bang that spilled the coffee from the cups. "Say girl, can't you say anything but yes and no?" he roared.

A cold gleam pierced Fleurette's eyes.

"Yes, M'sieur." She answered so simply that Wolf hesitated in wrapping the next cake about his fork.

"You're about as satisfying to talk to as that dumb boy!" he flung at her, and then slumped into silence.

Fleurette was glad when the meal was over, and yet more relieved when she had finished dressing Wolf's eyes. They were in a bad condition. Unfamiliar as she was with snow-blindness, her own intuition told her that it would be many a day before the man could see.

"Mind now, Jeanne, I don't want you running away while I'm outside. If you do, I'll send Pierre and one of the breeds to bring you back," he warned her.

"I stay, M'sieur!"

He laid his flat hand upon Pierre's shoulder.

"I'm ready. Now be careful how you move. If I stumble over anything you'll get a whipping!"

**F**LEURETTE wondered as Wolf felt his way across the room if his errand to the half-breeds' lodgings was to select men to continue the search for her. She breathed easier when the door closed upon his bulky figure, and going to the window, she watched Pierre leading him slowly across the space that separated the two cabins.

For an hour or more she washed dishes, made the beds and straightened the rooms; sweeping up tobacco that Wolf had spilled on the floor, and hanging up various articles of wearing apparel that he had slung about in profusion.

And while she worked, tragic memories with their unanswered questions haunted her. What had Wolf done with the body of her loved one? Had he buried Norry close to the cabin? But no! She believed that the man was too much of a coward to make a grave so near his house that it would be a constant reminder of his crime. Would it be possible to question him, try to learn the facts without drawing suspicion to herself?

She was still deep in thought when Wolf returned to the house.

"Jeanne—Jeanne!" he called quickly.

"Yes, M'sieur."

A breath of relief came from the man's lips. "Well, if I didn't think for a minute you were gone!"

"You not need fear, M'sieur. I goin' stay 'til dos' eyes of yours can see," she answered meaningly, and reached for Pierre's hand. But as the two of them started towards the kitchen, Wolf stopped them.

"Here, don't go sneaking off, Jeanne. I'm better to talk to than that dumb kid. Anyway, Pierre, you have to go out to the traps. Don't let me hear you around this house 'til night. Now get out!"

**A**FTER the door closed upon Pierre, Wolf managed to locate his favorite chair that was placed in front of the fire, and sank into it with a leadenness that meant his staying there for the day.

"Jeanne, girl," he called, "Come here. I want to talk to you."

"It too warm by fire," Fleurette re-

plied, staying near the door of her own room.

"Well stay where you are then," he growled.

Presently a smile distorted his lips. "I've been talking to my men, Jeanne. I've sent five of 'em to look for Fleurette Journal to-day!" He chuckled. "Unless she's lots smarter than I am, she'll be caught by night."

Fleurette gave a start. The face that was turned toward her, carried the shadows of every sin Wolf had committed in his life. His lips were again moving but it was only with difficulty that she could concentrate upon what he was saying.

"The Red Coats think they'll find her, but they haven't a chance against me and my men. No more chance than they have to find the man she killed."

Fleurette stared at him intently. Now was the time to find out something about Norry's burial place.

"Why dos' Red Coats not find him?"

"'Cause they can't." Wolf said it with a gloating tone in his voice.

"Why can't dey? Dos' police, dey find everything, M'sieur."

"Not him, they won't."

Fleurette studied the man a moment, then asked softly,

"Dat girl, Fleurette, she bury him?"

Wolf hesitated as though weighing his words.

"H'm. Yes—yes. Sure she buried him. You don't think she'd leave any tracks around that'd convict her. You can bet she buried him, and buried him deep."

Fleurette's eyes narrowed. The man was speaking for himself. He had buried Norry's body where there would not be the slightest chance of its being discovered.

It was all plain now. She remembered how he had sent Pierre into the kitchen to prepare coffee. After she had escaped, there was no one to see what he would do. So it had been easy to drive the sled with its silent burden into a lonely spot, and dig a hole beneath the snow and ice. He had said, "You can bet she buried him deep." He—he—had buried her Norry deep in the frozen ground!

DAYS passed. Days of heartache, dread, longing and monotony for Fleurette.

She found Wolf an exacting patient who invented all sorts of excuses to keep her by his side.

On the few occasions that Pierre was in the cabin, she turned to him for a moment's respite from the vigilant unseeing eyes, but if she so much as addressed a word to the boy, Wolf would send him from the house.

A suspicion began to dawn upon Fleurette that for some reason, the man was determined that no conversation, one-sided though it must be, should pass between her and Pierre, and it puzzled her.

Even had Wolf known she was Fleurette Journal, it would have caused her to ponder, but with her identity a secret, what reason could he have for keeping them apart?

But with all Wolf's success, there was bound to come a time when they would find a few minutes free of the presence of the man they both feared.

It came when, with the assistance of Pierre, Wolf stumbled out to the bunk house to settle a quarrel with the half-breeds.

Leaving him there, the boy hurried back to the house.

"What's the matter, Pierre?" Fleurette asked, seeing the agitation in his dark eyes.

Unable to speak, he ran to the window and pointed out. Returned to her side, caught her hand and hurried her to the window. Again he pointed out to the white landscape. When he saw that she could not understand, he grew almost frantic in his efforts to explain himself.

Fleurette stared at the two cabins; the small one, dark and silent, with the appearance of never having been inhabited; the larger one, at the door of which Wolf stood, talking to the half-breeds.

"Yes, Pierre, I see Wolf, but what you want to tell me?"

But as Fleurette spoke, the man began to call loudly for Pierre, and the boy, his face white with fear, darted from the cabin, leaving Fleurette's question unanswered.

She watched him run like a fleet

frightened deer to his step-father, his small feet scarcely making an imprint in the snow.

A few moments later, the door opened and Wolf stumbled in, dismissing Pierre with a harsh blow.

"You should be ashamed to treat the boy like that!" said Fleurette sharply.

**I**NSTANTLY she realized that she had spoken in perfect English, and not at all like a half-breed. Had Wolf noticed? He was staring at her with his dull, sightless eyes as he took his pipe, and fumbled for a match. Evidently he was thinking of other things, and had not noticed, for a grin stretched the heavy mouth.

"I'll make a bargain with you, Jeanne."

"A bargain? What you mean?"

"If you'll be kind to me, I'll be kind to Pierre."

Fleurette did not answer, but stared at him intently.

"Well, what you say?" he insisted.

Fleurette's eyes narrowed. "Jeanne Rabelle—she kind to everyone."

"Then you'll stay here and keep house for us?"

"Perhaps, M'sieur—perhaps," she answered.

The blind man made no rejoinder to Fleurette's reply, but there was a baffling expression on his face as the match flared into a tiny flame. He touched it to his pipe, and then his fingers closed over it, slowly and deliberately!

The first time she had seen that action had been the night she had burned Wolf, and she had seen it so many times since then that she could no longer endure it without protest.

"Why you do that? Some time you get burn!"

"I've already been burned," he answered slowly, "—and the girl that did it. I'll crush some day—just like that!"

An icy hand closed over the girl's heart. Did he suspect? But no, he couldn't. The very fact that she had remained safe, here in his cabin, was proof that he believed her to be Jeanne Rabelle, who had never existed except in her own brain. She tried to shake off her foolish fears, in fact she was angry at herself for allowing every little happen-

ing to throw her into a state of panic. Was this man to make a coward of her as he had done of the little Pierre?

Toward evening the cabin became chilly, for Pierre, due to Wolf's brutal dismissal, had been afraid to return even to renew the fires. It offered an excuse to Wolf to bring the girl from her room where she had gone as soon as she treated his eyes.

"Jeanne—girl," he called, "come out here, and fix these fires. I'm freezing!"

She had been standing at her little window, looking out over the frozen landscape, thinking of Pierre; wondering what the boy had endeavored to tell her.

"I can't see what you want to stay in that cold room for, all by yourself!" Wolf growled as he heard her approaching over the skins that partly muffled her steps.

"I stay there, M'sieur, 'cause you not my kind."

The man burst into laughter. "So, you're lonesome for your own kind, eh? S'pose you'd like me to invite the half-breeds in to meet you."

Fleurette's eyes grew round with horror, her lips formed an exclamation of terror, and her hands reached forward imploringly, but she drew them back quickly stifling the words that had all but been spoken, and hurried into the kitchen for logs for the fire.

They were kept in a large box almost as deep as it was long, making it impossible to select wood except by the sense of touch, for without a light no eyes could penetrate the darkness of it.

Unusually cold weather had reduced the supply to about a quarter of its capacity, and she found that only by standing on tip-toe could she reach any of the logs. Her fingers traveled from one heavy piece of timber to another in an effort to find one of medium size, and when an end of the box had been investigated as far as her arm would reach, she went to the other and repeated the performance. Here she found, not logs, but a stack of kindling, and as the kitchen fire also needed replenishing, she began to fill the bucket that stood by the bin.

Suddenly her fingers touched something that was not fire wood, something that was not hard and rough to the

fingers, but soft and pliable. Cloth. A woolen rag perhaps, she thought, but *why* in the wood box? A woolen rag with buttons on it. Deeper her fingers dug into the mass of wood that held it like a weight, and slowly and with difficulty she pulled it from beneath the kindling. Dragged it from the black depths in to the light of the kitchen. As she did so, a look of bewilderment swept her face, bewilderment that in turn gave way to bitter anguish. Her lips grew white, and a cry that was a prayer came from the depths of her soul,

"Norry!"

The cloth that she held was Norman Bruce's coat!

**F**LEURETTE stared at the jacket like one swaying on the brink of insanity, but held back by the reasoning of her brain. Wolf had stripped the coat from his victim, and hidden it in the box in order to conceal his crime!

She clasped the coat in her arms, her hands traveling over the cloth in a rush of tenderness that was fierce in its intensity. Memories, dear, sweet and precious surged over her. Memories of the hours, the days when Norry had filled her life, and her fingers lovingly touched the brass buttons that glistened beneath the tears that fell upon them. Slowly her quivering lips murmured the words Norry had taught her that day he had asked to be his wife.

"Richman — poorman — beggarman — thief, Doctor — lawyer — mounted police!"

There was a long pause, and her eyes that had been dull with anguish, began to gleam as though a smouldering flame had suddenly been fanned into a seething conflagration.

She walked back and forth in the small space, now clasping the coat tight to her heart, then holding it from her as though it were not an inanimate thing but the man who had worn it. She stopped before the window with its bars of ice, wondering if in all the great North there was a sorrow such as hers. Out there, perhaps not so far away, the law was searching for the murderer of the man she loved, searching for her, while she knowing the truth, must remain silent behind

the bars of ice with his red coat in her arms.

Throwing herself in a chair, she gave way to her tears until finally exhausted, she dropped into a soundless sleep, the red jacket clasped to her breast.

At supper time Fleurette took up her burden again, after bestowing a final caress upon the coat that was the only memento of her love. Pierre came in and crouched before the fire, thawing his half-frozen body. She started to speak but his hands flew to his lips in caution for Wolf was sitting in his usual place. Poor boy! He had taken advantage of the man's blindness, and crept to the fire.

She wanted to ask him about the coat she had found, and yet reason told her that he would know nothing concerning it, for dumb though he was, Wolf would never share such a secret as that with him.

While the boy's eyes adoringly followed her about the room as she set the table, Wolf could only follow her progress by the sound of her mocassin clad feet, but his ears were alert substitutes, and once or twice as she passed him, his clutching hands stole forward, seeking the girl who seemed so close.

**P**ERHAPS Fleurette would have succeeded in escaping him altogether had she not stooped to pick up a wolf skin that had fallen to the floor. As she started to replace it on the wall where it usually hung, his hand caught her arm. Before she knew what had happened she was in Wolf's arms!

Fleurette was so taken by surprise that she was stunned and for an instant stood unresisting, just staring at the dark, sinister face.

But not so Pierre. Horror blanched his lips, and leaping to his feet, he slid from the room without a sound and shot across the snow as swift as an arrow to the small dark windowless cabin.

He worked hard, bruising the flesh on his hands in an effort to swing loose the bar that held the door in place. Every bit of strength in his body seemed to flow into his slender fingers, giving them the power to do what he was determined to do. When the door swung open, he

darted into the little shack to perform his secret mission.

Meanwhile Fleurette threw off the lethargy that had enveloped her, but in spite of the fury with which she fought, Wolf's arms clung about her. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. The man's arms slackened their hold, and Fleurette, making the most of her advantage, tore herself loose and ran to the door. But as her hand grasped the latch, she hesitated, afraid that some new enemy might be waiting outside. Wolf growled angrily, "Who is it?"

"A missionary," came the voice from the other side of the door. "On my way to Father Breton's."

"Come in! Glad to have you!" Wolf called.

"As soon as I tie my dogs," the voice replied in answer to Wolf's gracious welcome.

Fleurette's eyes narrowed. That smooth ingratiating tone of Wolf's she knew was a mask; a mask for some hidden motive, and she looked at the man trying to read what lay behind those blind staring eyes. He was rubbing his hands, his gaze directed apparently at her.

"Look here. I'm generous," he whispered. "You may be pretty or ugly, Jeanne, but what's the difference to a blind man? I'll marry you as soon as the missionary comes in!"

**F**LEURETTE gasped. Wolf asking her to marry him? Wolf asking the girl, Jeanne Rabelle, to marry him! She had a wild impulse to laugh out loud.

"But M'sieur, you love Fleurette Journal," she mocked.

"Love? Didn't I tell you I hate her? That I'm going to have my revenge some day?"

"Careful, M'sieur! Maybe she also seek revenge!"

"What chance has she got to get me? My men are after her, and some day I'll find her. Blind or not—I'll know her!"

Again the icy hand of fear clutched at her throat as she stared at the unrevealing mask of his face.

"M'sieur,—I—"

 Her words were

cut short, for the door opened and in stepped the missionary.

He was a man of small stature, and though his years probably did not number more than fifty, he had the appearance of an old man.

As he came forward into the room, he greeted Wolf in the cordial way he greeted all strangers.

"Good evening, my friends. It is a very cold night, and if you'll allow me, I should like to warm myself a little before I go farther."

"Sure. Draw up to the fire," Wolf responded, sliding into a chair that was out of range of the light from the fire and the candle that burned on the table.

"Jeanne, get the missionary a hot drink."

"Thank you," the priest said with a benevolent smile. "I would like something warm if it's not too much trouble."

"It is no trouble, Father," Fleurette answered, and immediately set about preparing coffee.

"How much sugar, Father?" she asked meeting the kindly glance of the priest.

"How much sugar?" the missionary repeated her question, as though his thoughts were elsewhere. "Just one spoonful."

"Where do you come from?" came Wolf's abrupt voice from the shadows.

"From far away. I am a stranger in this part of the country."

"Then I don't s'pose you know Fleurette Journal or have seen her on your way?"

Fleurette shot a quick glance into the shadows.

**T**HE priest took his attention from the coffee that was being made.

"Fleurette Journal—is that the girl they call 'Flower of the North'?"

"That's the one. Have you been hearing things?"

"Yes, terrible things," and the missionary gravely shook his head. "Every one whom I've seen to-day, has stopped me to ask if I know her. You've heard of the murder? Of the search that is being made to find her?"

"Yes." There was a sinister note in Wolf's voice. "And I've sent some of my men out on the hunt—trying to help the police to catch the girl."

Fleurette bent her head low, pouring the steaming liquid into the cup and stirred it vigorously.

The priest rubbed one cold hand over the others. "That reminds me. You're likely to have a visitor or two. I stayed last night in a trap line cabin. There was a mounted policeman there. Let me see—what was his name?"

"Macley?" suggested Wolf from the darkness.

Fleurette's fingers hesitated over the drink, and her gaze was raised anxiously to the missionary. But he did not notice.

"Yes. Macley. That was his name. He told me that he expected to come this way to-day. That he would probably spend the night at your cabin, so you may see him any minute."

Fleurette's fingers gripped the cup. Why was he coming? Had suspicion been directed toward her? Had Macley begun to doubt that the girl he had seen at Wolf's cabin was what she pretended to be; a half-breed?

The thought stunned her. She had felt so secure from suspicion here in Wolf's house.

Well, suppose he did come, she argued, trying to bolster up her courage. She would bring out Norry's coat. Show it to the officer and tell the truth of the crime. And Wolf would answer for the murder! But a feeling of doubt assailed her. Would that coat be sufficient evidence to convict him? No one had seen her bring it from its hiding place in the wood box.

With her thoughts busily brooding over her predicament, she handed the cup to the priest, and then stood in the glow of the fire's embers.

"You say your name is Wolf?" the missionary asked the man who sat in the shadows.

"Yes. And this girl is Jeanne Rabelle. She's going to marry me."

Fleurette's shoulders drooped at the sound of that name. Jeanne Rabelle! That was another link in the chain of circumstantial evidence against her! The truth of her deception would sound weak. It was only natural that the police would think she had changed her name to escape the penalty for murder! Everything pointed to her guilt.

Automatically she stooped and took the cup from the priest, for he had finished with it, and was asking Wolf for a match. She stepped back as Wolf leaned forward into the light, his groping hand seeking that of the priest.

The missionary gave his full attention to the trapper.

"What is wrong, my friend? Are you ill?" he asked, solicitously.

"A case of snow-blindness," Wolf answered, and dropped the match into the priest's hand.

"I'm sorry to hear that. Have you done anything for it?"

"Oh yes. Jeanne, here, has been treating them. They don't hurt as much as they did."

Fleurette's eyes watched the missionary as he rose from the chair. "Let me see your eyes," he said. "I know something about snow-blindness."

**U**NDER the priest's guidance, Wolf stumbled over to a chair near the table.

"The Little Flower" followed every action of the priest as he examined the dull staring eyes.

"When did this attack come on?" he asked, seriously.

Wolf did not answer immediately, and his big head pivoted around as though trying to sense the location of some one in the room.

"I know well enough when it came on," he said. "It was the day the news got out about Fleurette Journal killing Norman Bruce."

The missionary bent over Wolf in concern, turning back one swollen lid and then the other. Finally his hands fell away.

"Well, what do you think, Father?"

The priest shook his head gravely.

"It's a bad case. But let me see—I have some medicine that may soothe the pain."

Fleurette gripped the edge of the table. Her lips, tense and white, closed upon her unuttered words as the door opened and Sergeant Macley stepped inside the room!

The policeman greeted her in a non-committal way that brought a lifeless response, but whether he noticed it she

could not guess, for he turned immediately to Wolf.

"Oh, I see that Father La Grange is examining your eyes. Don't let me interrupt. My business can wait." Macey's words stopped the blood in Fleurette's heart, for to her they had but one meaning.

**W**OLF had turned his head in the direction of the man's voice. He shifted uneasily in his chair.

"We won't be long. In fact I think the priest is through looking at my eyes. What I want to know is, how long's it going to be 'til I get back my sight? You know I'm figuring on getting married."

A shadow crossed the missionary's face, and he turned aside.

"Look here," Wolf snarled. "I'm no coward. I can stand being told the truth."

Father La Grange turned toward Sergeant Macey and Fleurette. Finally he addressed the hunched figure in the chair. "I fear your sight is completely gone, M'sieur!"

Wolf did not move. He sat quietly, not a muscle of his face indicating that the verdict had aroused any emotion within him. Macey gazed in sympathy at the helpless man, while the missionary endeavored to soften the verdict he had been compelled to pronounce. Fleurette

stood breathless, her eyes shifting from Sergeant Macey to Wolf, and back again to the officer.

On the point of scorning Wolf's proposal, the policeman's arrival had driven back her words, and left in place a great deadening sense of suspicion. She dare not refuse Wolf's offer!

It was Wolf himself who brought the necessity for quick decision. He asked, "Are you ready, Jeanne?"

She did not answer. Her eyes, dilated to great black burning pools, swept from the officer to Wolf. Slowly she started to move towards the trapper. Half way to his side, she paused and lifted the candle from the table. The eyes of Father La Grange and Sergeant Macey followed her in frank curiosity.

She did not stop beside Wolf's chair, but crept around until she stood directly in front of the man, allowing the light of the candle to play over his face.

Stealthily she leaned forward until the flame was directly before Wolf's face, then she passed it slowly back and forth before the unblinking eyes. But there was not so much as the flicker of an eyelash.

She turned to the policeman again. For a fleeting moment she tried to fathom his thoughts but it was futile, and facing Mark Wolf, she said with weary resignation:

"I am ready to marry you."

(TO BE CONCLUDED)

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*If you missed the first two installments of Jane Hurrel's powerful serial "The Heart of Fleurette," why not send for Cupid's Diary Nos. 112 and 113, and read it from the beginning?*

*It will be completed in the next issue, and we don't want you to miss the thrill that the amazing climax will bring you. Send for your copies now!*



# Smiles For Sale

By Leon Turner



*"There's no one but you in my young life, Bob," said Polly. "People always love those they've done favors for, and where would you be without me, I'd like to know!"*

**B**OB STAFFORD was lonely, there was no denying that. In the first place, he hadn't expected his fractured ankle to hold him down so long, or he wouldn't have been quite so complacent when Cornelia had announced that she was going back to New York.

Of course he really couldn't expect Cornelia to stay on for weeks in this quiet place to amuse an invalid, especially an invalid who wasn't seriously sick. And Cornelia was a very popular person with bridges, teas, and lunch-

cons to attend, now that their engagement had been formally announced.

With a grimace, Bob closed his eyelids over his usually merry blue eyes. Down in the ball-room the orchestra was rapturously pounding out, "Hello, Bluebird," for the third time that evening. Bob stirred restlessly in his reclining chair, pulled the steamer rug up to his chin, and closed his eyes, trying to shut out the irritating sound of the music.

When he opened them again, he blinked in bewilderment, for poised on

the veranda railing, like a glittering silver moth, was a girl, red-haired, piquant, alluring, her silver dress shimmering in the moonlight as she stirred restlessly.

"You looked exactly like a cross old ogre when I slipped in here, but now that your eyes are open, you're really quite handsome!" The girl's tone was bantering, gay.

Bob was half irritated. This little red-head had no business stealing out here to make fun of him. "I don't believe I know you," he remarked crossly.

She tossed back her red curls, and kicked her silver pumps together, laughing all the while, a delightful, rippling little laugh. "You sound just like an old-fashioned girl in a story book; 'I don't believe we've ever met before!' That doesn't matter, does it? I'm here, and I could tell you a secret!" she hinted darkly.

Bob felt like shaking her, but he managed a rather still smile. "Please tell it to me," he urged, with more politeness than enthusiasm in his tone.

"All right." She got down from the railing, and he saw that she was very small, slender and delicately formed. The silver-colored evening gown clung in diaphanous folds to her slim body; her red curls were flying about in reckless profusion. Altogether she looked like an impish fairy, a glittering bad fairy.

**S**HE spread her full skirts, making him a low, mocking curtsy. "Here's the secret! You're cross as a sword fish because you're in that chair for four or five weeks. You can't ride, or play golf for ages, and your fiancée has gone away and left you." She began to hum tantalizingly, "My sweetie went away, and she didn't say where!"

"She had so many engagements that she had to go," Bob defended Cornelia. "Of course! I know. Would you like to see her?"

Bob nodded. In an instant the girl's light, fairy-like grace vanished; she seemed to have grown inches taller. With head erect, and with a dignified, assured stride that Bob recognized as a faithful copy of Cornelia's own, she

walked back and forth across the veranda.

"And now her aunt, Mrs. De Puyster!" Again a startling transformation, a subtle change in bearing and expression, and before Bob's interested eyes strode a very good imitation of Mrs. De Puyster, lorgnette held before her, nose tilted haughtily.

Bob broke into a hearty laugh, which he checked at once. To laugh at a burlesque of Cornelia's aunt, and of Cornelia, it was unpardonable! But the little thing certainly had the gift of mimicry.

He tried to frown at her, but the corners of his mouth quirked suspiciously, and his eyes were merry. "Very well done! But if this ankle didn't hold me here, I'd get up and give you what you deserve, a good shaking!"

"Oh, no you wouldn't! If you weren't an invalid, I wouldn't even be trying to amuse you! So there! I left a perfectly good dance and partner to come up here, and see how you were getting on, Sir Gratitude!"

Bob pondered on this for a moment. He couldn't remember having seen this youngster in the hotel before, but then he and Cornelia had been very busy before his accident. "You're extremely kind," he granted her.

"Yes, yes, oh yes, indeed! My name is Polly Anna. Also I'm a boy scout, and you're my kindly deed for to-day!" She tossed this off with such infectious gayety that Bob smiled up at her, responding to her mood.

"Want to dance with me? The music is just beginning!" She cocked her head to one side, listening to the enticing strains of the dance music which came from the ball-room. She lifted her arms as if she had a partner, and then followed his imaginary guidance, swirling, turning, dipping, light as air, and graceful as a flower swaying in the breeze.

Stafford watched her, fascinated by her swirling gracefulness. He felt a sudden desire to lead her in the joyous, free dance that she was doing.

**H**E clapped heartily when the music stopped, and expostulated when she turned to the door. "Don't go!" he

begged. "I've been so very lonely!"

She stood framed in the doorway for a moment. "The doctor wants you in bed by eleven, and besides the night air gets damp! See you to-morrow! Good-night!" With a last sweeping curtsy, she was gone.

Bob glanced at his wrist watch. It was really eleven o'clock, as she had said. The time had gone faster than any evening since Cornelia had left. And the red-haired girl had said 'to-morrow.' Bob was suddenly anxious that she keep her word, for hours of lying still and thinking had become very tiresome. At times, too, his ankle had throbbled spitefully.

Soon after William came to wheel him in, and Bob fell to dreaming of a dancing red-haired sprite, who pelted him with fluffy white flowers, while Cornelia, calm, dignified, gathered them up patiently and crammed them into a large waste basket.

Bob was awakened early by an insistent tug on his arm. He opened his eyes to see William holding out the telephone receiver apologetically.

"I hated to wake you early, sir," William was murmuring. "I know very well that you like to kill the mornings sleeping, but the lady is so insistent, sir. She's called three times!"

Bob took the receiver, and managed a fairly cordial "Hello!"

"This is Polly Anna, again, trying to scatter sunshine!"

Bob grinned at the impish note in the girl's voice. "Do you call it scattering sunshine to rout a sick man out at eight o'clock?"

"Yes, indeed! I have something for him to do."

Bob's curiosity was aroused. It had been a long, wearisome time since he had done anything for anyone. "Yes?" he asked with interest.

"I want you to make a choice for me. Get your breakfast over, and then send William down to the mezzanine." The receiver clicked in a business-like way.

**B**OB hurried through his breakfast, usually a matter of long ceremony, and with his curiosity thoroughly

aroused, despatched William on his errand. In a few minutes the latter was back, his arms piled high with hat boxes, behind which his face was red and scandalized.

"She said to bring these up here, sir," William was so angry that he almost stuttered. "I told her there was some mistake, but she would have her way. What would you be wanting ladies' hats for, sir? And here's a note!"

Still laughing at Williams' outraged dignity, Bob took the small white note. "You may go now, William," he said. "It's quite all right. It's only a joke."

He waited until William had gone before he tore open the note with feverish haste.

*"I'm going riding this afternoon with a very attractive gentleman. Will you select my most becoming hat? Much depends on this!"*

*Yours,  
Polly Anna.*

Bob leaned back against the cushions of his chair, laughing until he was weak. The child's audacity was overwhelming, but he'd play her little amusing game. He untied the strings of the first box, and unwound the tissue paper from a lavender hat, of soft, intriguing chiffon, with a cluster of purple violets on the side. Stafford thought of her mischievous face, and soft, red curls, tucked beneath the lavender hat. It would be very fetching, he decided.

The second was black, with a prim little bow on the side. After a moment's deliberation, he laid it aside. It was too sedate for a bad fairy.

He worked steadily through the boxes until their tissue paper wrappings and the hats were all piled about him. Blue hats, green hats, little hats, big ones, nine in all, confronted him. He tried to fit a laughing, whimsical face beneath each, and finally, after long deliberation, he laid aside the lavender hat. That was the best.

It was a long task for him to rewrap and tie up the boxes, but at last it was done. He took up a sheet of note paper, and wrote upon it in a bold, dashing script:

*"My dear Polly Anna:*

*I've not worked so hard for weeks. I vote for the lavender affair, with the what-do-you-call 'ems on the side.*

*Sincerely yours,*

*Robert K. Townes."*

He rang for William. "Did the lady tell you where to return these?"

"Yes, sir, to number thirty-eight." Williams' tone was still grumpy.

"Very well." Bob handed him the note, and motioned to the boxes.

Then he leaned back on the cushions and sighed. He was really half tired, and it was after eleven o'clock already! The morning had gone rather rapidly, and he was drowsy again.

Guiltily the thought came to him that he hadn't written to Cornelia yet, and the morning mail had gone. Then with a slight feeling of resentment, he reflected that he hadn't received a letter from her that day, either. Cornelia was busy, and she detested writing letters. He closed his eyes wearily, and fell into a light doze.

**T**HAT night Bob insisted on being helped into his dinner jacket, and having the steamer rug folded down neatly before he was wheeled out on the balcony. He smoked contentedly, his hands beating time to the dance music which floated up from the ballroom. He was not in the least lonely, for he knew his visitor would come. She had written, asking him "to save her a dance."

And in a flutter of soft skirts she came out through the door, and perched again upon the railing. She was wearing green this time, a pale shade which made Bob think of ocean foam in early morning.

"Greetings!" she sang out. "How's the invalid to-night? Gracious, all dressed up, too!"

"Very well," he answered her question. "Not like an invalid at all, if it weren't for this wretched cast."

The girl studied his long outlines under the steamer rug, her attention centering on the heavy lump at the foot. "Broken very badly?" she asked.

Bob shrugged his shoulders. "Bad

enough to keep me here four more weeks, at the very least."

"Too bad!" she sympathized. Then her mood changing, "and then your fiancée went away and left you, too. What a mean trick!" There was something unbearably pert in her teasing.

Bob kept silent. The girl stole one look at his handsome, set face, and was quickly repentant. "Don't make that three-cornered scowl between your eyebrows. It's very frightening, and unbecoming, besides." She hurried to change the subject. "I liked the hat you selected for me."

Bob's face cleared. "You ought to. I spent serious thought on the matter, young lady." As he spoke Bob was studying her features. He couldn't decide whether she was pretty or not. Attractive, certainly, with her flawless coloring, and large, violet eyes, but too mischievous-looking to be really beautiful.

She interpreted his thought. "Not exactly pretty, but chic-looking! Just what my poor mother thinks!"

Bob flushed at her ready wit, and took refuge in retorting, "I think your mother should look after you better!"

She laughed. "She's down in the ballroom now. She probably hasn't missed me yet. Anyhow, I've told her all about the old gentleman I'm trying to cheer up!"

Bob ignored this, smoking on in grave silence for a minute. Then, "You might tell me your name and affairs, since you seem to know all about mine."

**S**HE settled forward in a confidential attitude, elbows propped on her knees, eyes suddenly serious. "It doesn't matter about me, anyhow. I'd rather be Polly Anna to you. As for my affairs, they're very unimportant. I've a devoted mother, who thinks I should be engaged this season. So I'm going to be. There are two possibilities. I went riding with the one to-day. I'm going with the other one to-morrow."

Bob felt uncomfortable at the sarcasm in her tone, but he decided that she was only joking, for in a moment she was gay again, and dancing across the veranda. She followed her imagin-

ary partner very carefully. "We must have our good-night dance, you know," she called back over her shoulder. "And then, good-night!" She danced to the doorway.

"To-morrow?" Bob called after her.

"To-morrow, of course! Every to-morrow until you're well, or I go away!" She threw the words back over her shoulder as she fled through the doorway.

The morning mail brought Bob a dutiful letter from Cornelia. She was very busy, but he'd understand. She hoped he was much better, and not finding his stay too dull.

Bob laid the letter aside, and picked up a huge box which had come at the same time. He pulled out a fragrant mass of dark purple violets and yellow jonquils, and held them against his cheek. Cornelia always was sparing of her words, but she had thought of him at least. Then he tore open the envelope, and with a flash of amazement, read the crooked writing on the card.

*"From Polly, Anna—because I was spiteful and catty last night!"*

The days flew by, everyone of them bringing some surprise from his merry play-fellow, who had settled herself seriously to the business of keeping him amused. One day she came in for tea, again she sent him whimsical, clever little notes, showing different phases of her variable personality. Always she came in the evening for a chat on the balcony, and that brief, graceful good-night dance.

Bob wouldn't have admitted how much he had come to depend on her during the four weeks of his convalescence. The weeks had sped by until now his doctor had assured him that he could be up with a cane in another week. Cornelia was coming back soon; she had written as much.

**U**NEASILY in Bob's mind stirred the thought that his friendship for Polly Anna was about at an end. He was fingering the pages of Cornelia's last letter, and musing idly, when Wil-

liam brought in a flat package and a note in Polly's characteristic scrawl. Bob tore it open eagerly.

*"The invalid is almost well, and Polly's work is almost done. You were a dear at choosing my hats."*

*"Will you choose between the two photographs I'm sending?"*

Bob hastily untied the flat package. It would be amusing to see Polly's impish face caught in the sedate lines of a photograph.

His surprised glance fell on the face of a young man, well-bred, handsome even, but with a weak mouth. The second picture was that of a chap of sturdier expression, high-browed, strong-chinned, blonde.

Bob studied them intently, an odd feeling of resentment stirring in his heart. Polly was serious in this he knew, deeply serious beneath the apparently light-hearted badinage.

Yet either of these chaps to have gay, whimsical Polly! The first would try to curb her, restrain her exuberance; the second would understand her as an ox understands a butterfly!

Bob grew angrier. Polly, his little play-fellow, couldn't belong to either of these fellows!

He dropped the pictures into the waste basket, and wheeled himself to his desk. Fumbling among his papers he drew out an old snapshot of himself taken when he had been guard on the old Harvard Eleven. Giving himself no time to reflect he scribbled beneath it, "my choice" and clapped it into an envelope.

When William had gone Bob's emotion and rage cooled rapidly. He had no right to care who married Polly. He was engaged to Cornelia, and he had been a cad, disloyal to her, and rude to Polly. A fine way to repay her for all that she had done for him! Bob despised men who play with fire, even the kind of fire which lurks in soft, red hair.

An hour later he sent her one word, "forgive." But no answer came. That night he smoked in solitude on the balcony, listening to the strains of dance music alone, penitent. He tortured himself by thinking of Polly downstairs,

dancing with others, unwilling to join him now that she had found him out. He cursed his injured foot. But for that he could seek her out and beg for forgiveness, make her understand.

**B**Y morning, after a sleepless night, Bob was desperate. He couldn't have Polly, but neither could he have her think him a rotter. Fishing out the discarded photographs he studied them earnestly. Yes, the chap with the well-bred face was the better. He tossed the other back into the waste basket, and drawing a sheet of note paper toward him, wrote rapidly:

*"Polly, I know I was a cad, but please forgive me. The one I'm sending is my choice. Won't you come see me again? Else I must hobble to you somehow."*

Polly came in very promptly after that. She was wearing a severe little blue suit which made her look like an absurdly young school girl. A dark veil flew back from the edges of her smart black hat. Her dark lashes shaded the deep violet eyes which looked wistfully sad and appealing.

"I came in to say good-by," she began directly.

"Honestly?" Bob's tone betrayed his anxiety and disappointment. "But I'm not well yet! You promised to stay until I was up, and I won't be walking yet for weeks and weeks!"

She smiled back at him, and then focussed her attention on her patent-leather pumps. "Fraud! You know you'll be out on a cane by the end of the week. I'd like to see it, but mother's tired of this place, and so—we're leaving in an hour."

Bob's hands gripped the arms of his chair tightly. One hour! He stole a glance at her subdued expression and then looked resolutely away. "I don't know what I'd have done without you these weeks," he ventured finally. "Won't you tell me now who you are, and where you're going? I'd like to have that much to remember."

She stood up to go. "It is very much better this way, I guess." Her tone was expressionless.

The blood throbbed painfully in Bob's temples. When he spoke his voice was husky with suppressed emotion. "I've got to say this much, Polly. It would all have been different—"

"If it had been different!" She finished with a fine attempt at bravery. "I know. But I would hate you if you weren't a gentleman, and true to your word."

Bob kept his gaze rivetted on the window for he was afraid to look at her again. His arms ached to hold her just once, close to him, to bury his face in the red curls. "I never dreamed there was anyone as wonderful as you, Polly. But it's too late now. They've gone to New York to buy the trousseau."

"I'm going to run away now, very fast—" Polly began.

**W**ILLIAM opened the door very discreetly. "I beg your pardon, sir, but Miss Chapman and Mrs. De Puyster are here."

Bob was spared a reply, for Cornelia and her aunt were following William into the room. Bob's perturbed face betrayed him as he held out his hand to Cornelia who stooped dutifully to kiss him.

"You look very well, Bob!" was her comment. Cornelia was blonde, and tall, faultlessly groomed and poised. "Foot almost well?"

Mrs. De Puyster bustled forward, lorgnette lifted to Polly, who stood composedly looking out of the window. "And who's this person?" she wanted to know.

Bob kept still, too ill at ease to attempt an explanation. He had an insane desire to blurt out the truth and watch Mrs. De Puyster's expression change.

Polly, turning around, answered for him. "I'm his nurse, you know." She walked toward the door. "But he's so well now that he's just discharged me." She smiled sweetly at Mrs. De Puyster, keeping her eyes all the while turned carefully away from Bob and Cornelia, who sat beside him.

"Did you tell us about any nurse?" Mrs. De Puyster's tone had a sharp edge to it.

"Oh, I'm sure he didn't!" Again Polly

rushed in to save the situation. "I've just helped out lately." She made a nonchalant little bow to the two women, and looked back to Bob, a smile brightening her face. "Good-by, Mr. Stafford!" She sang it out gayly as she closed the door behind her.

"A pert, rude little thing!" Mrs. De Puyster's tone was still ruffled. "No breeding in girls of that class. None whatever."

Heavy-hearted, too troubled to argue with her, Bob tried to listen to their chatter about the plans for the wedding. Cornelia had been entertained by all her friends; she was glad Bob could be about soon, for they were invited everywhere.

Half in a daze, Bob heard like a death knell, the date they had chosen for the wedding. There was no turning back for him now. He'd have to go on. He'd try to forget the gay, dancing fairy who had been his for one brief month.

"Well, *what* do you think?" Mrs. De Puyster, evidently repeating an important question, paused for an answer.

Bob flushed guiltily. "I beg your pardon?" he apologized.

"I asked you if we should have ten or twelve ushers? What's the matter?"

"I'm tired, I guess," he lied. "Why, as many ushers as you like. You and Cornelia settle that question."

When they had finally gone, he sat for hours looking out of the window, seeing a red-haired sprite who was dancing in the distance, growing dimmer and dimmer as she went.

**B**ACK in New York, Bob had left only a slight limp to remind him of his accident, and a sharp memory which tortured him ceaselessly. To banish the memory he followed everywhere, patiently, doggedly, that Cornelia wished to go.

The Ellis ball was quite the most formal of the dances they attended. Bob and Cornelia had come in very late, and as they paused at the threshold of the ball-room, Bob's eyes roved wearily over the crowd, a faint, absurd hope always in his heart that he might see her again, somewhere, anywhere.

Cornelia, exquisitely blonde and strik-

ing in her jet-black gown and rope of pearls, turned to him, her blue eyes coldly inquiring. "You're getting to be a dreamy kind of person, Bob. Whom are you looking for in that vague way? Aren't we going to dance?" Cornelia's voice, always unruffled, carried a note of irritation now, for they had been standing there several moments.

Bob smiled down at her, apologetically. "Pardon me. Shall we dance then?" he asked politely, and together they glided through the crowd, dancing gracefully and easily to the music. Cornelia danced as she did everything else, with flawless perfection—and lack of inspiration. Bob thought ruefully of dancing that had been improvised, gay, daring, like a flame of sudden joy.

Many eyes followed them as they moved over the floor, for Bob, tall, dark, distinguished-looking, was a perfect foil for Cornelia's blonde perfection.

The orchestra drifted into the opening strains of "Hello, Bluebird," and Stafford turned to Cornelia. "You're dancing this with someone? Then I'll go sit in the conservatory, for the old ankle still bothers me a bit."

It seemed to Bob that Cornelia's smile was unusually dazzling as she drifted off in the arms of her new partner—someone he didn't know, a man she had met while he was ill. When she danced with other men she was inspired enough, so the fault probably lay in himself. He'd been boring the poor girl to death with his moodiness. Must be brighter, gayer from now on.

He smothered a sigh and walked toward the conservatory. His ankle was weak yet, but more than that he wanted to get away from the sound of that music, which was too intimately connected with what had gone.

He sank wearily into the roomy luxury of a lounging chair, and lighted a cigarette, giving himself up to his dreams. Through half-closed lids he tried to see her in the faint haze of cigarette smoke, whimsical, teasing, intensely lovable!

**S**UDDENLY he sat upright. Imaginings were all very well, but what he saw couldn't be an illusion, unless

he was quite mad. At the opposite end of the room a couple was walking, the girl, slim, graceful with red curls flying, the man, slight, elegant. Polly and the weak-mouthed chap he had chosen for her.

They paused a moment to talk, and Bob watched her hungrily, his eyes betraying him. "Carter," he turned to the fellow who lounged in the chair beside him. "Carter," he repeated with the quietness of suppressed excitement, "Who's the little red-haired girl there, going out on the terrace now?"

Carter followed the direction he indicated, with annoying calm. "That's Pauline Hannah, one of this season's buds, familiarly known as Polly Hannah!"

Polly Anna, Polly Hannah! Bob wanted to laugh at the cleverness of her little subterfuge, at the very obviousness of it.

"That's young Colton who was with her," his companion resumed. "It's going to be a match, too, they say. Mrs. Hannah's dead set on it, for the Coltons are, well—Coltons, you know, and the Hannah fortune isn't what it used to be."

Bob nodded with pretended indifference. Polly Anna or Polly Hannah, either one or the other, she and her sweetness were not for him. He looked up interestedly when young Colton came back in from the terrace, for that meant Polly was out there, in the moonlight, alone. There'd be no harm in speaking to her, for the last time.

He excused himself hastily from his companion, walked hastily through the conservatory, out on the porch and down the terraced steps. She stood, a flash of white, on the lowest step.

"Good evening, Miss Hannah!" Bob accented the "h" broadly.

She turned around, smiling up at him frankly. "Good evening! I won't look surprised, for I saw you in there, and I got rid of Jerry, hoping you'd come out and talk to me. How's the foot?"

Her eyes, soft and kind, looked up into his. "Bother the foot!" he said happily. "Don't you hear the music? Aren't we dancing to-night as we used to when I was in bed?"

She nodded, and lifted her arms to him. Airy, graceful, she followed his leading back and forth, across the step, swaying, living the music. Bob drew her closely into his embrace, his heart aching with her sweetness, a sweetness not for him.

THE music throbbed on in poignant strains. They danced to the end of the terrace, where Stafford drew her into the shadows. "Polly, Polly, dear!" he spoke with the recklessness of long suppressed emotion. "I love you, dear! I've missed you so! Next week will be the wedding, and after that I'll be loyal to the girl I marry, but to-night, Polly, to-night is ours!"

She lifted a serious face to his, every last vestige of impishness gone. Her eyes were wet. "To-night is ours! This tiny bit of it. There goes the man I'm going to marry, looking for me, now!"

Bob glanced around to watch young Colton who was searching about helplessly for Polly. Finally he went back to the house.

Bob drew Polly into his arms again, and held her tightly. He buried his face into the soft curls and gave himself up to the ecstasy of the moment, to the forgetfulness of all else.

"Quite an interesting little scene!" Mrs. De Puyster's voice, strident, sarcastic, tore through the web of his dream. Bob looked up, flinging his arm about Polly's shoulder, as he faced Mrs. De Puyster.

"Cornelia said your foot hurt, and you had come out here. I see we wasted our time and sympathy. Bob, your conduct is disgraceful!" Her eyes, angry, condemning, studied Polly intently.

Cornelia, calm, collected, had halted a few feet away. Her aunt glanced in her direction. "Cornelia, go back. This is no place for you. I shall talk to Bob and—and this—girl!" She shot out the word with extraordinary venom.

CORNELIA moved forward leisurely. "I don't believe I should, Aunt Emma. There's no need to say anything. It's plain that Bob doesn't need us. Is it possible that you don't rec-



ognize his little nurse?" She drew off her solitaire and extended it to Bob.

"No dramatic scene, please!" She half laughed as she turned away. "If your male vanity would permit you, Bob, you'd believe this, that I'm very glad the whole affair is called off!"

Mrs. De Puyster tried to interpose. "She doesn't mean that! She's just angry, Bob, she's just hurt by your conduct!"

Cornelia pulled her away. "Don't, Aunt Emma, please don't! I'm not hurt and angry, only relieved, and you ought to know why. We never really cared for each other, you've always known that. And I—I've loved John Blackstone ever since I met him—when you were ill, Bob. But my aunt said we couldn't change our plans, now that the trousseau was bought and the wedding invitations ordered."

"Don't be ridiculous, Cornelia," commanded Mrs. De Puyster. "You can't be in love with a man whom you've only known for three weeks."

"Bob fell in love with Polly in three weeks," retorted Cornelia, "but we can

settle that later. My trousseau doesn't need to be wasted if that's what you're worrying about." Her laughter rippled in a way that Bob scarcely recognized, it was so free and unrestrained.

"Polly," he whispered, as Mrs. De Puyster strutted away, and Cornelia strolled after, "Does she really mean that, or is she only a good sport?"

Polly pulled him down to her by the ears. "Worried about that, are you? So your vanity is wounded." She heaved a romantic sigh. "I shouldn't be at all surprised if she did love John Blackstone, he's terribly handsome and distinguished."

Bob frowned jealously. "Polly—"

She tweaked his nose. "Oh, don't worry, silly, there's nobody but you in my young life. Don't you know people always love those they've done favors for? And where would you be without me, I'd like to know!"

He crushed a kiss on the mocking sweet lips. The orchestra was playing again—he held out his arms, and light as a caress, red curls flying, she danced across the terrace with him.



## "WHERE GLORY WAITS"

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# The Test That Told

By Inez M. Nichols



*"I'm poor—and a failure," sighed Ted, "I'll never be rich enough for Averil."*

CAROLINE ROSS was on her knees, finishing up the last bit of packing. She tried, with slight success, to hum a gay tune as she wrapped cups and saucers in tissue paper, wedging them firmly into Averil Radford's suitcase; it made her lonely to look about the half-stripped little apartment, where certain round clean places on the walls, and certain other square clean places, reminded her that Averil had taken down pictures and un-tacked tapestries. The place had never seemed so shabby before.

"Oh, I don't want those old tea cups

you're wrapping," protested Averil. "They're only imitation Sevres and not nice enough for my new apartment." "What gay pride in that last phrase!"

"I thought," offered Caroline, "you might like them for sentiment. You and Ted always have chocolate in these when you come in late."

Averil frowned delicately. "Whatever I am about Ted, Carol, I'm not sentimental. It doesn't do when you don't intend to marry a man for years and years—oh, do hurry, there he is at last with the taxi! All these things yet to be packed!"

Caroline bent her bright head low over her task. She was tired and lonely. She didn't want to be left alone in the apartment. It was glorious, of course for Averil to be going to new fortunes, new scenes, establishing herself alone in a smart little flat on West Adams Avenue. Averil had always dreamed of doing that. Nice that somebody's dreams came true.

Just the same, this place was going to look awfully bare with Averil's things gone out of it. Then there would be double rent to pay. She might get a new room-mate but no one could take the place of Averil, so gay, so triumphantly ambitious and energetic.

How lovely Averil looked now, her gold and ivory beauty flushed with excitement. Only her eyes, ice-blue and cold, betrayed her secret and invincible spirit. Everything else about her was fragile and delicate.

Caroline took herself sternly in hand at a swift rushing step on the stair. Averil mustn't guess any dark secrets now, this very last moment.

**W**HEN Ted Jackson burst into the room on his usual hurried, worried knock, Caroline's face betrayed only disinterested friendship. "Good thing you've come, Ted. Averil was nearly perishing for fear your taxi had run over a policeman!"

Ted glanced at his fiancée uneasily. He wasn't exactly afraid of her but he didn't like to displease her. Averil had such a way of taking a fellow down. "It does look like the wreck of a couple of policemen here. What are you going to do for fixings, Carol. get some new stuff?"

"I'll be all right." She was light and brave. "Averil didn't want these cups. I'll use them for foundation stones, add some wicker furniture, some hollyhock chintz curtains—old fashioned things—that's me!"

"Mid-Victorian!" sighed the other girl. "Wish I could have taught you to like Heppelwhite and Spanish settees."

"That Spanish settee of yours." blurted Ted, who was over-tired from a long day of labor, "is about as comfortable as a concrete bench!"

"If you don't like it, old dear, don't bother to come where you have to sit on it!"

Laughter from Ted, rather forced. A grand rushing about of all three of them, gathering last minute articles, crying out hurried good-bys and good wishes. Ted, loaded to the eye-brows with luggage, staggering down the stairs. Averil, very complaisant and efficient, making a lovely farewell picture in the door of the forlorn flat.

She took Caroline's tired hands. "Don't you get a bit lonely, darling! Ring me up any time. A secret phone you know, Temple 3666, and come to see me just the moment I'm settled!"

Caroline promised, knowing all the while Averil didn't want anybody but really smart people calling on her now. The door closed on a clatter of spike heels, on a shower of light laughter like the falling of silver coins.

Then—a lonely girl stood silently in the middle of the desolation.

The electric bulb glared on a slim, tired figure, hands twisted together before her. Yet no glare could be unkind to Caroline. There was too much rich chestnut in her gleaming hair, too wistful a beauty in delicate line of cheek and nose and brow. She didn't know it, of course, but Ted had often looked at the soft, warm curve of her lips and wished Averil's were more like them, not so thin and cold.

Caroline looked about the room as though she were in a new strange place. Then she straightened tired shoulders, threw back her head courageously. "I'll have a cup of tea, then straighten things the best I can."

But across the room an overflowing waste basket caught her eye. With a quick rush she was on her knees beside it, picking up a battered little picture of Ted that his sweetheart had tossed away.

Swift, choking sobs rose as she knelt, the grave face pressed against her lips. Then, after a moment, she dried her eyes, tried to gather her spent forces. She must forget all about Ted. He had never suspected her love for him, and neither had Averil. That had been her closely guarded secret.

Ted was climbing up in the world as attorney for a big lumber company. And some day when he had enough money he was going to marry Averil, the vivacious, the beautiful, the ambitious!

What a still look of endurance he had, steady and sober and strong under any adversity! Caroline dwelt long on every shade and turning of the dear face. How his dark eyes brooded with secret hopes and longings. What a sensitive curve to the beautiful mouth. Youth—youth and strength and ardent love. All—all—belonged to Averil!

The fire had died to a miserable heap of gray ashes when Caroline rose, stiff and chilled. She laid the photograph tenderly face down under the lining of a bureau drawer.

THE taxi lurched and leaped like a boat at sea.

"Go slower!" ordered Ted. Then he closed the window and turned to his bride-to-be.

"I suppose this is no place for an argument, Averil, but it's all a mistake, your taking a flat by yourself. I'd like you to marry me now instead and let me furnish one."

Averil could afford to be kind. She was having her own way. Her terrific, burning ambition had begun to be gratified, for to-morrow would see the opening of her own hat shop in Eighteenth Street. It would see her settled in her darling little flat, correct to the last detail. At least Jeffrey McClune, importer of French *chapeaux*, has assured her it was correct. True, she had assumed some terrifying debts—rent, fixtures, stock—but Jeffrey had such a cheery way of brushing such things out of the immediate perspective.

"Dear old Ted, don't begin that again!" Her smile took the edge off her words. "You and I in poverty, dirt and distress? There's been enough of that in my life already!"

He sighed. "I know I'm a failure. I can't save enough to get you what you ought to have. I work, but I can't seem to get anywhere."

"Other men do," hinted Averil. "Jeffrey began as a stock-boy—!"

The very name sent Ted leaping into a frenzy. "Jeffrey McClune—a crook and a bounder—you'll be sorry you let him hang after you!"

She smiled into the mirror of the taxi, a stir of delight running through her. It was pleasant to make Ted rage. The glass showed her a lovely face. No need for Jeffrey McClune to tell her so. Only her eyes disappointed her, for they weren't limpid and soft like Caroline's. Hard instead—oh, pretty enough, but cold. Cold and designing.

However, Ted must be settled somehow. "When you consider, Ted, that McClune has a big eight roadster to take me out in, and you have nothing but a flivver, don't you think I'm rather generous to go on loving you at all?"

"I don't know whether you do love me," he groaned. "I suppose I could win your affection with a Big Eight. Right now, I couldn't pay the first installment on a sack of peanuts!"

"Don't be vulgar!"

"Come, Averil," he begged, "give up this foolish venture. What if you should fail?"

She slew him with a glance. "Give up—before even beginning!"

"I'm trying to save you—and our love. I may be old-fashioned, but there's nothing so sweet as simple things. I couldn't give you much, Averil, but I can give you—love. And a little flat—!"

Her nerves were on edge at his persistence. "Yes? I know your ideas. Blue and white kitchenette and me in an apron every night frying the chops! You working over an imitation mahogany radio, and no doubt, to crown it all, geraniums in the window!"

Ted didn't answer, and the taxi bounced to a full stop in front of a handsome apartment building.

Bundles, boxes, packages—Ted was a grotesque figure as he tottered up the last stair and stood in the door. Averil had preceded him, calling out brightly. "There, Ted, be careful! Here's Jeffrey; wasn't it kind of him to come and light the fire and prepare tea? He's going to help me hang the etchings."

Ted glowered, and the other man bowed suavely.

"Hope I'm not usurping your duties, Jackson," apologized Jeffrey, smoothly. "Miss Radford is good enough to let me assist her."

"In that case," said the dejected lover, with a ghastly grin, "I'll be on my way."

"Oh, Ted," wailed Averil, "you might connect the gas range in the kitchenette!"

His departing voice issued through a crack in the door. "I won't rob McClune of the pleasure!"

DOWN in the street, however, his grin faded. He paid the driver with the money he had saved to buy a new case book and made his way alone toward town on foot.

The very thought of McClune's robbing him of Averil sent him into a sick rage. Of course she was only flirting with him, but the fellow's airs, his foreign affectations of manner, his cool superiority, the ideas he was trying to instill in the girl's mind!

Ted had only half believed his good luck was more than a dream when, a year ago, she had promised to marry him. Not right away, of course. She was working then as trimmer of hats in a big department store.

So full of blind, burning, stubborn ambition Averil was. She hated routine and poverty. She despised the flat she shared with Caroline. Caroline was sweet, but she wasn't enough of a go-getter to rise much beyond her job as private secretary. In a competitive world you couldn't afford to be sweet; you had to fight for what you got, Averil said.

Averil hated, above all, the thought of being poor after she was married. And Ted wanted to save her from poverty, more routine, so he waited. Maybe there would be a change in his fortunes, and some streak of magical luck would make a rich man of him.

Plodding wearily down Grant Avenue past the splendid stucco homes, he groaned to himself. He'd never be rich. However, there was one thing he could do. He could buy a new car, good—almost—as McClune's. There were three hundred shares of Metaluma Ten, the oil well down at Signal Hill that had never

come in, in spite of cruel years of sinking drills.

He slept fitfully, waking now and then to renewed tortures. Averil—McClune would win her away from him—he must do something desperate.

He hurried down early to his deposit vault and extracted the Metaluma stock certificates, laughing as he looked at them. They appeared so magnificent—and were so worthless.

He leaned apologetically over the counter of the brokerage house. "Metaluma Ten, could I get rid of what I've got?"

A clerk with glittering hair and eyes that burned with some incessant fever whispered, "What did you say—Metaluma? You don't mean you have some of that?"

Ted grinned foolishly. "I do. I'm one of Barnum's favorites, you see."

The bond clerk seized him by the coat, crept around the end of the counter and hauled his victim over to the blackboard. He pointed to a column at the end. "Do you mean you want to sell? You don't think she'll break, do you?"

"Break? She couldn't break any further." But his eye fell on the last list price. He rocked on his feet. Metaluma Ten—187. 210. 280—up, up!

"She's sticking around 500!" hissed the clerk. "How much have you got?"

"Three hundred shares," mumbled Ted.

The clerk shoved him hastily before the cashier's cage.

"Sure you want to sell now?" inquired the dour cashier. "Metaluma blue in at midnight—they worked all night trying to cap her and can't."

Ted was chalky white. He was only able to nod a faint assent.

The cashier saw so much money he was bored by it. Wearily he counted little heaps through the narrow slit. Twenties. Fifties. Centuries. And—good heavens—what was that?

A grand! Several grands!

"Could I have them smaller?" Ted cheeped.

The unhappy cashier reduced the grands to centuries. "You'll regret selling so early, young man," he predicted.

**T**ED, however, was out in Spring Street, keeping heavy, cold hands in his wadded pockets. What did a man do now? Dazedly he went back to his deposit vault and tucked away his cash. He felt very qualmish and ill as he ascended the steps. Then he thought of breakfast. Never mind—he looked at

was running through his disturbed memory a final word of Averil's. "You can connect the gas range in the kitchenette, Ted!"

So—! A bitter anger mingled with his joy. Was that what she wanted of him always? He could connect the gas ranges—while McClune hung the etch-



*"I like wicker furniture and chintz draperies," blurted out Ted, "that Spanish settee of yours is about as comfortable as a stone bench!"*

his watch. Great Scott, it was eleven o'clock and he'd get fired for being so late!

Then he laughed. A mighty, inward laugh that somehow restored his sanity, his ability to rejoice. He was free—free! His first excited impulse was to dash to a telephone and call up Averil. Instead, he boarded a car and went to Rockledge Park and idled on a bench. Better think things over a bit. For there

ings! After all, did she really love him—or McClune?

Was there any way to test her love? What the hungry heart of every man wanted was to be loved for himself. Not because he was rich, not because he was useful, not even because he had a streamline Eight.

Averil was a wonderful girl, of course, and far too good for a humble person like himself, but it wouldn't be a bad

idea to find out how much she really cared.

A soft little voice woke him from his dreaming. "Took a day off, did you, Ted? It's my holiday, too."

It was Caroline, very lovely in a soft gray frock with a bright pink rose at her throat. He grinned at her joyously. He'd tell her everything—good old Carol, she was such a comrade—no—no! Women were, after all, rather a good deal alike.

"I got fired," he announced.

"Poor old Ted! I thought you were in line for promotion."

He squirmed under her pitying glance. How sweet she was! "Other men just as good, will work for less."

"So you took to a park bench the first thing? And you haven't had breakfast. Now, have you?"

He hung his guilty head.

She dragged him to his feet. "Come with me!"

It was sweet to his bruised spirit to listen to her chatter as she hurried about the refurnished little flat laying the breakfast. She had done wonders restoring the place. Chintz of peacocks and hollyhocks in weird crimson and purple brightened the eye; the gay table cloth of amber and orange matched the canary that sang madly in a sunny window.

Over coffee and toast and sizzling bacon Ted's soul expanded. "This bad luck," he said, looking cheerfully around, "is going to knock me out of marrying for ages, probably."

Caroline hated herself for a traitor, yet she couldn't help the little singing in her heart. "Perhaps it's better to let Averil have a wide fling at her new work first."

"Perhaps," agreed the young man cautiously. "I want to ask you something, Carol—how does a man find out if a woman really loves him?"

"It's much easier if you're a woman and want to know if a man loves you. The best test then is how much time he spends with you. I suppose a man has to take it out in guessing."

"He does? Now, for instance, you know I like you a lot, don't you, and I never spent a lot of time with you."

"Oh, we're different. Just sort of brotherly and sisterly."

He liked the way she blushed. "You'd care for a fellow, anyway, whether he were poor or not, wouldn't you?"

Caroline smiled softly. "For a man who has just lost his job, you seem rather light-hearted."

Ted sighed heavily. "On the contrary, I'm going to do something desperate right now. I'm going to take all the money I've saved for ten years and go and buy a stream-line eight roadster. Sounds stupid, I know, but I have to prove to Averil that I love her."

"Good heavens, if she loves you that's the last thing she'll ask you to do, just after you've lost your place!"

"Can't help it, a man in love is a fool. And I say, what about it, will you take the first ride in the new boat this evening?"

"I won't be a party to such a wild scheme! What can I do or say to persuade you to save your money?"

Ted reached a hand across the table. There was tenderness immeasurable in his eyes. "My girl, you took me off a park bench and fed me. That's all I ask of you now, except the further favor—will you ride with me to-night?"

"I suppose the only way I can save you from making a complete wreck of yourself is to go along and watch what you do!"

They managed to laugh together, laughter that somehow blended with the canary's song, the sunshine, and the gaiety of the hollyhocks and peacocks.

There was in Ted's heart as he boarded the trolley car, a curiously sweet glow. Perhaps, he thought, a man was rather blind when it came to women. What a lucky fellow he would be, the one who won Caroline's kind of love for himself!

AVERIL smiled with gratification as she finished an elaborate toilet before her dainty new dressing table.

Wonderful, stupid, glorious Ted! He had taken every cent of his cruelly-won savings and bought a handsome new car just for her to enjoy! Lost his position, but right in the face of that loved her enough to do that foolish thing. ♦

She thrilled with pride as she 're-

viewed the last few crowded weeks. They had been one delirious round of new emotions, events, delights. There was indeed a smart tone to her way of living now. Mornings had to be spent at the shop, to be sure, but the afternoons were given over to living like a lady of leisure. Teas, luncheons, bridge parties, shopping. There was, however, a good deal of worry connected with the shop. Business didn't come in quite fast enough, creditors had to be denied. If only Ted were rich!

Jeffrey McClune, in spite of his devotion, didn't say anything about marriage. He was content to merely make Ted jealous by hanging about, but she didn't dare abandon him. He helped her in getting more credit, in suggestions for new frocks, furnishings for her flat.

Ah—the flat! She looked about the place now with uneasy eyes. It had cost so much—and was so bare! Queer, foreign things everywhere. Majolica cats and flowers. Gone was the imitation ebony elephant of the old days. In its place an amber vase with a single purple iris. The wicker furniture of the other place had been comfortable, at least. The Spanish settee, she admitted, was just what Ted had said it was. She knew etchings were correct. Yet sometimes she longed to resurrect the Dancing Nymph. How Jeffrey would smile!

Just the same, she thrilled with pride when the little Japanese maid announced Ted. He was going to take her in the new car to the Tudor Inn—that is, if he could afford to buy a dress suit.

There he was, looking like no less than royalty in full evening outfit.

"Ted, you're wonderful!" she acknowledged.

He smiled uneasily. "I rented it. Hope you won't mind. I'm poor, can't afford to be foolish."

She shrank from him visibly. "Actually, you do the most outrageous things! I won't go with a man in a rented suit. How cheap!"

Ted shrugged. "Not so cheap—put me back five dollars, and every penny counts now."

"You never talk about anything," she cried, angered beyond endurance.

"but how poor you are!" Jeffrey had invited her this very evening, also to the Tudor Inn. To think she had turned him down for a man with ideas like this! There was something actually common about Ted. Wearing a rented suit. Why he might catch something from it; they might both come down with an awful disease!

"Oh," she wailed, "can't you learn correct standards—ever? Don't you want to climb up along with me to better things? You just hinder me instead of helping!"

He was very sober. "Help you to keep a false front, furniture unpaid for, shaky business tottering to a flop? Mix with cheap friends of yours who spend what they don't have?"

A flame of hatred seemed almost to consume her. How dare he criticize her, her friends!

"I will get on in spite of you! I will succeed—and let you go on being a failure!"

He picked up his hat and coat. "I got the car to please you, I rented this suit to please you. Nothing I do is right. Call me up if you want to see me again."

He went out the door, head bent. She rushed after him—hesitated. It would never do to let him win. She took up the telephone in a fury of disappointment. Ted was handsome, he was devoted—it was hideous the airs he took upon himself. She laughed bitterly. Airs—in a rented dress suit!

She had McClune on the wire almost immediately. Yes, he would take her to the Tudor Inn.

**T**ED, with a strange feeling of relief, was speeding to Caroline's little flat in the gorgeous new roadster.

He bounded up the stairs. "If you had pity on a fellow," he urged when she opened the door, "you'd come sit in a park with him."

"Sit in a park? You can't, you're all dressed up!"

He grinned uneasily. "I rented it. I have to go to a Fraternity banquet to-morrow night and I wanted to practise wearing a dress suit!"

She laughed wildly there in the gay



hollyhock room. "At last you're learning to be a little economical!"

"Besides," whispered Ted, "it's spring. And there's a moon. And don't you rather like the park bench where you found me that morning when I was so—so hungry?"

Caroline did like it. So they sat close together in Rockledge Park on the same identical bench, only now things were so different. Ted was at her flat almost all his spare time. Of course she realized it was a mistake on her part to allow it. He was engaged to Averil. He loved her, and he was going to marry her.

Just now, however, it was hard to remember that. His nearness, his dearness, the beauty of the fountain, the misty moon the magic of his low voice—

"And so," he said, "it's you I've loved all along and didn't know it. A man is such a fool."

O silver moon, O dancing fountain, O the rapture and the pain in her heart at his words!

"You're engaged to Averil!"

Ted sighed. "She doesn't care for me any more. I'm poor. I'm a failure. I'll never be rich enough for her." A vision of his packed and crammed safe-deposit box floated before his mind, and he smiled.

"You can't break the engagement without her permission."

"I'll get it, never fear. I'll write her a note telling her I'm through."

Pity stayed her angry words. Ted was, after all, a complete child. Irresponsible, tender-hearted, impulsive.

"Ted, I do think you show the least common sense—!"

He leaned a tired head on her shoulder. "I know. If I had more sense I wouldn't be asking you to share poverty and distress and shabby living. But you see I love you, and I need you, Carol, I do need you. You can't turn down a man that needs taking care of like I do, can you?"

O tinkling fall of fountain waters. O scent of locust bloom!

"I can't take you from her, Ted. You do belong to her in all honor."

"But you love me, don't you?"

"Oh, yes—yes. But—she loves you too!"

"I'd like to laugh at that! She never did love me, she doesn't now!"

"Then ask her to release you. If she will—then!"

He seized her in his arms hungrily. "You'll marry me?"

"Of course. But she won't. The Averils of the world never do."

"I'll persuade her, you'll see. Come, how about a dance at the Tudor Inn. I feel happy enough to dance around the world!"

SO it was that Averil Radford, swinging in the dance at the country inn called the Tudor, beheld a sight that turned her dizzy with rage. Caroline and Ted, her fiancé, were dining together on a little balcony that ran round the room. Caroline, in a golden-yellow dancing frock, blue gentians pinned at her shoulder, a lovely Spanish shawl drooping over her chair!

Ted! Averil's feet stumbled in the dance. She had never been able to bring that look to his face. Tender, absorbed, glorified. How handsome he looked! Incredible, but he was far more patrician even than Jeffrey McClune.

Sick with rage and anxiety, she drew Jeffrey out onto a little gallery. The night stars, cool and remote, blinked down on her fevered distress. "Go and dance, Jeffrey. I want to rest a moment."

When he had gone she paced up and down, the coral gown she wore making a gleam in the darkness. How unfair life was, how unjust! Ted was easily the most distinguished man in the room, every one knew he was engaged to her—and here he was, devoted to Caroline!

Suddenly the sound of voices near drew her to discreet silence. Two men conversed in low tones. "I bought a block of Metaluma Ten, thinking it would go higher. The fellow that unloaded ahead of me, Ted Jackson, that fellow with the pretty girl in yellow—cleaned up a cool hundred and fifty thousand."

"You'll make it back, old man, in some other stock." The voices moved away.

Stricken, blind with rage, Averil clenched her white hands. It must be

a mistake! Ted—her man, her very own—rich! Rich enough to lift her at once from her struggles with creditors, her bitter efforts to be somebody, occupy a position in the world, arrive somewhere! Ted had made all that money and was keeping it from her—she who had first right to know of it! He was here with Caroline—ah, did Caroline know?

Her keen little mind leaped like a fox's along the trail. That was how he could buy the Packard—and that joke about renting a dress suit! She bit her lip savagely. To be made a fool of like this!

Wait—just wait, she would show him! She'd surprise him by hurrying up their wedding. Now she would have the things she wanted! Clothing, jewelry, trips! Another pressing reason for haste occurred to her. There was talk of closing her shop unless she paid her rent at once.

When Jeffrey came back for her she maneuvered him out of the place without their being observed by the other two. Once at home she dismissed her cavalier in one of the sudden moods he was used to.

Up and down her room she paced, thinking, planning, wondering, why had Ted done this? Why hadn't he rushed to her at once? Was he already in love with Caroline?

She pressed locked fists to her mouth to keep from crying aloud. This then was the reward of striving, of ambition! It was the chill, gray dawn coming in at the window that sent her at last into brief, fitful slumber.

**T**ED was surprised and a bit cautious when Averil telephoned him to come to her at once.

In the ornate, rather silly, formal room he looked at her with uneasy and yet hopeful eyes. She wasn't so pretty today. Tired and worried. Plenty of fire and temper left, however. "How does it happen," she asked, "that I found you at home when I telephoned? Aren't you hunting for a job at all?"

"Why should I? Why work when you keep refusing to marry me? In fact, I'm glad you called me over. It will make

me feel better if you'll break our engagement in plain words."

Completely aghast, she stared at him. He—rich, secure—and dismissing her with a wave of the hand!

Then caution reasserted itself. She must not betray by a single hint that she knew the truth. She came over and stood beside him with an assumption of timidity. She managed a shaky little laugh of tenderness. "Ted, I'll admit I've been worried, not myself. Sometimes hasty—perhaps I've seemed unkind. But my heart is still the same. Forgive me, and let's be happy as we were."

Her words threw him into a panic. "Happy! We never were that. I'm here to ask you to give me up, release me. You don't care for me, so why pretend you do?"

He heard in her answer all her inflexible will, her burning determination. "I never will release you as long as you live!"

Bewildered, he wondered if she could have heard about his good fortune. "Why won't you?"

"How silly! Because you belong to me!"

He was in a trap. More than ever he wanted Caroline now, Caroline who meant peace and comfort, and the divine comradeship of understanding hearts. She had fed him when she thought him hungry, had fought to keep him from spending his poor savings! She knew the meaning of love, its glory, its simplicity, its tender devotion!

White and shaken, he rose. "You're going to hold me to my bargain then, Averil?"

"Of course I am. You'll forgive my hasty temper when you think it over. You wanted to marry me, didn't you? You asked me, begged me, said you would die if I didn't?"

Ted cursed under his breath. He had done that very thing. She smiled at him softly, and he opened the door without a word.

"To-morrow," she said bently, "I'll order my wedding dress. We'll have a simple home wedding here in the flat. I'll call you up to-morrow when I'm ready to see you."

**I**N a cove by the sea Ted lay on the white sand, hat over his eyes, thinking his problem through. Here he was safe for a time at least from Averil.

How was he to face Caroline with the news that he wasn't free, never could be free? How be sure, indeed, of the love

Was it love, real love, that drew her back to him?

He saw himself in a lifetime of bondage with her, then in bitter contrast, he visualized a honeymoon with the girl he really loved. The money he had won could provide her with a home, journeys



"Carol, don't cry," he begged, "it's all a frame-up. I had to be sure that you loved me, dear."

of any woman? Perhaps even Caroline didn't love him. An old proverb of the Orient filtered into his tired brain. "*The foot of a fish in the water, the flower of the fig tree, you may see—but not what is in the heart of woman.*"

He reflected bitterly that there was no way out for him, for Caroline would never consent to treachery. Suspicion gnawed at him. Why was Averil so suddenly anxious for a speedy wedding?

for them both to the enchanted spots of the world—country England, the white peaks of Switzerland, the canals of Venice . . .

He rose at last, far from any decision, and drove back to town. It was too early for Caroline to have returned from work, so he sat on the steps of her humble apartment building and waited for her. How could he break the news?

As he sat brooding, oblivious to every-

thing save his own misery, a little tinkling laugh fell on his ear. With dismay that he didn't conceal he looked up to see Averil gazing down at him with a triumphant smile. "The knight awaits his lady love? Something told me I should find you here. I hope you don't mind driving me home?"

Ted rose abjectly. His car stood at the curb and he helped her in.

She turned to him, bitingly contemptuous. "What were you waiting to see Carol for?"

Ted was in no mood for soft words. "How do you know it was she I was waiting for? Well, I'll tell the truth for once. I was going to tell her I love her more than life itself, but I can't marry her because you insist that I marry you!"

If he had thought she would be enraged he was mistaken. She laughed, that little laugh which was so like a shower of falling silver coins. "So, my poor boy, you're infatuated with the little kitchen-garden girl, are you? Well, I know something of the hearts of men. They get over their infatuations, once married."

"I wish you joy of the sort of bridegroom I'll be!"

However casual Averil appeared, she was nevertheless quaking with apprehension. So he did love Caroline! Loved her as only quiet men, once wakened, can love. She saw immediate danger—and planned immediate solution of it.

As they stopped in front of her apartment house, she turned to him swiftly. "Ted," she said, "I'm an impulsive sort. But you'll have to get used to that. You drive down now—hurry before the office closes—and get the marriage license. Come back and get me, and we'll have Rector Brandon marry us—to-night!"

He didn't look at her, only stared into the shadows under a big locust tree. That tree reminded him of the night he had told Caroline of his love. He wondered dazedly why he wasn't more of a man. Why didn't he leave this girl Averil with loud, harsh words and rush to the woman he did love?

"To-night? You must be crazy?" he objected.

She got out of the car swiftly. "I'll be waiting for you! And hurry now, it's a quarter of five! Run for it!"

He wondered as he threw the car into gear why he did run for it. What in heaven's name was the power behind such women that men obeyed them? Swiftly he turned corners, grazed curbs, shot around slower vehicles, disregarded stop signals—

Good God—that woman with a baby in her arms—!

A wrenching of the wheel—all happening in the twinkling of an eye—

The stream-line eight bounced, rolled, leaped into the air like a live thing—in a straight nose-dive for a concrete lamp post. Like a winged creature it took the post, head on, turning completely over, Ted crushed underneath.

AVERIL had spent a hurried, flurried half hour after Ted left. Anxiety, triumph and a seething rage fought within her for supremacy. Calling the little Japanese maid, she bade her pack her entire wardrobe, then dismissed her without her wages. What matter? In a few hours she would be able to pay off all her debts.

Jeffrey McClune rang up with a dinner invitation. She hung up on him impatiently. She had something very important on hand, she said.

The landlord appeared on a scene of opened trunks, scattered finery and an air of hasty flight. "If you try to take those trunks out without paying your rent—!"

Averil smiled sweetly. "If I were to marry a very rich man to-night you'd feel differently, wouldn't you?"

He muttered threats, and left her.

Then—she began to run to the window to look for Ted. Six o'clock—and fury consumed her. Seven o'clock—and she was sure of it. He had gotten the license and eloped with Caroline!

She set that terror at rest by telephoning the old apartment. Caroline's voice, rather weary and faint, answered her.

Then the telephone jangled. Somehow significant, somehow terrifying. Staccato and brief the news came. Mr. Ted Jackson—Mercy Hospital—injured—

Ward C—calling for her—she was to come at once.

Long, cold white corridors of the hospital. Fleeing nurses who smiled calmly as they fled.

Ted! Very white, so very silent. A surgeon in a white gown that shone like a high priest's robe.

He spoke smoothly, suavely. "He asked for you. Wants to tell you about it." Averil, now flushed with excitement, now frozen with disappointment, looked down into Ted's eyes. Such remote, cold eyes—

"Ted, what happened?"

"He was," explained the surgeon, "going after a license to marry a lady. Accident. They always happen at the wrong moment."

"How badly is he hurt? Can he get up at once?" demanded the girl impatiently.

"I'm all right," said Ted, from lips that were white and cold. "Doc wants to tell—wait a minute—who's that at the door? Let her in, I say, nurse, she's to come in too."

Caroline came in. There was something stern about her white terror. As if with her own stubborn will, her invincible courage, she would battle off the arch enemy that had laid low her beloved.

Ted's eyes—his misty, love-filled eyes! Any other woman but Averil would have seen—and left the battle field.

"Doc, you tell them the bad news—like you said—the terrible facts."

The doctor spoke. Gravely, kindly. "The patient requests me to break the news to you. He thought you would want to help him bear his affliction. I've just operated on him, the accident necessitated removing both his lower limbs. He is—he wanted me to tell you this—only half a man. He can never walk again, for he has no legs. For the rest of his life he will have to live—confined to a chair."

Caroline gathered the import of it first. With all the passion of a lioness defending her young, she dropped on her knees and wrapped the injured boy to her warm little heart. "Don't you mind, laddie! I'll never forsake you a single minute! And we'll get artificial legs

and you can walk as well as ever—won't he, doctor!"

The doctor nodded, and turned his face away.

Ted looked at Averil. Like a wild creature driven to its last covert she stood against the wall. Her hands were pressed to her pounding heart, her awe-stricken eyes rested on Ted, on the kneeling girl. "Half a man—half a man!" she whispered. "You mean—!"

Ted's eyes followed her shrinking figure. "I mean you can agree now to the breaking of our engagement. It would make me sleep better. I feel—sort of sleepy." He and the doctor exchanged a glance.

The doctor held the door open. "You wouldn't marry half a man for anything in the world, would you?" he said, in an oddly cheerful voice.

Averil's wild voice reached them as she fled down the corridor. "No—no—no!" It was the cry of a tortured soul in flight. But as she ran—ran—down the cool white avenues and out into the street some stubborn determination reasserted itself. "Jeffrey—Jeffrey!" she repeated to herself. She hailed a taxi and leaped into it. It might not be too late to intercept him at his club and have him take her to dinner.

**T**ED stroked the bright head on his breast. His lips were tremulous with a strange smile. "Carol, dear, don't cry, please don't. Let me tell you—this is all a frame-up. I got hurt all right, but I had the Doc make the yarn a little strong. I wanted to be sure Averil would chuck me, be sure you did love me. I've got two good legs left, haven't I, Doc?"

With an understanding smile the doctor took his departure. "Count them yourself and see. One of them's broken, but it's all there. If that girl of yours doesn't come out of here in five minutes I'll come in and carry her out."

Caroline lost her look of sternness, of frozen, invincible will. She began to sob, wildly, uncontrollably.

"Carol, darling, what are you crying about; don't you understand? I'm not really hurt," pleaded Ted. "It was a scheme to see whether you loved me."

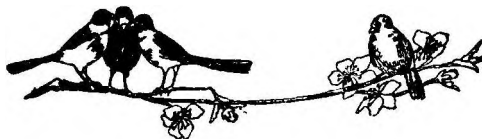
"I—I'm crying b-ecause you aren't hurt!" wailed Caroline. "Now I can't take care of you!"

He smiled. A heavenly smile. "Don't feel badly about it darling. I've really got some good news for you."

"I don't want any more good news except that you're going to walk—both legs—both legs!"

"But listen, angel, this is worth listening to. I made some money—a whole bunch—we can—"

The surgeon opened the door in time to hear. "They talk that way often when they come out of the ether—slightly unhinged in the mind for a few minutes. You run along home, little girl, and come again to-morrow."



## *Hidden Gold*

STARS in a gleaming shroud,  
 Blossoms that fall apart,  
 Willows along the lake,  
 Springs where forever start  
 Rivers of silver water,—  
 These, in my secret heart,  
 Gleam with the face of beauty,  
 Arrogant, misty, proud.

Purple and bright and bold  
 Flowers that burn afar,  
 Names that are set in song,  
 Songs that, repeated, are  
 The voice of the wind and the wave,  
 The sea and the star,—  
 These are my hoard of treasure.  
 These are my secret gold!

Sand on a placid shore,  
 Gulls with their grave gray wings,  
 Valleys where small homes lie,  
 Houses where heartease clings.  
 Seasons when roses banner  
 Doorstep and roof and door,—  
 These, and your face, shall give me  
 Beauty forevermore!

*Linda Fitzgerald.*

# Due Diplomacy

By William Freeman



*"I ought to kiss you, oughtn't I?" said Jack. "Queer, isn't it, that I never have before? Not even at Christmas time when there was mistletoe and stuff around!"*

**A**UNT SYLVIA opened the morning-room door with a click.

"Ann!"

Ann, curled in the window-seat, and giving her best imitation of a dormouse beginning its winter-sleep, stirred slightly.

"Ann!"

The dormouse wriggled, raised its head, and yawned. Ann's yawn was rather a fascinating affair. And if it lacked politeness, there were excuses. She had been up since something past six.

"Yes, Aunt Sylvia?"

"I have a letter from Jack. He's in very great distress."

"Again?"

"You might show at least a pretense of sympathy."

"Sorry, but Jack's in trouble so often,

isn't he? Last Friday, for instance."

"You can hardly blame the poor boy for writing to tell his own mother that his landlady has given him Irish stew for dinner four nights out of seven."

"The week before—"

"He wasn't responsible for the people in the apartment opposite starting a jazz quartet."

"Well"—Ann abandoned her defenses, which she had known from the first weren't worth while—"what is it this time?"

"The poor darling"—Aunt Sylvia's voice acquired a quaver—"has been trapped!"

"Trapped?"

"He's engaged to be married."

"Is that all?" Ann spoke almost snappily. "Well, he's old enough, isn't he? Twenty-four, and with as much in-

telligence as you'd expect of a boy—I mean a man,—of that age."

"Jack," flared Aunt Sylvia, "has one of the most brilliant intellects I ever met. He may climb to any height in his profession. If he were anyone else's son, I should say exactly the same"—(Ann suppressed one of her crooked little smiles)—"which makes it so much worse."

"How?"

"He has thrown himself away—utterly."

"Do you mean that the girl isn't worthy of him?"

"Worthy?" Aunt Sylvia gave a cracked laugh that in her own romantic ears sounded desperately pathetic. "Worthy! Do you know who and what she is?"

"How should I?"

"A housemaid—an Irish housemaid!"

"I don't see anything very frightful in that," mocked Ann. "Lots of quite lady-like girls go in for domestic service nowadays. And it isn't a crime to be Irish."

"But, Jack! With his artistic temperament!"

"She'll be able to cook his dinners, and look after him properly."

Ann received the best glare of which Aunt Sylvia's pale blue eyes were capable.

"I—I can't talk about it any more, Ann. It's too painful. . . . Except to say one thing. You must go and see Jack. I'd go myself, but my head is aching terribly. The mere thought of a visit is agony." (Aunt Sylvia was one of those people who classify any form of acute discomfort as 'agony'). "You will go up to-morrow after lunch. The 2:57 train will be the best. Find out everything you can, and if there's any hope of buying the girl off, you have full authority to offer any money that may be necessary."

"All right. Better let Jack know I'm coming, hadn't I?"

"There's no need. I—er—have already written. I sent a wire as soon as I read the letter." Aunt Sylvia moved towards the door. "Sorry to disturb your nap. Personally, I don't expect to get a wink of sleep until the whole frightful matter is settled."

Five minutes later, a succession of penetrating snores from the next room announced that Aunt Sylvia had been unduly pessimistic. But Ann's slumbers were not resumed. She had too many things to think about.

IT was a pleasant afternoon, and Ann's spirits rose in the sunshine and the warm breeze that stirred the trees in Washington Square where Jack had his studio. Mrs. Mason, the housekeeper, told her he was in. Ann made her way up to the big room on the second floor, where Jack was one day going to create a masterpiece, and tapped. She was annoyed at the rapidity with which her heart was beating.

"Yes?" said a voice—Jack's voice.

She turned the handle, and went in.

Jack was sprawling in a long-seated wicker chair near the window, his eyes fixed absently on a sketch pinned on the big easel. Ann, when she came near enough, saw that the sketch was a charcoal outline of a girl's head. At the foot of the easel was another.

"Hullo!" said Jack dully, and hoisted himself out of the chair. There was nearly six feet of him. But he looked nearer eighteen than twenty-four. "Mother said you'd probably be coming in. I'll ask Mrs. Mason to send up some tea."

"You needn't bother—yet, anyway," said Ann. "May I take off my hat?" She took it off, and hung it on a hook behind the door. The sunlight emphasized the warm crinkliness of her hair as she moved across the room and back again. "I'm awfully sorry to interrupt your work like this."

"I wasn't working."

"Your thoughts, then. I wouldn't have butted in at all, only—"

"That's all right. I know mother. And on the whole," added Jack generously, "I'm rather glad it's you who's come, because it'll give me a chance of explaining the thing to someone who's sensible, and who won't go off the deep end with a splash that puts the lid on everything."

"Disregarding mixed metaphors, that's the first compliment you've ever paid me, Jack!"



"Well, you know what I mean. Take a pcw—no, not the one with the palette on it. I'm going to walk up and down the room while I smoke. Sort of makes things casier."

"Go ahead," said Ann.

"To begin at the beginning," said Peter, "mother's a terrible strain for any able-bodied male over school age, with her 'now be sure to write each week, Jack, and tell me everything that happens!' I've told her, because if I hadn't she'd have suspected I was keeping something up my sleeve. Darn it all, Ann, she's always suspecting people of keeping things up their sleeve. You know she is!"

"I know," Ann admitted.

"So I shoved in all the news there was, pressed down and bulging over. But even that didn't satisfy her, and her last threat was to drop into the studio at intervals to make sure that I was really comfortable and really working hard. So I cultivated a habit of going out at odd times in case she did come."

"That," said Ann, "was weak. Awfully weak."

"I suppose so. But that was why I went over to the Benson's opposite."

"The jazz band people?"

"Yes. How quick you are at jumping at facts. You save such masses of explanations."

"Compliment Number Two!"

"Well, here's Number Three, while we're about it. What I mean is, you're looking fit—schoolgirl complexion, and all that, if you understand what I mean."

"Heavens, Jack, what's happened to you? Oh, I forgot. You're in love, aren't you? And people in love notice things that ordinary people don't notice. But go on. I didn't mean to interrupt you."

"I was telling you that I went over to the Benson's. To complain, originally. But they turned out to be an awfully nice people, so sorry if they'd disturbed me, and wouldn't I stay and have some supper. So I stayed. And they mentioned that they were going the next night to the 'Mercury,' a new place, just opened, where anyone can go in and frisk about for three or four hours for a dollar"

"You mentioned that, in your last week's letter to Aunt Sylvia."

"Did I? Well, anyway, I went. And there I met Eileen."

"What's her other name?"

"O'Brien."

"How thrilling! Tell me what she's like."

"Oh, slim and slight. Red hair. Lovely complexion—what I could see of it. And that wasn't much, because she was wearing a silk mask."

"Thrillinger still."

"Someone or other introduced us, and we got chatty. Her accent and grammar"—Jack hesitated—"they're not what I suppose you'd call aristocratic. But that, of course, can be adjusted."

"M'm!"

"I wish you wouldn't interrupt with those farmyard noises!"

"Sorry. How old is Miss O'Brien?"

"Twenty-two. She said that she was awfully lonely, and I told her that I was lonely, too. And when we said good-night—she's housemaid for some rich people on Park Avenue—she hinted that she wouldn't mind seeing me again. So we met. And the second time, because I couldn't help it, I kissed her. And afterwards again, and from that point onward, she seemed to think that we were engaged."

"And you hadn't the heart to undeceive her?"

"No, Ann. Poor little thing, she has a hard enough time, as it is! Up at seven, slaving away at the same monotonous jobs all day long."

"Lots of people have monotonous jobs."

"Not as monotonous as hers," insisted Jack loyally. "However, I suppose you can't expect any girl to sympathize with another girl's troubles. Did mother send you here to try to break the whole business?"

"She wanted to know the facts."

"What's going to happen when she knows them?"

**A** NN lifted her head from its attitude of deep thought.

"Jack, do you really want to marry this Eileen?"

Jack, with a deliberation that was a

trifle overdone, paused to adjust a picture on the wall before he answered.

"She's a dear, Ann, I can't bear to hurt her."

"But suppose she were willing to give you up—now?"

"She wouldn't be; you don't expect me to go to Park Avenue and ask her, do you? Her friends aren't admitted at this time of the day. Mrs. Tenison-Scott is awfully strict on that point."

"She'd probably let me see her, if I went and explained."

"She might. But—darn it all, Ann, it's not your job."

"Anything's my job," said Ann, with sudden bitter conviction.

"I'm not going to let you go."

"Yes, you are."

"I'm not."

"Then I'm going on Aunt Sylvia's account," said Ann. She had already reached the door. "I'll be back in an hour."

She left Jack standing with his hands in his pockets, and his back to the fireplace. His face indicated mixed and complex emotions.

She was gone just fifty minutes. Jack's "Come in!" when she rapped had a snappiness that indicated that the time had seemed longer to him.

"Well?"

"It's—it's all right," said Ann confusedly. And he saw, with a certain amount of astonishment, that she was trembling. It wasn't like Ann to be either confused or trembling.

"Then you've seen her?"

"Yes. And she's willing to release you."

Only conditionally."

"What do you mean by 'conditionally?'"

"She won't mind, provided it's on account of someone else you knew before you met her." Ann paused for breath. "Someone you might have been engaged to, or want to be engaged to, if it hadn't been for her."

"She's willing to sacrifice—"

"I'm not sure that it would be a sacrifice. But she has her pride. Of course, if you don't think it worth while, if you want to continue the engagement—"

"Worth while?" Jack was pacing the room feverishly. "Worth while!" Then

his elation vanished. "But I don't know half-a-dozen girls, all told."

"One would be enough," said Ann. She had regained her usual placidity.

"Yes, but you know what a she-dragon Mother has always been. There isn't a soul who—" Again he broke off. He blushed boyishly. He looked to Ann younger than ever. "Oh, say—"

"Well?"

"I've just had a brain-wave. Of course, you'll think I'm ridiculous, but—"

"I do wish," said Ann, "that you wouldn't keep leaving your sentences frayed at the edges."

"What I mean to say, there's you, isn't there? And we've known one another since we were both kids. And we've always been good friends. Well, why not?"

A wrinkle appeared in Ann's forehead.

"Are you trying to suggest—?"

"Who's leaving sentences with frayed edges now! Ann, why shouldn't we? If we got bored with one another, we could call the whole business off. Mother might have objected before, but she wouldn't object now."

ANN stared at him stiffly. She did not answer at once. And Jack stood, equally stiffly, and looked at Ann. It seemed to him that she had become changed, unfamiliar . . . distant.

He took a couple of stumbling paces nearer.

"Will you, Ann?"

"Oh, I don't mind," said Ann carelessly, and with her head averted.

"That'll be great. It's awfully dear of you."

Jack gave a husky, constrained laugh, and decreased the distance between them by another pace. "I ought to kiss you, oughtn't I? Queer, when you come to think of it, that I never have before. Not even at Christmas-time, when there was mistletoe and stuff about."

Ann made no comment.

He came closer still, and put a hand on each of her shoulders, and bent. His lips touched her cheek. Ann gave a little shiver. Jack kissed her again—a different kind of kiss, full on the lips.

"D-d-don't!" stammered Ann. And burst into tears.

Jack said thickly, "Look here, you

mustn't! There's no need—" and awkwardly abandoned the sentence, and drew her, quivering and sobbing, close into his arms. Close, and yet closer. It would be difficult to say which of their hearts were throbbing the more wildly.

Said Jack, after a long interval.

"Ann, it's a staggering discovery to have made, but I'm sure that I've been in love with you for years and years!"

"Have you?" said Ann in a small voice.

"Yes. It's lucky that I realized it before some other fellow came along."

"Is it?"

"Ann"—he put a paint-stained finger under her chin, and tilted it, and tried to look into her eyes. But he couldn't, because Ann resolutely kept them closed.

"Ann, darling—"

"Well?"

"You've never loved anyone else, have you?"

**A** NN kept him waiting for one exquisite, agonizing, heart-rending instant before she answered. And then he could scarcely catch the little "no."

"Thank Heaven. If there'd been a secret love-affair, anything that I didn't know of—"

"There—there is."

"What is it?" demanded Jack, when he could speak at all.

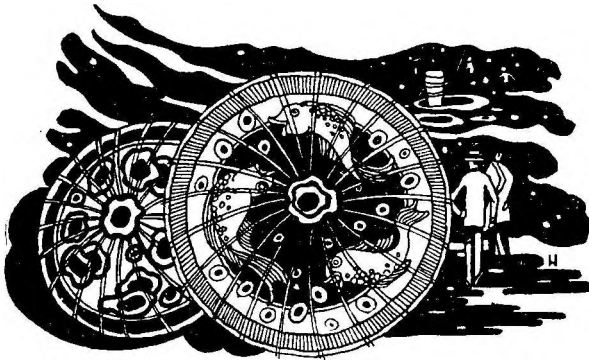
"I didn't mean to tell you yet awhile," said Ann. "But I suppose I may as well. You see when you took this studio, I was worried. I knew Aunt Sylvia, and I was afraid that her supervision might drive you into marrying some girl—any girl—the wrong girl. And when you wrote and said that you were going to the Mercury to dance, the feeling was so strong that I decided to go too."

"You did!"

"Yes. Aunt Sylvia happened to be away at the time, and it wasn't hard for me to go to the Mercury without her knowing it. And sure," concluded Ann, her head on one side, and a wide grin brightening her face, "it's plain that if you fell in love with an Irish housemaid with a red wig, of whom your mother wouldn't approve at all, at all, why, when you wanted her to release you, I'd always be around, although you've never realized before that I occupy the same earth with you!"

"Ann! It was you?"

"Who else?" she said triumphantly. "and I always knew you'd be just that blind when you fell in love!"

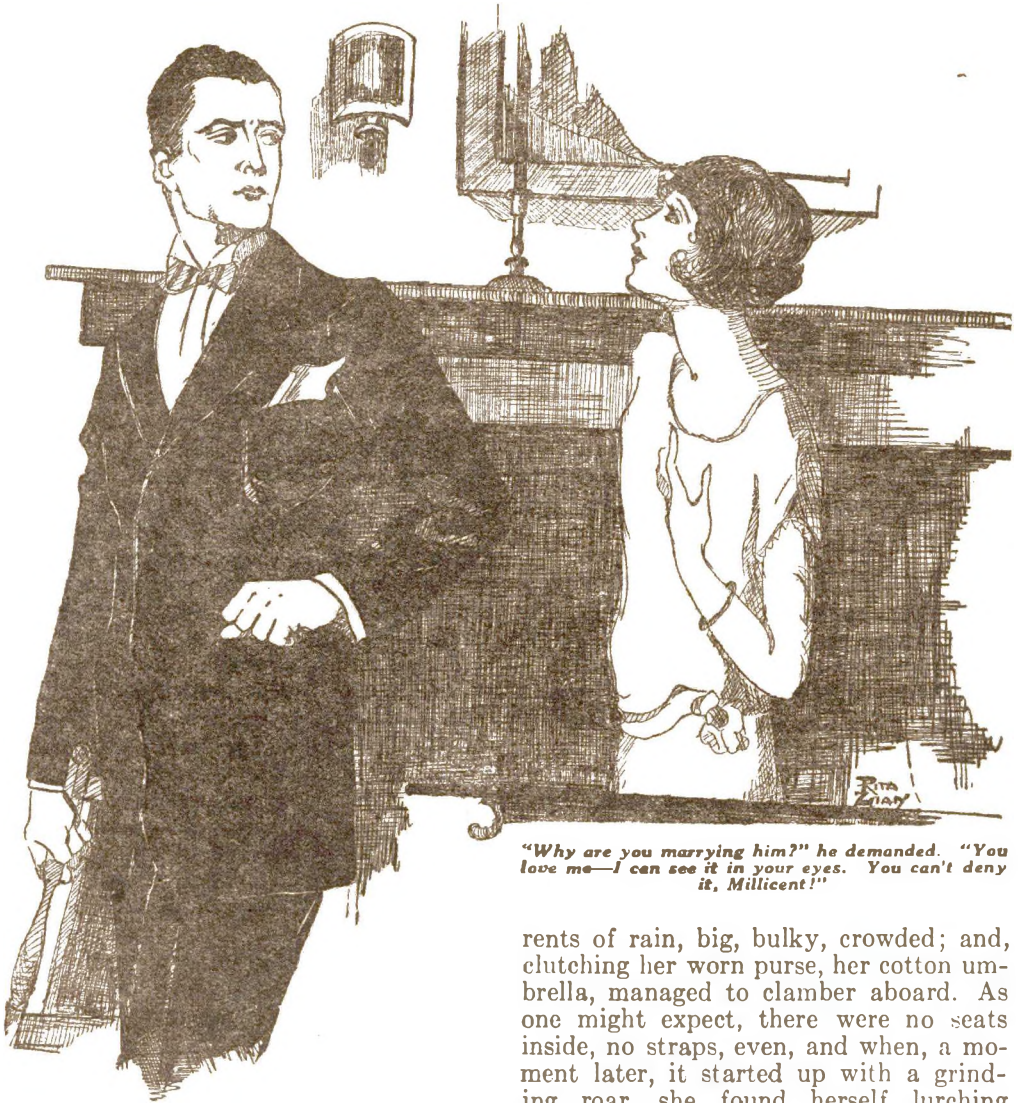


*"Peacock Parade"—a gorgeous, glamorous romance at the seashore—one of Dorothy Dow's best—will appear soon.*

*It will delight every feminine heart!*

# The Miracle

By Penelope Russ



*"Why are you marrying him?" he demanded. "You love me—I can see it in your eyes. You can't deny it, Millicent!"*

**T**HE rain rushed in a silver flood down the crowded city streets, and Millicent's cheap little shoes that needed half-soleing were soaked from stepping into slippery puddles. Millicent's shabby mended suit was dripping, and whole showers of rain lodged in her small dark hat, its one brave feather drooping forlornly, as she stood waiting for the bus.

She saw it approach through the tor-

rents of rain, big, bulky, crowded; and, clutching her worn purse, her cotton umbrella, managed to clamber aboard. As one might expect, there were no seats inside, no straps, even, and when, a moment later, it started up with a grinding roar, she found herself lurching perilously to and fro in a swaying, damp mass of humanity.

She really didn't mind the lurching. She couldn't fall; she was far too closely packed in with other people. But, she thought, it must be uncomfortable for the other people when you fell on them unexpectedly. It must be especially uncomfortable for the nice young man directly behind her.

She was just wondering absently, after her fourth or fifth lurch into him,

whether or not she should beg his pardon when he touched her shoulder:

"Perhaps," he suggested, ever so politely, "if you'd hold on to me," and extended his arm.

She took it, thanking him with her gentian-colored eyes, and was immediately grateful that he didn't smile, or, as so many men would have done, begin to make advances to her. He merely nodded pleasantly, and quite carelessly, and continued to stare over her head out of the window.

She stole a glance at his profile. He was handsome. She was just beginning to wish that he would smile when, in a sudden, terrifying moment, she was aware that the whole bus was lurching to one side. There was a screech and grind of emergency brakes—a woman screamed—someone cried, "The bus is skidding!" and she was whirled dizzily this way and that in a chaotic maelstrom of arms and legs and frantic faces.

Out of her sudden, stark terror, out of the whirling nothingness, she remembered only one thing: there was an arm about her, a steady arm, and in her ear, a pleasant firm voice that said, in a low, reassuring tone: "Don't be frightened; I'll take care of you!" and looking up, in the last moment, just before the blackness swallowed up everything, she found herself gazing into the steady eyes of the young man who had extended his arm to her a few moments earlier.

Then came the deep deafening silence, the dizzying darkness.

**Y**OU'RE safe—quite safe!" Someone was saying it over and over to her, like a chant. She opened her eyes slowly, then shut them again. Through a haze of rain, she saw the great overturned bus lying like an enormous bug on its side in a ditch a short distance away. There were clanging ambulances, white-uniformed figures, ominous-looking stretchers.

She looked up dazedly to find herself face to face with the nice young man. "Oh—it's you," she managed to whisper, and struggled, with sudden panic in her eyes, to see if she could rise.

He was saying again, reassuringly: "Really you're all right. You're not

hurt at all. Just upset from the shock. You'll be fit as ever in a moment or so. It only got," his voice was lowered, "those in front. But it's a miracle more weren't hurt. But it didn't touch you or me," he finished gratefully.

She managed to get to her feet. "Why, I *am* all right," she said in faint surprised voice, "only I'm a bit shaky." She smiled at him bravely. "Did you manage to save my umbrella and purse?" she questioned.

He handed them to her with a flourish. (He had *such* nice eyes.) She took them, hesitated a second, uncertainly, and then whispered: "Thank you, and good-by."

She turned to go, but he called after her. "Wait!" and hurried to her side.

"Certainly not 'good-bye'!" he said, disappointedly. "You don't really mean good-by, do you? I'd like awfully to know a girl like you. I'd thought you might let me take you out to supper tonight. I'm rather a lonely chap," his voice went on wistfully, then brightening: "Can't we have supper somewhere? I'd like to talk to you. I know it's a bit irregular, but since," he smiled suddenly, looking at the bus, "we met through a miracle, surely you aren't going to turn me down?"

"I'm afraid—" she began, and stopped. She was just about to shake her head, regretfully but firmly, for, after all, it was only six months since she had come from the small New England town where she had been brought up with the distinct understanding that young women did not accept strange young men's invitations to supper, but, with the words of refusal on her lips, she noticed his overcoat!

**I**T was quite the shabbiest coat she had ever seen, torn, frayed, and ragged. Traveling down, her eyes saw that his shoes needed repair far worse than her own. She looked up in surprise. Yes, he did have on a new hat, and a clean collar, and he was clean-shaven; she had thought—

He saw her looking at his overcoat and smiled.

"Terrible, isn't it?" he said, totally unembarrassed.

She said, vaguely: "About supper—" and as she said it she saw an odd look come into his eyes.

"Oh," he said shortly, "well, I guess I am rather a sight to take a girl to supper."

"Hush!" she cried. "It wasn't that." She was thinking rapidly.

He had been kind to her. He was lonely; and, probably, poorer than she. She had a sudden inspiration:

"Perhaps we can have supper together," she offered, "if you'll let me cook it!"

Before he could reply she said, quickly, smiling: "Really, I can cook! I have the smallest little stove in the world, and we'll have," she counted on her fingers, "cream of celery soup, tomato salad and lamb chops!"

He looked down at her in surprise, suddenly gentle.

"Why I'd feel honored to let you cook for me," he said.

"I'll let you do the dishes!" she promised gaily. Then they were walking along, under the cotton umbrella, laughing as they went through the silver, slanting rain.

The little chintz-curtained room was gay with their laughter. Outside the rain drenched itself against the windows; the streets were slippery and mournful, but inside there was laughter and courage.

"What do you do for a living?" Millicent asked him, tasting her soup.

For a moment he appeared oddly discomfited. "Why do you ask me that?"

"It's a perfectly logical question, isn't it?" she replied, opening her gentian-colored eyes wide.

He appeared to consider.

"Well, yes," he conceded, "it is. So I'll give you a truthful answer. I'm—" he stopped a moment, then went on: "I'm out of a job."

Millicent's gentian-colored eyes sympathized and kind small hands touched his shoulder encouragingly. "Don't you worry," she said, in a steady small voice. "You'll get another job. Though," she went on, with a distressing minor tone in her voice, "it's pretty hard until you do get another job. I know. Before I got my job at the hosiery counter at

the Avenue Department Store," she confided, "I had a terrible time. Whenever I think of it!" she shook her head sadly.

"Tell me about it," said the young man, whose name, he had told her, was Peter Richards.

"There's nothing much to tell," she went on, a moment later. "I went all over town just hunting a job. I couldn't find anything. It was just after Father died about a year ago and we left Orchardtown, Anne and I."

"Anne?" he questioned.

Suddenly, to his surprise, she put her small hands before her face. "I—I can't talk about it," she whispered. "Don't ask me."

HE didn't ask her, but he came over to her gently and patted her shoulder while she dried her tears. Five moments later she was smiling again. She put on a perfectly enormous blue and white apron and cleaned up the dishes, while he wiped them.

They were beginning to feel like old friends.

"Tell me," Peter said, "are you happy?"

"Happy?" she whispered vaguely. "I don't know. What is happiness?"

"It's what we've got now," he said, suddenly, in desperate earnestness. "It's something free and rather gay, and tremendously splendid. It hasn't anything to do with one's station in life or with money," he spoke with conviction.

"Money?" murmured Millicent doubtfully. "Happiness hasn't anything to do with money?"

He looked at her in surprise.

"Why, no," he said slowly. "What could money have to do with happiness?"

Millicent turned her face away suddenly, her voice trembling in the hush that followed:

"Sometimes money can have a terrible lot to do with happiness."

The dishes were wiped and put away; the crumbs brushed; the small room tidied. As they sat together on the cretonne window-seat (that was really an old packing-box fixed up by Millicent's deft fingers), Peter said:

"This is such a cozy little room. I

love it here. It was wonderful of you to cook for me."

"Ye-e-s," she drawled. "It is cozy. But this room isn't—"

"Isn't what?" he prompted.

"Isn't what I'm going to have some day soon," she said the last word softly.

"What do you mean?" he asked, quickly.

She looked out of the window for a moment. How should she tell him? She considered her small hands gravely, then spoke:

"There's a man," she began. "on the board of trustees at the Avenue Department Store who wants to marry me."

There was a sudden hush in the cozy little room, and she spoke quickly to fill in the silence.

"He's not so very old, and not so very bald, and he's only a little bit stout," her voice sounded queerly pathetic, "and he has whole mints of money."

"You love him?" asked Peter slowly.

She considered again, gravely.

"I don't think that enters into the matter," she said, gently. "He's very rich. He could give me everything I want."

She looked up amazed, for Peter had risen and walked swiftly across the room. He picked up his shabby overcoat, and his hand was on the door-knob. His nice eyes were very stern.

She sped after him. "Why, Mr. Richards, Peter!" she gasped. "What in the world is the matter with you?"

"I didn't think it of you," he said, with a strange bitterness in his voice. "But women are all alike. So you're only a fortune hunter after all, like all the others."

She touched his arm. "You're being ridiculous," she said quietly. "Peter, don't quarrel with me. I want you for my friend." She smiled suddenly. "I haven't said I'd marry the man with money!"

Her smile was infectious and he smiled back. He flung aside his overcoat and took her hand. "What you need," he cried, "is a good cheering up. You've been brooding over something. Forget the man with money. Let's go to a movie!" He reached into his pocket and drew out a dollar bill.

"Oh, but I can't let you spend your last cent—"

"You fed me. Now I'm taking you out. Get your hat!"

He was splendidly masterful! What could she do but obey? They left the room laughing.

Miraculously, it had stopped raining. The night was clear and beautiful and there were shining stars, and the wet spring trees had a delicious smell, like woods after a May shower. They walked arm-in-arm, laughing.

SHE stopped him suddenly: "Why, there's Officer Milligan!" she cried, "leaning against the lamp-post. I must speak to him."

She started across the street, but he held out a detaining hand.

"Wait!" he whispered sharply in her ear. "Did you say Officer Milligan?"

"Why, yes," she said, looking up into his eyes wonderingly. "He's my friend. Just about the only friend I have here in the city. I speak to him every evening when I'm out walking; this is his beat. He's very nice to me."

Officer Milligan was crossing the street. "Hello," his booming jovial voice came to them, "and is it Miss Mason? And how are ye this fine evenin'?"

They could see his buttons glistening beneath the lamplight as he came nearer. But what was Peter saying? Millicent looked at him in startled surprise.

"I—I'll wait for you around the corner," he whispered, hurriedly. "Don't forget—around the corner. I can't explain, but Milligan mustn't see me."

He was gone, and she looked after him with incredulous eyes, a dark fear in her heart. Afraid to meet a policeman, an officer of the law! It could mean only one thing . . .

She spoke only a few brief moments with Officer Milligan, then sped down the street, around the corner. There he was, huddled against a building. He didn't see her coming. Every mother's instinct in her, every gentle impulse, rose. He mustn't be afraid! Lots of men had committed crimes and had come back. Whatever he'd done he could live it down. Dear Peter! So that was why he was "out of a job."

She went up to him and held out her hand gently:

"Peter," she whispered. "You musn't be afraid . . . of policemen. It doesn't matter what you've done."

She stopped suddenly and peered into his face. It was working strangely. What was the matter with him?

She touched his arm:

"Won't you tell me all about it, Peter? Perhaps I can help," she encouraged.

To her utter bewilderment, she saw that he was laughing!

"I don't understand," she faltered, and he cried, between gusts of laughter, "don't try to!" But, ten minutes later, when before their eyes on a silver screen romance and adventure walked shinningly, the laughter went out of him, and he touched her hand humbly. He said, seriously:

"Forgive me for laughing. Some day I'll tell you all about it. Millicent! What a wonderful little pal you'd make for a man!"

She didn't question him further.

**THREE** weeks passed, three weeks of evening walks through the fragrant May dusk, of gay little dinners at cheap, unfrequented restaurants, of shy hand-clasps in scented, dark movie theaters. Peter had a position now. He was rather vague about it, but still he was working. He had bought a new suit and he brought her dear little gifts; a book, a small vase, flowers.

"Peter," she would thank him with shining eyes, "but you musn't spend your money on me!"

"I want to, Millicent," he would say gently, looking down at her in the splendid masterful way she loved. "Every time I look in your eyes, I want to give you things. Oh, not vases, not flowers, not books. Something more precious, more enduring."

"Happiness?" she would whisper, and he answered:

"I would give my life to make you happy!"

For he was—she, herself was forced to admit it!—very much in love with her, at the end of three short weeks.

What was worse, she was falling in

love with him. She faced the enormous truth squarely. Because, after all, she could never marry him. It was utterly, irrevocably impossible. It wasn't the fact that he *might* have a criminal record. It wasn't the fact that he had been afraid to meet Officer Milligan. It was something far, far more important. It was Anne.

With a sudden, fierce gesture, she sped across the room and picked up Anne's faded photograph, pressing it close to her. Dear Anne! Patient, gentle Anne! Anne, her sister, who must be taken care of.

She had just had a letter from her, and she opened the bureau drawer and drew it out with trembling fingers. She had received it only yesterday, along with another letter from Anne's doctor, kind old Dr. Winthrop, who had told her, without mincing words, that unless Anne were taken away from the little town where Millicent had left her in the care of a housekeeper, immediately, taken far away in the clear fresh air of the West, he could give her no hope. Anne's poor affected lung was growing worse.

But Anne's letter was brave and even a little gay. Millicent glanced over the familiar phrases:

*"I am much worse. The Doctor says I must get away at once, but don't worry, dear. I know how hard things are for you. I'm quite happy, only I miss you so."*

Anne was dying, that was what it amounted to, dying because she. Millicent, didn't have the money to send her away. Money! What was it Peter had once said about money? Scornfully, with contempt in his voice he had said: "What has happiness to do with money?" But Peter, of course, hadn't known, didn't dream about Anne.

**SHE** had never told him about her sister, after her one outburst of tears. Peter had asked no questions, although his eyes had often wandered to the faded photograph. And she, in return, hadn't questioned him about Officer Milligan. She had accepted him



with full trust and he, her, unquestioning.

She trusted him now. She would always trust him. Deep in her heart she knew that, whatever he had done, he was honest and fine and true, now.

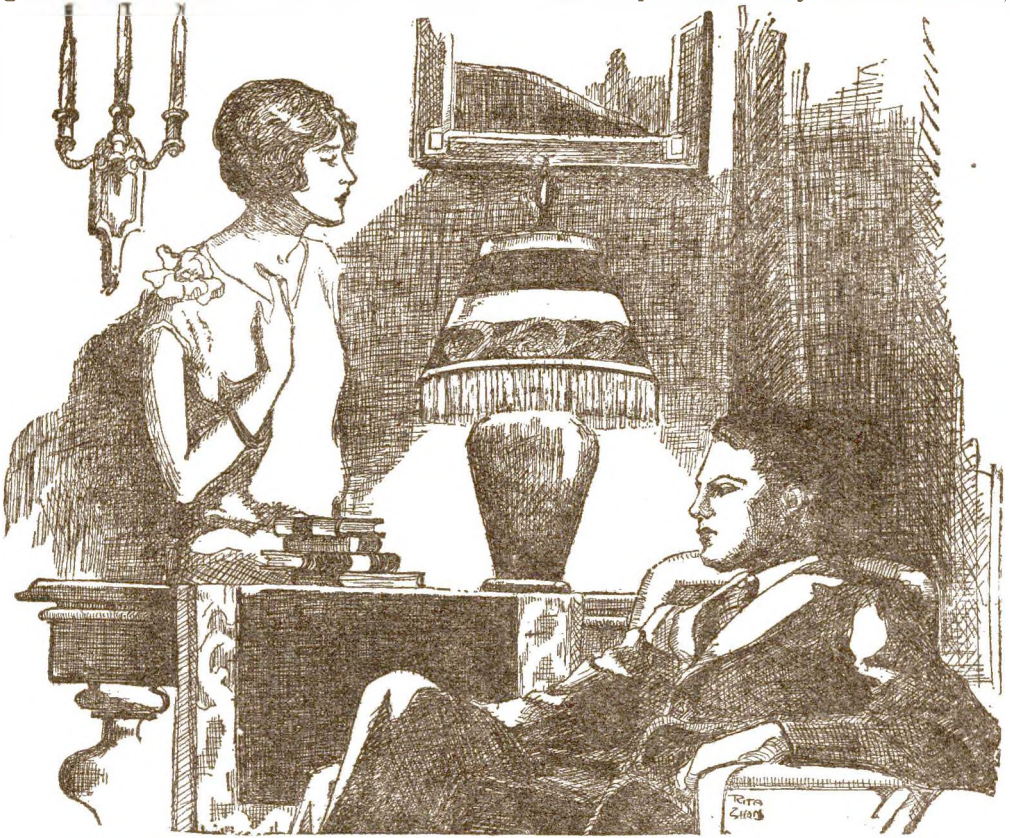
But that was the secret reason she hadn't told him about Anne, after she'd got to know him. And that was her

prison bars, herself weeping before them, Officer Milligan taking her sternly away. Anne would still be dying and Peter's sacrifice for nothing.

So she didn't tell. Very quietly, in deadly earnest, she made up her mind.

To-night would be their last night together.

She crept home dully from the office,



*"I thought you were different from other girls," said Peter. "I put you on a pedestal—and adored you. But you're greedy for furs and silks and jewels—just like all the others!"*

secret fear. For, suppose she *did* tell him about Anne, about her desperate need for money to send Anne away, knowing that, as he had told her, he would "give his life for her happiness"? She saw it all so clearly; the deep temptation to him to get the money for her some way, any way.

That was the secret fear. The way in which he'd try to get the money, the knowledge that he'd stop at nothing for her happiness, even theft.

If she had told him, inevitably it would happen. She saw Peter behind

slipped out of her shabby mended suit into a pale buttercup yellow crepe, her one good dress, that Peter loved, and sat listening for his footsteps.

They came up the stairs, swiftly, happily. She heard him whistling, heard his rap on the door, and flung it open. "Millicent!" he cried. "You look lovely!" his eyes were not on the dress; they were on her face. He cried:

"You can't guess what's happened!"

He was like a young, excited boy. She managed to smile wanly, although there were tears in her eyes.

He thrust before her a fragrant bunch of roses, of lovely pale pink roses.

"Got them at the corner from the old flower man," he said, happily. "We're going to celebrate to-night, you and I! Millicent!" he came closer, "I got a raise to-day and I want—I want to ask you—"

She put a trembling hand over his eager lips.

"No," she whispered, "No."

"But why?" he cried, suddenly chilled by her white face, her tragic eyes. "Millicent! What's the matter?"

She turned her face away; she whispered through white lips:

"Peter—I—" she faltered and then stopped.

"Go on," he said, in a low voice.

"I'm going to marry the man with money," she said slowly. "I've promised," her voice sounded dull and lifeless in the sudden hush that hung ominously over the room.

He was looking at her strangely; all the happiness had somehow drained out of his eyes.

She heard herself saying:

"We're going to be married to-morrow."

**T**HE utter finality of that to-morrow choked in her throat. She walked swiftly away from Peter and sank into a chair. He followed her dazedly.

"But, Millicent," he stammered, "I thought—I hoped—"

He was breathing quickly; almost gasping, as though he had been running some hard and dangerous race. He cried out suddenly:

"Millicent! Do you love him?"

His dark eyes, wildly hurt, pierced her own. How could she lie to him? She closed her eyes.

He towered over her. "Answer me," he said slowly, in a queer, choked voice. "Do you love him?"

She raised her blue eyes to his; she whispered only one word:

"Peter!"

He dropped to his knees beside her.

"Then for God's sake, why are you marrying him?" he demanded, wildly. "You love me. I can see it in your eyes. Look at me, Millicent!" he pleaded.

She only shook her head bitterly; she turned her face away again.

Suddenly he stiffened, and a hard look came into his eyes.

"I see," he said shortly.

Then, as though he were weighing each word, he went on:

"So it's true then. You're marrying for money?"

She didn't reply, but kept her head averted, and he could feel her trembling.

He was suddenly savage and bitter; he felt a fierce need of hurting her as she had hurt him:

"And I had thought you were different from all other women. When I think of how I put you on a pedestal, and yes, I worshipped you! And now you're selling yourself, for that's what it amounts to, just because you're afraid to face poverty with me, because you're greedy for silks, and furs, and jewels, I suppose. Like all the others."

His voice, angry, savage, rose and beat in her ears; she covered them with her small, trembling hands but she couldn't shut it out; her eyes, frantic, sought Anne's picture and clung. She must remember Anne's pitcous big eyes; Anne's frail, dying dearness. She must remember that Anne would die unless she made this sacrifice.

He had stopped talking. He was picking up his hat and had his hand on the doorknob. The door was opening. It was shut; she heard it slam. She heard retreating footsteps. He had gone away.

**B**UT he had hardly been gone a moment when the door opened again. Through it, before her bewildered, tear-blinded eyes, appeared Peter and Officer Milligan!

Officer Milligan was flushed and triumphant. "Got ye now," he was chuckling. "An' to make sure ye'll not slip away, I'm holdin' ye tight! It's the reward I'm after, the reward for findin' ye!"

Peter stood silent, looking at her with dull eyes. She sat utterly still for a moment, for only a moment, then like a small whirlwind, she flung herself upon Officer Milligan:

"You can't take him away to prison! You can't! You can't!" she was sobbing.

Officer Milligan looked at her in surprise.

"Sure, an' what is he to you, Miss Mason?" he asked, surprise in his booming voice.

"What is he to me?" she faltered. "Why, he's just everything in the whole world to me," and, to Officer Milligan's surprise, frankly unashamed, she flung her arms about Peter's neck.

"I don't care," she sobbed, "who hears me. I love you, Peter! I love you just terribly."

Peter's lips trembled, but his eyes were still stern:

"You love me," he said, in a queer, choked voice, "but you're still going to marry the man with money?"

She buried her face in her hands.

"You don't understand," she faltered desperately. "I've got to marry the man with money. Wait." She left him and walked swiftly across the room and returned with a letter. She handed it to Peter with trembling fingers.

While he was reading it she went on:

"Peter, she's dying! Don't you understand? I've got to get money to send her away. She's depending on me. Peter, Peter, *now* do you understand?"

He was looking down at her with a strange light in his eyes.

"But, Millicent!" he said, with wonder in his voice, "why, why didn't you tell me?"

She flung out her hand in a fierce gesture:

"What could you do to help?" she murmured. "You were out of a job, and when you did get one, you didn't make much money. I know. And I was afraid—afraid—"

She looked at Officer Milligan suddenly.

"Afraid of what?" asked Peter wonderingly.

"Afraid, if I told you about Anne, you'd find *some* way to get the money," she went on in a small, weak voice.

"Of course I'd find some way," cried Peter. "Why didn't you tell me, let me help you—"

Suddenly she lifted her head; she faced him squarely.

"Peter," she said slowly. "You were afraid to meet Officer Milligan. It could

mean only one thing. You had broken the law once and were wanted by the police. I didn't want you to—steal—for me."

There was a funny hush, broken at length by Officer Milligan's rumble of laughter.

"He's wanted by the police, all right," he said, "but Richard Peterson never had to steal anything, Miss Mason. Not old man Peterson's son!"

Richard Peterson!

Dimly, somewhere in the back of her mind, she saw a newspaper headline. *Richard Peterson, Prominent Young Club Man Disappears.* Richard Peterson! There was only one Richard Peterson, young, spoiled, fabulously wealthy, only son of old Norval Peterson whose millions were a legend in the city. Surely Peter, with his shabby overcoat, his gay contempt for money couldn't be Richard Peterson?

But, as it turned out, he was!

HE explained it to her gently, holding her dearly close to him:

"Yes, Millicent, I am *the* Richard Peterson. I quarreled with my father. Do you know why, Millicent? He wanted me to get married. Married! And ever since I was a kid, every woman who's ever come near me has wanted just one thing—my money! You can't imagine how terrible it is to feel you're never liked for just yourself. All my life I've longed to be liked for myself, without any thought of money. I made up my mind to find someone who'd care for me, not my wealth. Someone brave and gay and courageous, a real comrade. I cut myself off from the old life; I disappeared completely. I was sure I'd found that someone in you. And then—"

He stopped a moment before he went on:

"But it's all right now, Millicent, darling. I'm glad I have the money now, because we can use it for Anne. We can send her away."

Millicent lifted a shining, bewildered face.

"Surely I must be dreaming," she murmured. "Miracles like this don't happen."

He drew her closer.

"They *do* happen," he said, softly, "to people like you. You're so brave and wonderful."

They had forgotten Officer Milligan, and he coughed with embarrassment.

They drew apart; Millicent was blushing beautifully; she was radiant.

"Not that I like to be interruptin' ye," he said, apologetically, "but after

all, yer old father's waitin' to see ye. And I," he chuckled, suddenly, "sure an' I'm waitin' fer the reward fer findin' ye."

"Officer Milligan," cried Peter gaily, "there's just one favor I want to ask of you before you take me to Father. And that is," he looked down tenderly at Millicent, "take me to the City Hall. I want to get a marriage license."



### THE VEILED PRIESTESS

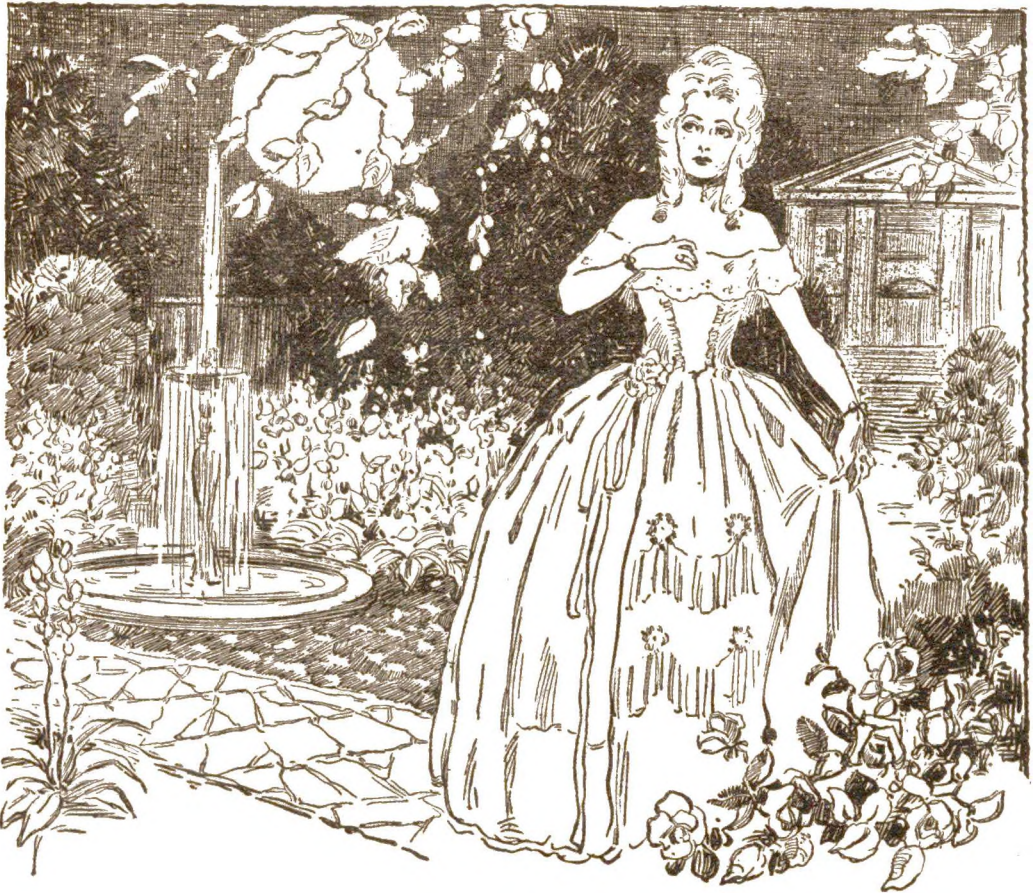
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# Wait For Love!

By Maysie Greig



*The tiny white-haired lady circled the fountain, her beckoning hand gleaming through the silver-shot darkness. "Wait for love!" she called in a voice like a muted violin note, "Wait for love!"*

"**L**OVE," said Mary's mother, "is not essential. A clever woman can get along nicely without it."

She raised a dainty, freshly manicured hand to retouch her eyelashes with mascara, and added that it was up to a girl to get the most out of life. By that she meant position and money and soft cushioned living.

Aurelia Mansfield said a lot more that morning as she sat before her lavender enameled toilet table, her hands, like soft white birds flying, fluttering among the gold and crystal perfume bottles and tiny cream jars. But the upshot of it was that Mary must marry John Finchly.

"It isn't only his wealth," she concluded softly, "lots of crude people have that, but think of his lovely home in Virginia, his town house here, his cars, his yacht. Such a beautiful background for you, Mary."

And when Mary remained dangerously quiet, she added with her affected, tinkling laugh, "John would be an ideal husband. You musn't forget that a sweetheart is one thing—but a husband is quite a different proposition."

Mary spoke then, the first time that afternoon, and her voice was pleading, halting, afraid.

"But mother, Barry and I—"

Mrs. Mansfield swung around on the little stool before the toilet table. Mary

sometimes thought that when her mother died a ghost of her would haunt that toilet table. A ghost in a fluffy lilac negligee forever retouching her cheeks with rouge or dusting her long white throat with scented powder.

"'Barry and I'" she mimicked the girl. "Silly child! I won't listen to such nonsense!"

"It isn't nonsense," cried Mary hotly. A flaming thing she was by this time, flaming inwardly, flaming outwardly until even the copper tint in her curly brown hair seemed to have become a decided red. "We love each other and —"

"Love? Bah! You're a pair of babes in the wood! Barry Benson, with nothing to offer you but his good looks and conceit"

"He isn't conceited," came Mary's furious little voice.

"Well, he will be in time. Show me an actor who isn't. Besides none of them are to be trusted. Marry him and you'll find that within a year he'll be making love to his leading lady off stage as well as on. Of course, you think him romantic, but romance never paid the grocer's bills. And what of Flavia Forrester, his leading lady—he's mad about her."

"That isn't true!" cried Mary, springing angrily off the bed and tearing the lavender taffeta coverlet that was so typical of her mother.

**M**R. MANSFIELD smiled maddeningly. She waited long enough to spray a wisp of a handkerchief with a French scent before she replied, "Maybe it is and maybe it isn't. But the vaguest gossip usually has something solid behind it. Anyhow that's immaterial. Listen, child," and she leaned forward, marshalling her facts together and sending them out as though they were little soldiers going into battle for her. As in fact they were. Only what she was fighting for was the ability to continue indulging herself in all the pretty luxuries that were the breath of life to her. Mary's happiness was rather incidental.

She was in debt. Yes, alas—and she raised those lovely white hands of hers skywards in a pathetic gesture. It was

for Mary's sake she had involved herself financially. To give her child an expensive education, pretty clothes and the chance to marry well. As for herself, she didn't matter. She supposed that if Mary wouldn't marry John, then she, her mother, would end her days in some old ladies' home endowed by charity. Here two tears trickled down her delicately rouged cheeks. Mrs. Mansfield could cry very effectively—on occasion. Mary might have laughed if she hadn't pitied her shallow, selfish mother. The thought of Aurelia Mansfield, who didn't look a day over thirty, in an old ladies' home was ludicrous.

Now was the time to tell Mary that she had already accepted John's invitation for them both to visit him and his mother in their old Virginian home. She had even intimated to John that Mary might eventually accept him.

"If you love me at all you'll go," she pleaded finally. "Surely you'll do this much for your poor old mother?"

So in the end Mary gave in. At seventeen one doesn't realize how selfish even a mother can be. She had herself heard the rumor that linked Barry's name with Flavia Forrester's. She had seen him lunching with her at the Ritz, only once, to be sure, but there might be any number of engagements she knew nothing about. A stunning creature, Barry's leading lady. A famous beauty with raven black hair and a sophisticated kind of grace that would have got her into the Follies if she hadn't been more interested in drama.

Mary saw Barry the afternoon before she and her mother left for the south.

Barry couldn't understand at all why she was going.

"But, sweetheart, I simply won't hear of it!" he cried in that deep husky voice of his that so thrilled all the matinee girls, but which somehow rang twice as sincere when he was talking to Mary. "That man John Finchly is in love with you. Don't you know that, little innocent? He only wants to get you down there so he can force a promise from you to marry him. And I won't hear of your marrying anyone except me. Do you hear that, sweetheart? You're my own baby girl."

**I**N his arms, standing on tip toe, she reached barely to his shoulder. She felt so small snuggling up against him. Now, leaning down, he kissed her on her soft little mouth. Once. Twice. Three times for luck.

"Oh, Barry, I love you," she sighed, clasping her hands in a little knot behind his neck.

"Course you do!" he laughed back at her—only there was a certain tender husky note in that laugh of his. "And you make up your mind that I'm never going to lose you. No, sir, wherever you go I'll follow and bring you back to me. Even if I have to slay a couple of dragons and force my way into some wicked magician's castle to claim you!"

She sighed happily. Seating himself, he pulled her down on to his knees, rocking her backwards and forwards as though she had been a three-year-old.

"So you've got to end all this nonsense talk about going south," he told her presently.

"But Barry dear, I can't now. Mother would be terribly disappointed! She's looking forward so much to the change."

"Why doesn't she marry John Finchly herself if she's so anxious to have his money in the family?" Barry grumbled, forgetting for the moment, that after all, Mrs. Mansfield was Mary's mother.

But Mary wouldn't stand for a word against her.

"Barry—how mean of you! You know mother doesn't think of herself, ever. It's all for me and my future. I hate you for saying anything so unjust!"

At that precise moment Mrs. Mansfield herself fluttered into the room. Seeing Barry there, she immediately settled herself like a pretty graceful cat among the gay taffeta cushions on the sofa. Evidently she had no intention of leaving.

She smiled charmingly at Barry. She was always sugary sweet to him when Mary was present.

"How nice of you to drop around, Barry," she purred. "Why don't you bring that charming Miss Flavia Forrester in to tea sometime? I'd love to meet her. I consider her so talented."

Barry sat upright. He looked like a wrathful Greek god with his dark eyebrows drawn together.

"I'm afraid Miss Forrester and I are mere business acquaintances," he remarked stiffly.

Mrs. Mansfield shook a mocking finger at him.

"Oh, you young men of to-day! Don't think you deceive me, please. Why, Mary and I saw you lunching with her at the Ritz the day before yesterday!"

Barry couldn't deny that. Leaving a rehearsal Flavia Forrester had suggested that they lunch together. "I want to talk about a play a friend of mine has written," she had said. "It's good and there's a wonderful part in it for you."

**B**UT at that moment Barry was too angry to explain. He was finding it so difficult to remember that Mrs. Mansfield was Mary's mother, that he thought he had better go. Anyhow it was getting late and he had to change and be at the theatre by seven. He hoped that Mary would see him to the door so that he could tell her about his lunch with Flavia. But she didn't, and they parted with that uncomfortable little misunderstanding between them. A misunderstanding that sent Mary to her room to cry all over one of her mother's lovely brocaded sofa. Also it made her ever so much nicer to John Finchly when she met him, than she had intended to be.

Finchly Court was a lovely old home—from the outside, at least. Inside it was like a tomb where laughter and happiness had been slowly suffocated. John was tall and broad and stern, with a clipped way of speaking and eyes that coveted the fresh, sparkling youth of Mary but couldn't really appreciate it.

He wanted her for his wife much as he had wanted the lovely inlaid piano for his drawing room. He had decided that his home needed youth and children's voices but his old mother seemed sceptical of Mary from the first. "A flighty little thing. Not fine enough for my John," she would mutter to herself. A grim old lady. An old lady who had forgotten how to smile and who hobbled from one room to another on a black ebony cane like some bent, wizened witch. Even Mrs. Mansfield found her trying.

"Anyhow I don't have to live with

them—once Mary is married," she consoled herself. "As likely as not I'll be able to get John to give me enough money to go abroad for a year!" But she took care to be ever so diplomatic. She was just a forlorn little widow woman. And so devoted to her child. "I'm afraid I'll die of loneliness when Mary marries," she remarked one day to John and his mother.

But Mrs. Finchly, who was a shrewd old soul, commented dryly. "I think you'll survive."

"Oh, I suppose so," returned Mary's mother, ready for every occasion. "The emptier life is the longer you seem to go on living."

Barry didn't write to Mary and Mary didn't write to Barry. At least she wrote but never posted the letters. They were tearful little notes that she penned all alone in the great cold bedroom after everyone had retired for the night.

*"Barry darling, Why don't you write to me? Have you forgotten me so very soon? Don't you remember how little I was in your arms and how we planned to spend all our days together, glad days, cry days? Living here is like having died and yet still being alive. My heart is dead and my body moves about automatically—I don't seem to mind what happens to me any longer since you don't care!"*

**T**HAT note went with the rest of them. Into the fireplace. Mary was too proud to send it since he hadn't written. But as it crinkled into ashes and the wind drew it up the chimney this little prayer went with it.

"Please wind, carry those ashes to Barry. Give him magical sight so that he can read what I wrote and come to me."

But days passed and Barry never came. The evening John asked her to marry him she accepted.

It was funny, that offer of marriage. Such a matter-of-fact cold proceeding. Even the kiss he gave her on the forehead when she said 'yes' was so prosaic that it didn't seem like a kiss at all to Mary. Yet, in spite of that, it hurt her. Barry's kisses were still too vivid in her

mind. His adoring passionate kisses to which her soul had responded. Kisses that opened the gates to a magic land. A land of joy and youth and laughter, where love reigned supreme and the only crime was to sin against it. Now she herself was committing that crime. No wonder she shivered at his cold kiss.

The long silent dinner over—even Mary's mother seemed to have had all the chatter shrivelled out of her. John suggested that he take the girl and show her over the old portrait gallery in the west wing.

"I haven't invited you there before," he told Mary, "I was waiting until I could take you there as my promised bride."

Mary murmured an assent. What did it matter what she did or where he took her? This evening must be lived through somehow. And so many evenings after it. They stretched before her mind in a lifeless dreary succession. What sin had she committed that life should end at seventeen?

When they entered the gallery it was in darkness. A great barren room with a high domed ceiling. Outside the moon was like a gleaming orange ball and as they stood there silently before John switched on the lights, a yellow moon-beam crept in through the window and lit up a lovely woman's face. It was painted on canvas surrounded by a heavy gilt frame. A beautiful face with soft powdered hair piled like a halo around it and two little ringlets falling down each side of the cheeks. But it was a sad face, the eyes wistful as though eternally seeking a happiness that life had denied her. And in that moment before John flooded the room in a brilliant white light Mary had an uncanny sensation that those eyes flashed her a warning. That they said to her, "Keep away from this house if you are looking for happiness. It isn't to be found here. I know. I know."

So vivid was this impression that she almost started. The next moment John had switched on the lights.

**A**N amazing assemblage of faces stared down at her from the walls. Young men, old men, but one and all



they bore the undeniable stamp of the Finchlys. A certain hardness about their mouths, a certain cruelty in their eyes. Their wives, reproduced on canvas, hung beside them. Lovely ladies, ugly ladies, their styles in hairdress indicating to what generation they belonged.

John was looking around with undeniable pride.

"Here hang the portraits of my ancestors for the past three hundred years. I'll tell you the histories of some of them if you like. They make interesting telling. Then, after we're married I'll have *our* portraits painted and hung here with the rest of them."

Had the room turned suddenly colder? Was that why Mary shivered?

As though impelled by some force outside of herself the girl moved over to the portrait of the lovely sad looking lady. She saw now that she wore the crinolined dress of a past age, a dainty fine lace about her bosom.

"Tell me about her," Mary said suddenly, "I'd like to know her story."

John frowned. In fact it was almost a scowl.

"I'm disappointed that you should pick her out," he said, "for of all my ancestors I consider her the most worthless."

"Oh, no," cried Mary's heart in denial. "She wasn't worthless. I know. Somehow we understand each other." But she didn't dare say it aloud. Not when John looked so forbidding.

"I suppose you've got to hear the story sooner or later," he resumed moodily. "It's a sort of skeleton in the family closet. She was Jocelyn Finchly and that's her husband next to her."

Mary looked in the direction he pointed.

"But surely," she cried, "he was much older than she."

"Twenty years," he commented tersely, "and though they say my great uncle wasn't an amiable man to live with, after all she married him and it was up to her to stick to her bargain." And his eyes were hostile as they lingered on his great great aunt's face.

"You see," he resumed dryly, a moment later, "she fell in love with a cousin of her husband's. Mad Larry

Moore, as he was known in the neighborhood. An attractive scamp, a daredevil, but evidently with no sense of honor. He persuaded her to run away with him. It was arranged that she should slip away at midnight and meet him down in the garden by the old fountain. She went to the tryst and waited all night but Larry never came. Earlier that evening he'd been killed in a duel that arose over a game of cards. They found her at dawn lying cold and unconscious in the garden, and though they revived her then, she died a few months later. A broken heart doctors said. But my great great uncle never spoke to her after that night. I can't say I blame him. A woman like that isn't worth worrying over."

HE finished with a harsh laugh. For the second time that evening Mary shivered. She found, too, that there were tears in her eyes. Poor little lady who had found love too late. Mary's sympathy went out to her in a great heartfelt tide. How well she understood the way Jocelyn Finchly must have felt. Caged in a living tomb like this. Driven finally to sacrifice everything for a love which, in the eleventh-hour, was denied her.

John drew her over to the casement doors that lead out into the garden. Lovely it looked in that still summer night. The flower bushes cast oblong shadows on the pathway where white stones shone like chipped ivory in the moonlight. And there, gleaming silver in the distance, stood a fountain.

"That's the very same fountain," remarked John as he pointed to it, "and it's rumored that once a year, on the anniversary of the night she was to have met her lover, her ghost still haunts it. Servants' gossip, of course. I must say that I've never seen it."

Mary never knew what prompted her to ask:

"When is that?"

John laughed. "To-night, as it happens. But you can see for yourself that there's no one there."

"No," said Mary. "But it's not midnight yet."

They didn't speak of the sad little lady

again. He told her tales of his other ancestors, boasted of their achievements, but Mary found herself scarcely listening. The story of Jocelyn Finchly ran as an undercurrent through her thoughts like a sad muted melody in a symphony. She couldn't forget it. She felt it would haunt her always.

They retired early at Finchly Court. That night was no exception. Yet before they parted he put an engagement ring on her finger in the presence of his mother and hers. An enormous diamond and pearl in an old gold setting.

"This has been the engagement ring of our family for generations," he told her proudly.

Mary glanced down at it. "It's very beautiful," she said. Yes, it was beautiful. But, oh, it felt so heavy on her hand. It seemed to weigh her down.

That night Mary couldn't sleep. She tossed and turned in the great four-poster bed without once even drifting into a state of semi-consciousness. The ring seemed to burn her finger, as though it were a red hot band of fire. And always she thought of Barry. With everything in her she longed for him. Longed to see him, to hear his voice. That deep throbbing voice of his that always sounded more wonderful in her ears than the finest music ever written.

"Barry, Barry," she cried to the lonely dark silence around her. "Why didn't you write to me? Did you forget so very soon?"

**F**INALLY inaction became impossible. The air in the room stifled her. She felt she must get out somewhere—anywhere. She dressed hastily, slipping into the dinner gown she had worn that evening and throwing a great yellow Spanish shawl around her shoulders.

If there was only someone she could confide in. Could tell of her breaking heart. Then she thought of the portrait of the sad little lady in the gallery. Absurd to expect sympathy from a picture—yet hadn't those lovely eyes sent her a message that very evening?

Silently she tip-toed along the corridor and into the gallery. Everything was the same. The lovely lady still hung beside her morose old husband.

Mary saw her faintly in the moonlight, for she didn't want to switch on the lights. Slowly she approached the picture and as she stood beneath it her lips murmured. "You understand, don't you, dear little lady with the wistful sad eyes? You knew what it was to love and to suffer. I know you're glad that you died and went beyond to join him, whom you loved, away from that cruel husband of yours. And now I'm coming to you in my own misery. Please help me. Tell me what I should do. . . ."

From somewhere in the great house came the muffled chimes of a clock. Twelve slow chimes. Midnight. Mary moved towards the casement doors that led out into the garden. She sank heavily upon a marble bench and drew her shawl over her throat. "Barry, Barry," she bowed her head and let the welcome tears flow down her cheeks, tears that eased her spirit and cooled the rebellious fires in her heart.

She must have fallen asleep, for she next remembered looking up to see someone standing by the fountain. Dimly she discerned that it was a woman, a woman in a blue crinolined dress with powdered hair piled high on her head. Could it be the forlorn little ghost who once a year haunted the fountain? Immediately her sense of fear left her. She was conscious only of a great sympathy. A great understanding. Then, as she watched, an amazing thing happened. The little ghost seemed to turn towards her and beckon with her hand. Once, twice, she beckoned, her hand gleaming through the silver-shot darkness.

As though under some spell Mary found herself walking toward the fountain. The night air blew cool on her cheeks. As she moved along the white-stoned pathway she was conscious of the fragrance of summer roses and lilac bushes and violet. Such an exquisite setting for love. No wonder the little ghost came back to haunt that garden where she had loved and suffered so many years ago.

But the fountain stood deserted when Mary reached it. The ghost of the little lady had gone. Yet as she stood there listening to the faint sound of rippling waters she felt that she wasn't alone.

That some unseen presence stood beside her, comforting her, urging her not to lose hope.

**T**HEN suddenly, startlingly, from out of the darkness came the sound of a man's voice singing. A deep, husky voice that soared through Mary's soul and transplanted it into the land of dreams come true and joy inexpressible. How well she knew that voice. Barry's voice.

He sang:

*"She is coming, my own, my sweet,  
Were it ever so eerie a tread  
My heart would hear her and beat,  
Had it lain for centuries dead.  
Would startle and tremble under her  
feet,  
And blossom in purple and red."*

She opened her eyes and murmured dreamily, "Barry. Barry. I'm here. I'm here."

She heard his footsteps running towards her. She felt him sweep her into his arms. She raised her face and returned his kisses, crying a little, laughing a little.

"My dear, my darling, are you actually here? Is it true? Is it true?"

"True enough, my sweet one. Did you think I was some ghost? Mary, sweetheart, I had to come. I sensed that you were in danger. That you needed me."

How wonderful to feel his arms about her. To be able to raise her hands and touch his dear, dear face.

"Needed you?" Her voice was a glad sob in her throat. "There hasn't been a moment when I haven't needed you, longed for you. My heart seemed to die when you didn't write, when I thought you'd deserted me."

He held her back from him a little way, gazing down in amazement at her

small oval face, ghostly white in the moonlight.

"But sweetheart, I *did* write. Every day. Someone must have prevented them reaching you."

"Yes," murmured Mary, "someone must have." And although both knew who that someone was, neither mentioned a name. Both knew that neither would ever mention a name. It was enough that at last they were together. That they understood.

**B**ARRY was saying: "I couldn't stand the strain of not hearing from you, so just as soon as our show closed down I jumped into the first train going south. I came to town late to-night but I was too excited to go to bed. I felt that it would be a comfort if I could just get near the house where you were sleeping. Listen, darling, haven't we suffered enough as it is? Do we need to be separated any longer? I hired a car to drive out here. Run back into the house, get a coat and we'll drive to a neighboring town and be married. Tomorrow we can come back, tell them what we've done and face the music. But somehow I don't think anything they can say will be able to hurt us then!"

And in her heart Mary knew that it couldn't.

A few minutes later with throbbing heart and a gladness in her soul that she had never dreamed she could feel she crept back through the gallery. Half way across the room she paused and kissed the tips of her fingers to the sad little lady in the great gilt frame.

"Thank you, my dear," she murmured with tears in her throat, "thank you for showing me the way to happiness."

And it seemed to Mary, as she stood there, that the eyes of the sad little lady smiled down into hers.



# Eve Had Nothing to Wear

By J. Russell Warren



*How wonderful to know you're the best-dressed girl at the ball! Eve refused to think of illness, unemployment, accidents or her funeral. Rather a pauper's grave than that taupe jersey again!*

"I M not fit to be seen," wailed Eve, discarding a pair of satin slippers, and rolling a pair of torn silk stockings into a forlorn ball. "I have nothing, nothing to wear!"

That is to say, she had a blue serge dress that was very neat and well tailored and sensible for the city, but which she wouldn't be seen dead in anywhere else; and a last year's coat which she had ingeniously made to look like this year's, if not next; and a taupe jersey sports dress; and a black velvet afternoon dress; and a beautiful apple-green

chiffon trimmed in silver embroidery which she wore when she went to a really nice dance or party, which wasn't very often; and an old black lace for second best.

Eve had two hats—a dark blue felt that she wore to business, and a beige velour to match her coat. She hated both of them.

Also she had four pairs of shoes—

black patent leather for business, tan imitation snakeskin, silver slippers with rhinestone buckles to wear with the apple-green frock, and a pair of run-over house slippers. And she had four pairs of stockings the darns in which didn't really show, and four pairs that had no darns at all (this included the silver pair to go with the dance frock and slippers).

She had lingerie, of course, and pajamas and so forth, but they have nothing whatever to do with this story.

And she was about as satisfied with her outfit as a man is with his job, or his golf, or his car when a Rolls-Royce walks past him on a stiff hill.

Eve drew up her outfit in review order and inspected it. Then she gave a sigh that fluttered the window curtains.

"I've *nothing* to wear," she said.

"My dear," said Theodora who shared her room, "you seem to me to have plenty of things."

Theodora was the kind of girl who imagines that one only wears clothes for decency and warmth. She looked it, too.

"My dear," said Eve, "you don't understand." I've nothing—positively nothing. I want heaps of things. But it can't be done. It—simply—can—not—be—done."

**T**HIS was only too true. Eve worked. She spent every weekday morning from nine till one, and every weekday afternoon (except Saturdays) from two till five, in listening to what a pompous, bald man had to say to the people with whom he did his business, and in writing it down in pencil and a fat notebook with spidery scrawls: Then she produced it in legible form with the aid of a typewriter.

You know the kind of stuff. It goes:

"Dear Sir,

*We are in receipt of your favor of the 14th ult. re Czecho-Slovakian oilcake. . . ."*

*Trusting to receive a favorable reply at your early convenience.*

*We are, dear sir,*

*Yours faithfully,*

*Dash & Co."*

Thrilling stuff for a young and pretty girl to have to write and type for seven hours every blessed day, except half days, and holidays, year in, year out, till something in the shape of a Fate happens to her.

For this sentence of indefinite servitude Eve, being an efficient little person, was paid twenty-five dollars a week. If she went on being efficient she would get a raise of five dollars a week each Christmas—for the next ten years.

And when twenty-five dollars a week has to pay for a room, food, cooking, car-fare, amusements (few), magazines (fewer), malteds (still fewer), and other necessities of life, and provide against illness, unemployment, accident and funeral expenses and clothes, it's no wonder a girl has nothing to wear.

"You see," said Eve, "I want to go away for a vacation, and I'm going to splurge."

Theodora looked shocked. She peered at Eve through her round glasses and said:

"My dear!"

"I am," said Eve. "You're going home to your people. I haven't any home, or any people. I wouldn't care to ask anybody to come and spend a vacation with me in this grotto, even if I knew anyone who'd care to come, and if sticking here alone is your idea of a vacation, it isn't mine."

**T**HIS wasn't fishing for an invitation. Eve knew Theodora couldn't invite her to her overcrowded home, and she wouldn't have enjoyed such a visit anyway, and if you think her unreasonable you're unreasonable yourself. So there!

"But, my dear," said Theodora. "A— a splurge." She dropped her voice.

"Nothing less," said Eve, and her little voice was as one defiantly taking an irrevocable step of supreme importance. "I've manoeuvred an extra day and a half out of old Dash, and I've heard of a hotel at Seacliffe where there's always a jolly bunch of people staying, and I've asked about their terms and they're quite reasonable, considering, and I've saved thirty-five dollars—heaven knows how I did it; I don't—

and it ought to just about do, and I'd have a high old time if I only had something to wear."

"Thirty-five whole dollars!" Theodora murmured faintly. "On a—a splurge."

"Five whole days," said Eve. And I've got one really decent dress, for a special evening, and one other that will do for the rest and that's all."

"I'm sure," said Theodora, "your black lace would look very nice for any evening."

Eve gave her up. You can't argue with people like that.

"If I could take about ten dollars out of the thirty-five," said Eve, "I would get some of that flowered chiffon at Terry's and run up something, but there's certain to be incidental expenses: you must have a few dollars in your pocketbook—"

She relapsed into the ancient pastime of trying to stretch a dollar to cover something that cost ten, and of course she had to give it up in the end, finding that dollars aren't elastic. She was up against economic facts, and all the misapplied mathematics in the world wouldn't give her an extra ten dollars to buy something to wear.

Of course there was the Sinking Fund, but she kept that inviolate with a dogged determination you would never expect from one so small and young and fluffy. But, as she told Theodora, "it's just when you're small and young and fluffy, and all on your own, that you need a good strong bar handy to put against the door if The Wolf comes round."

"No," she said eventually. "This outfit will do. If it won't, it'll have to."

And she really thought it would.

SO she packed the taupe jersey and the apple-green georgette and the black lace and the other things into one of those suitcases that are said to be elastic enough to carry all you need for a week end, a week, a month, or the rest of your natural life, as the case may be, and she packed the Sinking Fund in an old sponge bag in the bottom of the suitcase (she always took it with her when she went away, in case her room was burgled in her absence), and she put the thirty-five dollars in her

purse-bag, and on Thursday evening she, wearing the blue serge, caught the six-thirty train, and at eight o'clock she walked demurely, but with poise, into the Marine Hotel at Seacliffe.

There were several girls and young men in the lobby as she walked in. The young men surveyed her in interested appraisement, because, she was really a very pretty little thing. The girls swept her with brief glances, some almost contemptuous, which stung her, and some almost pitying, which was worse. They all looked expensively dressed girls. Not really expensive, you know: not the fifty thousand a year kind: but far more expensively than Eve.

She dined alone in the big dining room, and then went into the lounge. She knew she looked all wrong in the blue serge but it would have been absurd to change, then. She didn't think it would matter.

It didn't seem to. The Marine Hotel was one of those places where everybody gets to know everybody at once, and anybody who is in the least willing is eagerly welcomed to swell the cheery circle. The expensively dressed girls stopped being either almost contemptuous or almost pitying, and were quite nice to her. So were the men.

They danced to an orthophonic victrola and kept it up till midnight. Eve danced three times with a Perfectly Lovely Man. His name was Kenneth Bentley, and everyone called him Ken. Thinking it over in her bedroom, as she undressed, she realized that she could hardly have described him to anyone—Theodora, for instance. She hadn't noticed the color of his eyes and, she hardly remembered a word he had said to her.

"But," she breathed as she dropped her tired but happy head on the pillow, "I know he's a Perfectly Lovely Man."

As a matter of fact, he hadn't taken very much notice of her. He had seemed more interested in two or three of the expensively dressed girls—particularly a boy-bobbed, superbly-turned-out one in a knee-length flame colored gown so Parisian that Eve was sure the girl must be a mannequin.

"It's the clothes," said Eve. "Men

pretend they don't know anything about them, don't notice. But they do. But never mind. I'll have to wear my taupe jersey during the day, and my apple-green georgette *every* evening. That'll knock 'em endways."

SO in the morning she put on her taupe jersey and she considered it held its ground against whatever might be brought against it. And the whole party trooped down to the nearly deserted pier and had great fun with some penny-in-the-slot machines. In dismay Eve watched her pennies disappearing, but she wouldn't let even Kenneth Bentley put *his* pennies in for her, whatever the other girls did.

After luncheon they danced, again to the orthophonic. Ken was quite nice to Eve, but he danced far more with the girl who must have been a mannequin, and who was called Inez. She, like one or two of the others, had changed from her morning frock into a crepe de chine.

Eve eyed it morosely, her lips compressed. This, she considered, was unfair competition.

"But never mind," she told herself comfortingly. "Wait till this evening, when I put on my apple-green. It'll knock all these other frocks endways. I haven't seen one that's a patch on it."

She hadn't. But she hadn't seen inside the wardrobes in the bedrooms of the expensively dressed girls. Every blessed girl turned up to dinner in a frock totally different from the one she had worn the evening before, and one distinctly and definitely more striking and effective. Inez wore a creation of emerald green georgette that made Eve's apple-green look like a washed-out cabbage-leaf.

Eve, alone at her little table, with her back to most of the others, wept salt tears into her puree. How in thunder could a poor little stenographer with twenty-five dollars a week possibly compete with girls who changed into a fresh rig-out at noon, and turned up in a different dance-frock every blessed evening? She just couldn't keep the pace. And there was Ken talking and laughing with Inez (she sat, as it happened, at his table, and not slanting more than an occasional glance at Eve.

Considering what the dinner cost, and how good it was, it was a pity that Eve couldn't eat much of it.

AFTER dinner they danced. Eve didn't dance much. One or two of the men said, "May I have this one?" But most of the time she sat in a corner and glowered, fighting with a sinking sense of defeat, of an awful impotence, and hoping her set face didn't give her away.

"The woman's a cat, a vamp a—a—a—I don't know what," she told a tubbed palm. (She meant Inez.) "She's not half good enough for him, and she'd simply ruin him with her extravagance, and it'd be a kind action and an act of charity to stop her getting him. But how? How—how—how?"

She choked back something.

"Hello," said Ken at her elbow. "Not dancing?"

"No," said Eve. For the life of her she couldn't have got out another word, just then, without blubbing.

"Oh," he said. He sat down beside her. "I'm afraid," he said kindly, "you're feeling just a little bit out of it. All the rest of us have been here before, you see."

If he hadn't said it so kindly, Eve wouldn't have minded. But his voice seemed to her to have just the very faintest tinge of patronage, and patronage was a thing she could not and would not stand. She turned upon him defiantly glittering eyes.

"Thank you," she said, "I'm having a perfectly lovely time."

"Oh." He seemed to be taken aback. He stared at her, fidgetting with his tie. "Oh. Oh, well—well,—shall we dance? May I?"

"Thank you," said Eve, rising stately. Even five feet one *can* be stately when properly roused.

"Whoop!" said about fourteen voices from all round them. "We're all going to the movies. C'm on, you two."

Inez tucked Ken under her arm and carried him off.

At the movies Eve sat at the end of the row, with two expensively dressed girls between her and Ken. To this day she doesn't know what the film was

about or who was in it. She only knows that she thought it "the bunk." It was the awfulest waste of a dollar ten (including entertainment tax).

As she undressed, she reflected regretfully that perhaps she had been a little curt with Ken. She hoped, desperately, that he would understand, but she knew he wouldn't. Men don't understand these things. Why, many a man can be the worst dressed man in a room and not know it or if he knows, so long as he isn't wearing tennis shoes with evening clothes or knickers with a top hat, or something of that kind, he doesn't care.

**A**T breakfast next morning Eve said: "This has *done* it." She looked round at the other girls, all in frocks that nobody present but the wearers had ever seen before; she looked down at her taupe jersey, which everybody was seeing for the second day in succession and would see for the three following ones; and her chest heaved, her blood boiled, her eyes glittered, her lips went into a thin hard line, and she said—well, *Theodora* would have fainted if she had heard it. She said it aloud too, and if anyone had been close to her table he would have heard it.

She rose from her breakfast and bolted upstairs. With set teeth and desperate eyes she unlocked her suitcase, rummaged in its depths, withdrew the old sponge bag from among her stockings, extracted its contents, put them into her purse, put on her hat, seized her gloves, and bolted downstairs again.

In the hall she met Ken. He said:

"I say, we're all going to—"

"Can't stop," said Eve. "I'm going in to the town. Shopping—"

She shot past him and out of the door. He stood staring after, fidgeting with his tie. In his nice eyes was amazed, bewildered wonder.

She returned at half past twelve. At a quarter past one she made an effective entrance for luncheon. The men stared at her, and wondered what she had done to herself to make herself look so much prettier than before. The girls also stared, and they knew.

"It must have come from that awfully

good shop in Beach Street," whispered Inez. "And it must have cost—"

In the afternoon they danced, and Ken danced with Eve five times.

Eve was a little late for dinner, and made another effective entrance, in a Limoges blue georgette dress, weighted with rhinestone and silver, and silver slippers and stockings that made the Inez boybob nearly stand on end. A slight fragrance of *Le Temps de Lilas* wafted to you as she walked. After dinner they danced—first to the orthophonio and then to the radio, and Ken danced with Eve nine times. Also she danced every remaining dance with one young man or another, but they didn't really count.

Eve was radiant. She was happy as a girl only can be when she knows that she's perfectly turned out, more perfectly than any other girl present. She had raided the Sinking Fund almost to extinction, but she didn't care. She refused to think about illness, unemployment, accident or her funeral. Rather a pauper's grave than that taupe jersey again!

**O**N Saturday morning she wore a little shirred georgette frock of pistachio green with a scalloped vestee and pearl buttons. The other girls gnashed their teeth as they realized that their lines of communication, by which they might have called up reinforcements, were cut off: the shops wouldn't open again till Wednesday morning, when all would be over. One or two of them had already been obliged to fall back on Friday's day frocks. By Tuesday, though Eve didn't know it, precious few of them would have anything left that hadn't already been seen.

On Saturday afternoon Eve wore a heavy crepe of wild aster hue, with hem-stitched panels front and back.

In the evening she wore a fluffy carnelian tulle.

On Sunday she wore a gray and white knife pleated crepe de chine with a deep bertha and flowing sleeves, also a little black casque-shaped hat. Everybody in the old church looked at her and asked each other who she was. She ate her dinner from cocktail to demi-tasse with



the first real appetite she had had—in a honey-colored crepe, stitched in black and silver. In the afternoon they played bridge, and Ken had to elbow the less perfectly lovely men out of the way to get near Eve. In the evening she wore her carnelian tulle again, so as to keep something up her sleeve for the last act. The management had engaged a small but lively orchestra that night and the next and to its lilting strains Eve danced clean through her carnelian pumps.

On Monday morning she wore a tailored navy blue kasha, and a pearl choker.

In the afternoon she wore a sweet little black taffeta with a round neck and a tight basque. It had sleeve caps of cream lace, edged with black and she couldn't have got rid of Ken if she had tried.

In the evening she wore the climactic costume of her career, a frock alluringly suggestive of carnival and masquerade. Wide petals of silver cloth formed the skirt, and the bodice was a bolero of midnight blue velvet. A gypsy girdle of the velvet swathed her waist, and little silver crescents edged the bolero and the sash. And she wore silver loop earrings and several slender silver bracelets. She was a darling, everybody said so.

She danced fourteen dances straight off with Ken. He simply wouldn't let her go. Then he marched her into the garden, put her in a wicker chair, and sat down close beside her.

"Oh," thought Eve to herself, "how perfectly lovely."

**T**H**ERE** were no lights in the garden, but a clear, full moon sailing high, sent soft blue-green radiance over the terraces, and there was a hint of lilacs in the air. From the ball-room came the muted throb and thrum of the small but lively orchestra.

"Er—" said Ken.

"I beg your pardon?" said Eve sweetly.

He appeared to swallow something.

"Er—" he began again. "Lovely night."

"Isn't it?" said Eve.

"Lovely moon," he added.

"I think so, too." She fiddled with her bracelets.

"This kind of a night makes one feel—er—romantic."

"Does it? I hadn't noticed." (What a fib!)

"Oh." He coughed and fidgetted. "I rather hoped you had." Her words were chilly enough, but something about her eyes and her wisp of a smile made him plunge on.

"I—I do hope you've had a good time while you've been here," he said.

"Gorgeous, thank you," said Eve.

"It's nice to have—er—a nice vacation, isn't it? "You—you've had a nice vacation?"

"Yes, thank you." And she had. "I hope you have?"

"Yes, thank you." He swallowed something else. "I—I've never had such a vacation. It's been the most gorgeous one I've ever had."

He swallowed three times and went the color of her new carnelian frock. "Do you know why?" he blurted out.

"I?" Eve's eyebrows went up. "No. How could I?"

"No," said Ken judiciously. "How could you? So I'll tell you. It's because *you've* been here."

"Glory!" said Eve to herself. "Got him." Aloud she said: "What difference does that make?"

"All the difference. I—perhaps we'll never meet again—"

"That depends."

"On what?"

"On—on whether you want to."

**K**EN looked as if he couldn't believe his ears.

"Want to?" he yelped. "Want to? I?"

"Well," said Eve, helping him out. "It rather depends on you, doesn't it?"

He seized one of her hands and held it as if afraid somebody would come and tear it away from him.

"If it depended on me," he said. "I'd never let you out of my sight for an instant from now on."

"Not really!" said Eve.

The young man got up and shouted at her.

"You shan't play with me," he stormed. "I won't be played with." He shook violently the hand he still held.

"Do you understand? I'm serious, and you've got to be serious too. This is a serious matter."

"What is?" asked Eve.

"Marriage."

"Oh. But you haven't said anything about that before."

"Haven't I? Well, I meant to. Look here, are you going to marry me or not?"

"That depends—"

"On what?"

"On why you want to marry me."

"Why? *Why?* Because I love you, because I worship you, idolize you, adore you. Because you're the only girl in the world who exists, so far as I'm concerned. Because—oh, confound it—"

He swooped at her, grabbed her violently, hauled her to him, wrapped her in a hug that nearly squeezed the breath out of her body, and kissed her eyes, her lips, her nose, her cheeks, her chin, her ears and her hair. The midnight blue and silver frock would have to be pressed before she wore it again.

"Now," he thundered, releasing her a fraction of an inch, "are you going to marry me?"

Eve got a hand free and patted down her shingle.

"After that," she said, "I suppose I'd better."

"You will?"

"Well—if nothing else will satisfy you—" she kissed him on the chin, which was as far as she could reach—"Yes."

"You darling," he said. And for a little while then there seemed nothing more to say.

"**Y**OU know," said Eve, presently, "I'm afraid I've rather deceived you."

"How so?"

"Well, all my dresses and things. You must think I'm well off. I'm not. I'm just a stenographer, all on my own, with twenty-five dollars a week."

He didn't seem interested.

"I'm an accountant," he said, "with forty a week—but excellent prospects. We ought to be able to manage, all right, in a quiet way."

"Of course," said Eve. She persisted in her confession. She told him how she had raided the Sinking Fund. She didn't

tell him the fundamental reason because there are some things a man had better not know. She merely conveyed that she just had to keep her end up with the other girls.

"And a very right and proper spirit, too," he said indulgently. If she'd confessed to embezzlement he'd have been indulgent, just then.

Eve was disappointed.

"But it did make a difference to you, too," she said. "You didn't pay much attention to me until I turned up in my new things."

He looked puzzled.

"Didn't I? I really didn't notice. You looked so ferocious at first. I was almost afraid of you. When I spoke nicely to you you snubbed me horribly. After that you seemed to change: to like me better. I don't know why."

"Merciful heavens," thought Eve. "Has the man no eyes?"

"But didn't you," she asked, "like the carnelian tulle I wore last night? Or do you prefer this one?"

He looked at the cloth of silver and midnight blue, his head on one side.

"Isn't it the same one!" he asked.

"Goodness, no!"

"I hadn't noticed. I was looking at you, not at your clothes. I'm not sure, but I think I liked the one you wore the first evening best."

"That washed out rag? The apple-green one?"

"Was it apple-green? I don't know. You see, I'm practically color blind, and, really, all dresses look almost alike to me."

"**W**ASTED," said Eve to herself, that night, as she slipped out of the cloth of silver and midnight blue. "Ab-so-lute-ly wasted on the man. But never mind. They'll come in for my trousseau. When we go on our honeymoon they'll knock everybody endways. And with touching up, I can make 'em last for years. I'll have to. If he only has forty dollars a week, I'll have nothing new to wear for a long time."

She grimaced.

"Nothing to wear," she said. "Same as before, only—" she blushed—"this is different."

# Drop Us A Line!

## Join The "Post Office"

Conducted by Mrs. Russell Laird



### The Overall Trio

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: We are three jolly girls better known as the Overall Trio, and would like to correspond with girls from sixteen to nineteen, Italian girls preferred, but all are welcome. We go by the names of Ted, Bob, and Don.

THE MERRY OVERALL TRIO of Illinois.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I want one pen pal from each state in the Union. Can you help me? I am a lover of all good clean outdoor sports, and am an interested worker in church. I am twenty-four with auburn hair and hazel eyes.

JUST WILLIAM of Maryland.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: My hobbies are playing the violin, dancing, sewing, and reading. I also love to cook. I am seventeen, with blonde hair and blue eyes. I am a stenographer, but have plenty of time to write.

ANNA MAY of Pennsylvania.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I am a fifteen-year-old girl, and my mail box will soon rust if I don't get a letter soon. Come on girls, contribute, and I promise an interesting correspondence.

JUST SNAPPY of New Jersey.

### Wants to Own a Boy's Club

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I am very interested in boys and am planning on some time owning a boys' club on the coast of California, as that is my home for the future. I am an orphan, twenty-two, a lover of art.

SAILOR of Texas.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: Others seem to be successful in finding letter pals, and I hope I can find one too. I am twenty-six, was married, but am not any more. I have a little girl whom I support. Would appreciate having a few letter friends.

STELLA of Pennsylvania.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I am a Girl Scout, a sophomore in high school and fond of all sports. Like to hear from everyone everywhere.

TOMMIE of Oklahoma.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: Do you think someone would like to write to me? I can tell them something about the ruins of this state and change pictures. I am twenty-four. I collect and exchange used stamps.

YOUNG MEXICAN.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: We are two lonesome boys from a one-horse town, both seventeen. Jo has dark brown hair and eyes, while Theodore has medium brown hair and blue-gray eyes. We both like to dance, and Theodore especially likes to canoe and swim.

JO AND TED of New York.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I am a comptometer operator in a large department store, and have plenty of time to write. I am eighteen, with brown bobbed hair, am a typical flapper, and dress very up to date.

DOVE of New Jersey.

### A Newspaper Reporter with Big Ideas

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I am just Billie of a small town with big ideas. I am twenty and not half bad to look at. I love all things everyone else likes, and best of all, pals. I am a first rate reporter on a good paper.

MISS BILLIE of New York.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: I want snappy you to write to lonely me. All letters are welcome. I am a sixteen-year-old girl, five foot three, and I'll leave the rest to you.

JUST ANOTHER BOB of Canada.

DEAR MRS. LAIRD: My sister put an ad in your column and she has found a great many friends. Please do the same for me. I am nineteen, like all kinds of sports and love to correspond.

DAVID of Massachusetts.

**I'm Rather Lonely, For** the only friend I have is a boy. Please find me some true blue pals. I am sixteen, have brown hair, hazel eyes, and a big heart. Miss Lonesome Me of Pennsylvania.

**I Like Swimming** and other out-of-door sports, also reading and dancing. I am eighteen, five feet three, with fair complexion, light golden brown hair, and blue eyes. Won't someone write, especially someone from California and New York? Gladys of Virginia.

**I Am Awfully Lonesome at Times** when I have nothing to do. Won't someone of my age take pity on me? I am fourteen, with blond hair and blue eyes. Lonesome Blue Eyes of Connecticut.

**I Am Twenty-one**, five feet five, with brown hair and green eyes. I love all sports and my hobby is reading. Ethel of Illinois.

**Somebody Who Likes to Have a Good Time** please write to me. I like all sports and dancing. I have grayish eyes and brown boyish cut hair. Dot of Pennsylvania.

**I Am a Seventeen-Year-Old Flapper**, with hazel eyes and dark brown hair. I would like to correspond with any girls my own age. Jazz Baby of Canada.

**I Haven't Many Friends**, and would like to make some. I am sixteen, and a junior in high school. Hopping Alice of Massachusetts.

**I Am a Sophomore** in high school, sixteen, with light brown curly hair, and would like to correspond with someone who is interested. I like dancing and outdoor sports. Loretta of Wisconsin.

**I Like the Piano, Sing, and Dance**, and am fond of outdoor games. I am seventeen, five feet three, with light hair and blue eyes. Olive of Pennsylvania.

**I Am Just Another Interested Reader** of your interesting column, and I want to tell you how much I love it. I am seventeen, tall, and somewhat nice looking. Christine of Canada.

**I Am a Six-Footer**, medium complexioned, with brown eyes and hair. I would like very much to hear from a boy in Texas, for I am from there myself. Fred of Arizona.

**I Am Fond of Good Times**. I love dancing. I am sixteen, with blond hair, large blue eyes, and not bad looking. Blue-Eyed Mary of New York.

**I Do the Valencia** and the Charleston. I am twenty-two and would like to correspond with boys from twenty-one to twenty-five who like dancing and movies. I have black eyes and hair, and am five feet nine. Clement of Massachusetts.

**I Live in a Small Town** and feel very lonely. I am twenty-two, five feet five, with blue eyes and auburn hair. Lonely Betty of New Jersey.

**I Wish Someone in Toronto** would take pity on me as my husband is to go there in the near future. I am thirty-two, black-eyed, and black-haired, and full of pep. I am by myself from Monday until Saturday. Pal of Ohio.

**I Am Fond of Dancing and Shows**. I am fifteen, with light brown hair and blue eyes, five feet three. Blue Eyes of Wisconsin.

**Reading and Writing Are What I Do** to try and forget the blues. I am twenty, with

dark brown hair and blue eyes. I love all sports. I have been married. Ann of California.

**I Am Coming to You** for some pen pals. I am seventeen and in my last term in high school. I am five feet three, with dark blond hair and gray eyes. Ann from New Jersey.

**I Love Music and Books**. I am twelve years old, have blond bobbed hair, and blue eyes and am four feet eleven. Write to me and send snapshots, and I will do the same. Miss Blues Eyes of Washington.

**I Am a New Yorker**, but am now living in Massachusetts, and I miss my old home. I want pen pals, girls, in all sections of the country, from eighteen to thirty. Dream Pal of Massachusetts.

**I'd Like to Hear From Girls the World Over** who are interested in travelling, music, literature, and sports, especially the wonderful one of horseback riding. I want to exchange snapshots of places of interest. I am nineteen, and my native state is Texas. Paula of St. Louis.

**I Am a Lonesome Girl on a Farm** and would like to have some girls write to me from all parts of the world. I am fifteen, with brown bobbed hair and hazel eyes. Beatie of Maine.

**Who Could Be More Lonesome Than I?** I am sixteen, brunette, with hazel eyes. I would like to exchange photos with pen pals. Bee of Massachusetts.

**I Am a Working Girl** and would like to hear about your country from anyone who cares to write. I am twenty-two, a blonde, with hazel eyes and shingled hair. I am a keen dancer. Miss Paddy of England.

**I Play the Uke, Dance**, and like all sports. I am nineteen, and would like to hear from anyone anywhere, as I have loads of time to answer letters. Lonesome Kitty of Chicago.

**My Pal and I Would Love to Write to Girls in the States**. We are both in lodgings here in Glasgow, and it is pretty lonesome. We are both nineteen, and love sports and dancing. We will exchange snapshots and souvenirs. Two Scotch Lassies.

**I Am Always Full of Fun and Make Friends Easily**. I am twenty-one, dark complexioned and considered very modern. I like dancing and sports of all kinds, and also do a lot of reading. Lottie of Massachusetts.

**I Am a Young Married Woman** of twenty-two. I am very lonesome. I love children. I wish some married women would write. Gertrude of R. I.

**I Would Like to Have Some Correspondents From Everywhere**. I am eighteen, married and have a baby boy eight months of age. My husband works at night, so I have lots of time to write. Mrs. Tennessee.

**Can I Sneak Up on Your Merry Circle?** I would just love to hear from girls in New York and Canada and Florida. I am thirty-one, with black bobbed hair, and brown eyes. I love outdoor sports. Miss Lonsome of West Virginia.

**I Enjoy Horseback Riding**, dancing, and all kinds of sports. I have black, bobbed hair, and blue eyes. I am very lonesome for letters. Blanche of Vermont.

**GIRLS** may write to other girls through this department; boys may write to boys. If a certain letter appeals to you, answer it and send your letter, with an extra stamp, to be forwarded. Please do not write and ask us for addresses, but be sure to sign your own name and address in full so that your correspondent may reply to you direct. Address all mail to Mrs. Russell Laird, CUPID'S DIARY, 97 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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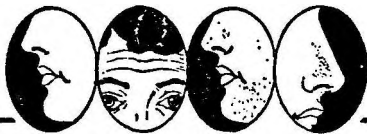
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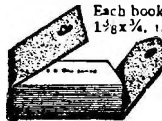


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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Organization                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter Writing                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Traffic Management                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Show Card Lettering                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Law                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Stenography and Typing                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Banking and Banking Law                 | <input type="checkbox"/> English  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accountancy (Including C.P.A.)          | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nicholson Cost Accounting               | <input type="checkbox"/> Railway Mail Clerk                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Common School Subjects                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Private Secretary                       | <input type="checkbox"/> High School Subjects                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Illustrating <input type="checkbox"/> Cartooning |

### TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineering                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Architect                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Lighting                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Architects' Blueprints                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineer                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor and Builder                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Draftsman                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Draftsman                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Machine Shop Practice                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Builder                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Railroad Positions                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineer                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engine Operating                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineer                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Work                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Airplane Engines                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metallurgy <input type="checkbox"/> Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineering                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Radio      |

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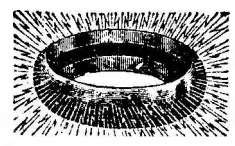
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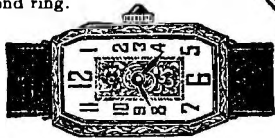
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**Latest  
Popular  
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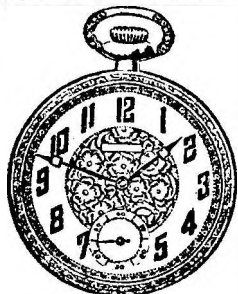
14kt. rolled white gold case, platinum style. Beautifully engraved. Silk grosgrain ribbon band and 14kt. rolled white gold engraved clasp. Ruby and sapphire jeweled movement, perfect time-keeper. Will give 25 years satisfactory service. You get it free on this offer.

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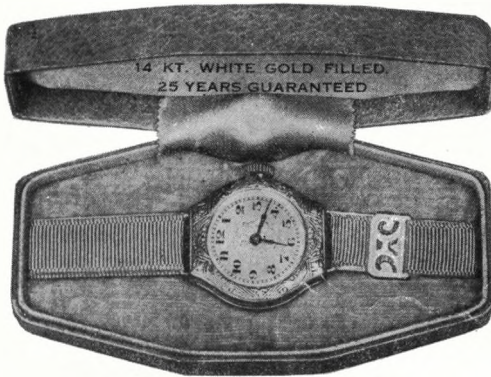
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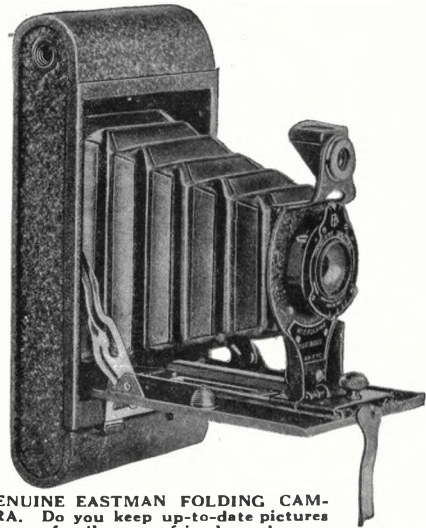
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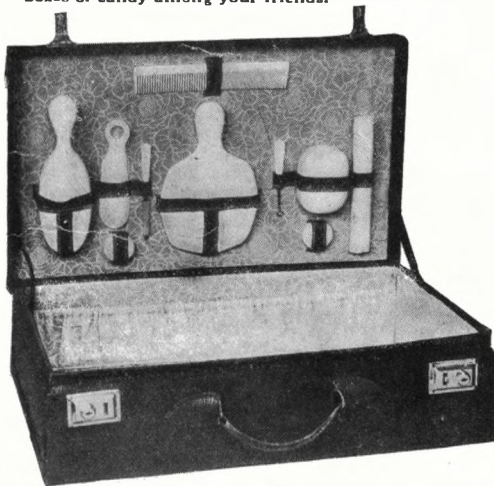
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**26 Piece Silver Set**  
Pleasing pattern and popular polished finish. Each piece heavily silver plated on nickel silver base. Set consists of 6 knives, 6 forks, 6 dessert spoons, 6 teaspoons, 1 sugar shell, 1 butter knife.

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