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EXCITING

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

LOVE



ISLE OF *Broken Hearts*

*A Complete
Romantic Novel*

By **JERROLD
BEIM**

In This Issue

**STRANGER
TO LOVE**

A Fascinating Novelet by **MONA FARNSWORTH**

Reducing Specialist Says:



"Thanks to the Spot Reducer, I lost four inches around the hips and three inches around the waistline. It's amazing." Mary Martin, Long Island City, N. Y.

LOSE WEIGHT

where it shows most

REDUCE

most any part of the body with

SPOT REDUCER



Miss Nancy Mace, Bronx, N. Y., says: "I went from size 16 dress to a size 12 with the use of the Spot Reducer. I am glad I used it."

DOCTORS PROVE BY ACTUAL TEST THAT THIS EASY TO USE SPOT REDUCER HELPS LOSE POUNDS AND INCHES WHERE IT SHOWS MOST. Yes . . . Doctors say that this method of reducing will help you lose weight easily, pleasantly, safely. Nothing internal to take, no pills, laxatives or harmful drugs. Just think of it you can lose weight in SPOTS, just in the places it shows most. All you do is follow the instructions of this amazing, new, scientifically designed SPOT REDUCER.

HOW SPOT REDUCER WORKS. The Spot Reducer uses the age old principle of massage. It breaks down excess fatty tissue, tones the muscles and flesh and the increased awakened blood circulation carries away waste fat economically, simply, pleasantly. In a recent Medical Book, edited by the chairman and two other members of Council on Physical Therapy of AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, the following is stated on page 34, Chapter 18, Vol. 3: "Beyond all question something can be done by massage to reduce local deposits of FAT . . . There can however, be no question that massage applied to the region of the HIPS can and does, reduce the amount of fatty deposits in this region" This book is a reliable unbiased source of information and many doctors refer to it for the last word in Physical Therapy. This prompted us to develop and have doctors test the SPOT REDUCER.

HERE IS PROOF POSITIVE THAT THE SPOT REDUCER WORKS!

In recent tests made by outstanding licensed Medical Doctors on more than 100 people with the use of Spot Reducer everyone lost pounds and inches in a few short weeks, in HIPS, ABDOMEN, LEGS, ARMS, BUTTOCKS, etc. And the users say: "IT WAS FUN AND THEY ENJOYED IT." The Spot Reducer worked as well on men as it did on women. The Spot Reducer way controls weight, once down to normal it helps retain your new "SLIM FIGURE" as long as you like. Look and feel better, see bulges disappear within the first weeks. The beauty of this scientifically designed SPOT REDUCER is that the method is so simple and easy, the results quick, sure and harmless. Thousands have lost weight this way in hips, abdomen, legs, arms, buttocks, etc. The same method used by stage, screen and radio personalities and leading reducing salons. The Spot Reducer can be used in the privacy of your own room in your spare time.

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an ACCOUNTANT'S CAREER



IF you're that man, here's something that will interest you.

Not a magic formula—not a get-rich-quick scheme—but something more substantial, more practical.

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Exciting LOVE

Vol. 13, No. 1

A THRILLING PUBLICATION

November, 1948

Complete Romantic Novel

ISLE OF BROKEN HEARTS

Jerrold Beim 11



Denny Logan, lass of the coastal sea, finds that all is not smooth sailing when she sets her craft for the harbor of dreams! Follow the romance of a Captain's daughter as she seeks true happiness!

Complete Novelist

STRANGER TO LOVE

Mona Farnsworth 74

There was no room for romance or emotion in the medical career of beautiful young Dr. Sari Mayfield—until she found she needed a prescription for an aching heart!

Short Stories

ONLY TO BORROW

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Everything in the world that Pandora Blake wanted was just a bit beyond her reach

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It's only a business date, but do look out, Cathy Benton—your heart is showing!

NOT FOR LOVE NOR MONEY

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Fran was a juke-box jockey with a groovy line, but Dan Cupid put her off the beam

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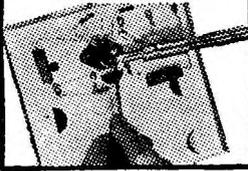
PLEASE FORWARD (Correspondence Department)

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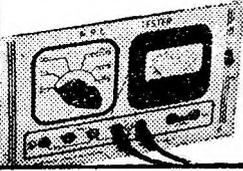
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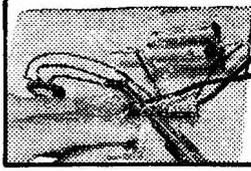
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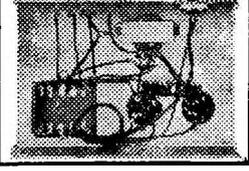
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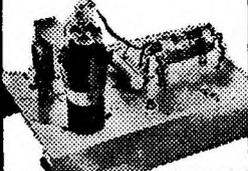
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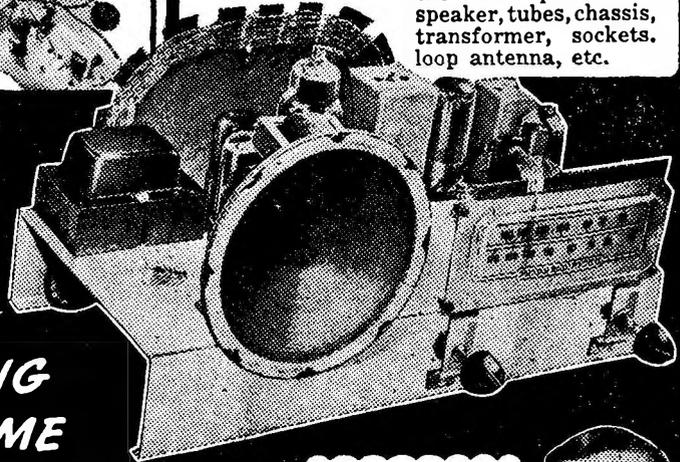


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Fashioned for Rain

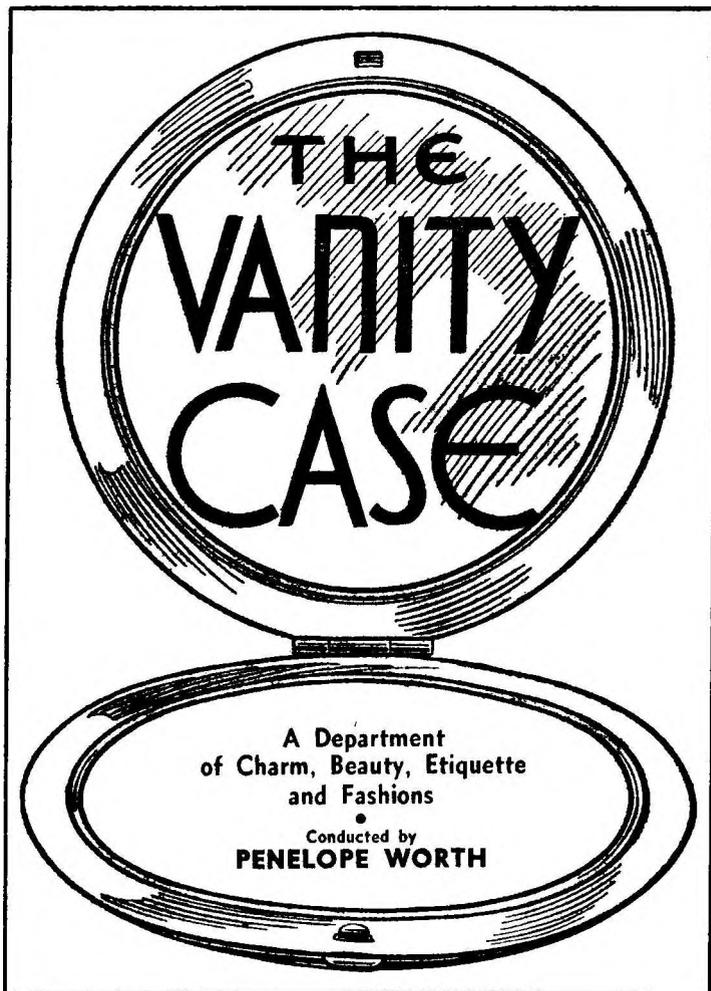


DON'T let those blue skies overhead fool you. This is the season of the year when cold, wet rains come a-tumbling down. But it shouldn't bother you too much because the days when rainy weather meant drab, gloomy clothes are over.

Fashions for rain tell you to dress to spite the weather—the gloomier the day, the brighter you should look. A touch of bright color, a red umbrella, a raincoat as blue as the skies should be, those plaid fabric wrappings to protect your shoes—all are designed to not only protect you from falling raindrops but to make you forget the weather as well.

Raincoat colors run the gamut from light pastels, and even white to dark navy or black. And gay colors are particularly attractive when skies are gray. Even the blacks have become brighter because they are to be had in fabrics that gleam in the light—satins, shiny twills and taffetas. If you choose a dark color, brighten it up even more with a gay scarf or colorful umbrella.

So many of the raincoats come with hoods that you can fling over your bonnet that you



won't even have to leave your pretty hat at home even if the weatherman predicts afternoon showers. If your coat doesn't have a hood, try one of those kerchiefs made of transparent plastics that you can tie on your hat. They're easy on the budget and fold up like a hanky so you can keep one in your desk drawer or purse for emergencies.

Yuletide Toys

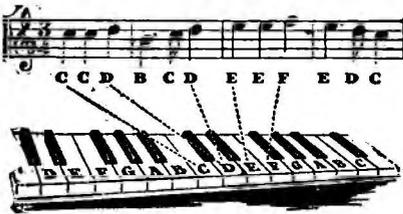


IT'S NOT A minute too early to start thinking about Christmas. And if you have some small fry on your list, you'll be interested in an easy-to-make Christmas toy. You can make fine, fat felt pigs, roly-poly Teddy bears, bean

(Continued on page 8)

To those who think LEARNING MUSIC is hard...

SEE HOW EASY IT IS!
MY COUNTRY 'TIS OF THEE,
SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY



Strike these notes and you're playing "America." TRY IT—IT'S FUN



Easy as A-B-C this print and picture way

• Perhaps you think learning music is a tedious grind. It isn't any longer! Long hours of practicing humdrum scales and hard-work exercises are over and done with.

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THE VANITY CASE

(Continued from page 6)

bags, balls—and lots of other things that children love. Here's how for a felt toy:

From a child's coloring book, trace onto heavy wrapping paper the outline of the particular toy figure you want to make. Use double thickness of felt material. Pin the paper tracing to the fabric and cut.

After removing the paper tracing, baste both sections of toy outline together, right sides facing out. Stitch around the entire outline leaving a small opening through which to insert the stuffing. If the animal figure you have selected requires a tail, leave the opening at this point.

Stuff the figure through the opening with cotton batting or other soft padding.

The finishing touches such as eyes, tails, ears and mane for animals can be cut from scraps of either matching or contrasting material, depending on the effect you're after.

Decorative buttons are cut for the eyes of animals. Or make the eyes, nose and mouth with embroidery floss. Ears, tails and manes can be made from lengths of knitting wool stitched in place.

Give Your Eyebrows a Lift



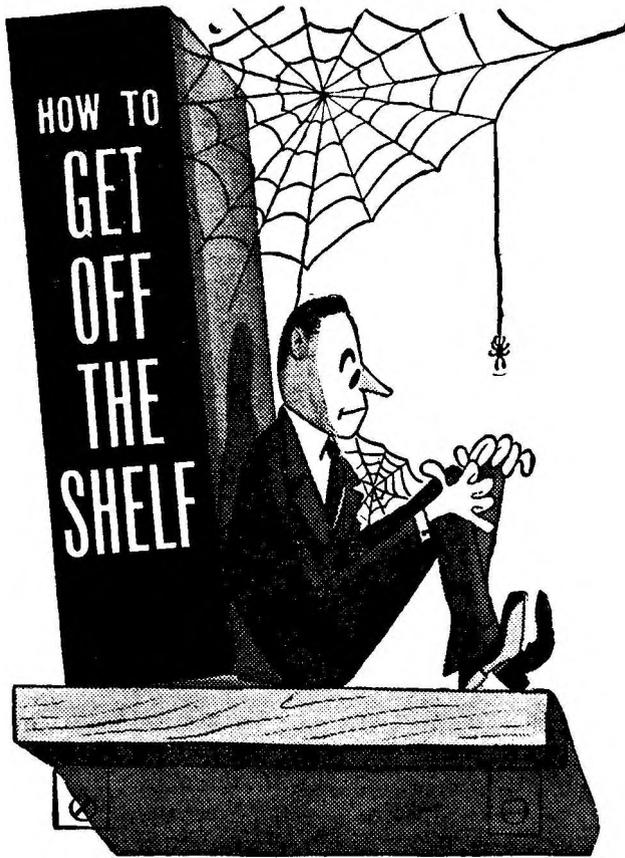
DID YOU ever stop to think that you couldn't really do without your eyebrows? You need them—they add expression to your face. The nicest thing about eyebrows is that you can change them to enhance your eyes or the shape of your face.

If your forehead is too high—and you simply aren't the type for bangs, make a high arch of the brows. Keep them fairly thick without letting them look unkempt. Let them be prominent without dominating your face.

Closely set eyes can seem widely spaced with some judicious plucking. Leave a wider space between the brows to make the eyes seem wider apart. And to further accent the illusion of widely spaced eyes, use a little eye shadow on the outer edge of the lid and bend it outward toward the temple—not upward.

By eliminating the arch and making the brows fairly straight, you cut the length of your face. And a round-faced girl shouldn't

(Continued on page 108)



ONE or two promotions . . . several pay raises . . . and then that long, long stretch "on the shelf." You want to keep on climbing. You want to feel that you are getting somewhere. But how?

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Trained men get the "breaks"! That's a fact proved over and over again by the records of former I. C. S. students.

You don't want to bog down in your job. You don't want to remain "on the shelf" with the untrained. Mail the coupon today for complete information on how you can join the steady climbers.

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OKAY, GET GOIN'

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IS THE LADY SICK, MISTER?

SHE LOOKS LIKE THAT MISSING ELLIS GIRL.

DON'T GET NOSY, PAL, JUST HAUL US OUTTA HERE FAST



HIS SUSPICIONS AROUSED, PHIL USES HIS TWO-WAY RADIO

IT LOOKS FISHY, STEVE. HAVE THE TROOPERS INTERCEPT ME AT THE JUNCTION!

WHEN HE'S FINISHED, I'LL BUMP HIM



YES, I'M JESSIE ELLIS. OH, THOSE TERRIBLE MEN!

TURN AROUND, YOU MUGGS, WHILE I SUP ON THE BRACELETS



MESSAGE 546 ... GENERAL CALL TO ALL STATIONS. ELLIS GIRL RESCUED

THIS TELETYPE WILL BRING PHOTOGRAPHERS HERE IN DROVES

H-MMM... I'D BETTER CLEAN UP



LIKE TO SHAVE? HERE'S A RAZOR

FINE... THANKS!



MAN WHAT A SHAVE! SAY, THIS BLADE IS REALLY SOMETHIN'

YES, THIN GILLETTES SURE MAKE SHAVING EASY



YOU'RE OKAY IN MY BOOK, SON. I'M COUNTING ON SEEING YOU TOMORROW

THAT MEANS A SWELL JOB FOR MILLS, OR I DON'T KNOW THE OLD MAN

HOURLY LATER

BELIEVE ME, MEN, YOU GET CLEANER, BETTER-LOOKING SHAVES AND SAVE MONEY, TOO, WITH THIN GILLETTES. THEY'RE MUCH KEENER AND LONGER-LASTING THAN OTHER LOW-PRICE BLADES AND FIT YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR PRECISELY. ASK FOR THIN GILLETTE BLADES IN THE CONVENIENT NEW TEN-BLADE PACKAGE

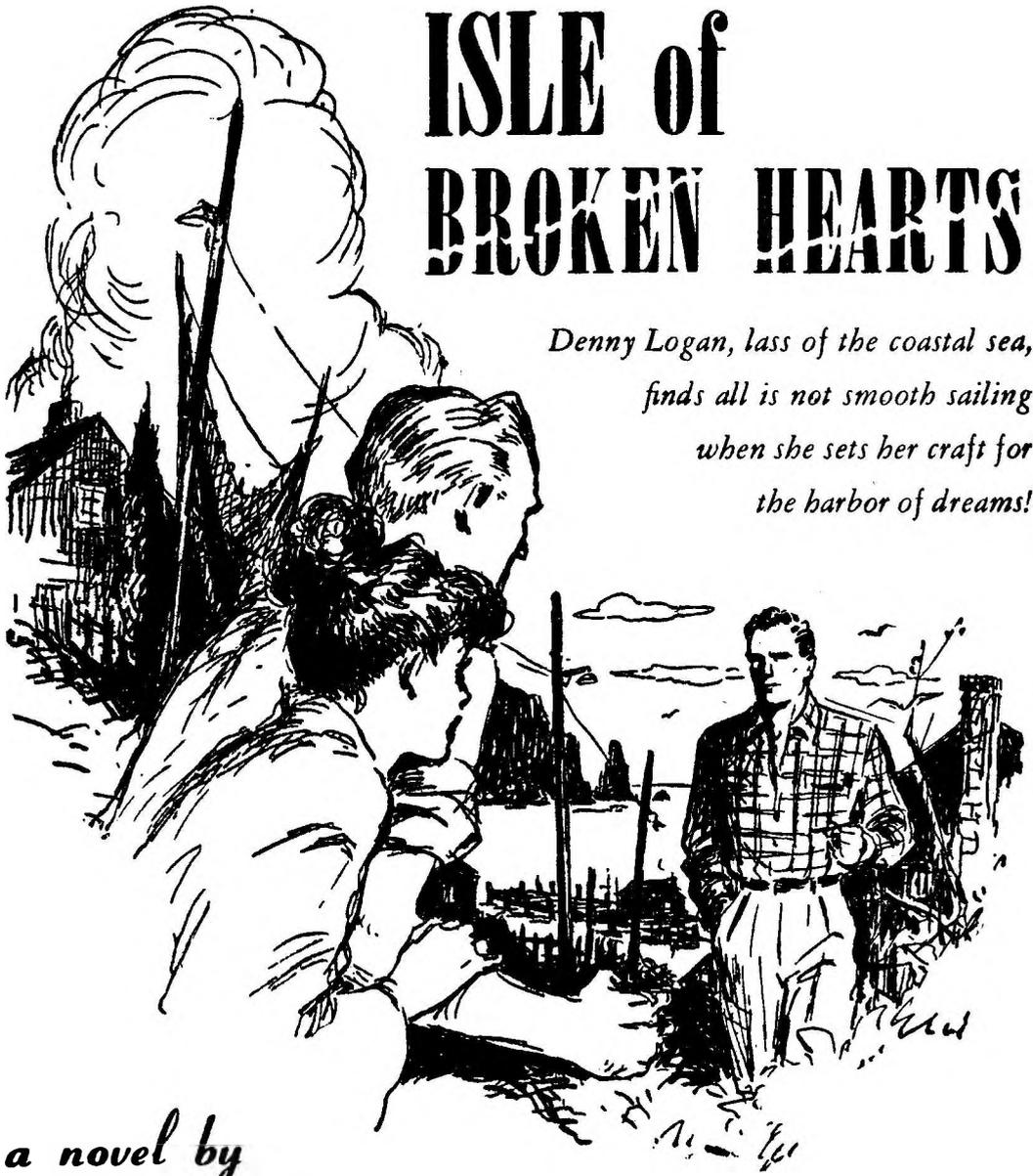
THIN Gillette BLADES

4-10¢
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New ten-blade package has compartment for used blades.

ISLE of BROKEN HEARTS

*Denny Logan, lass of the coastal sea,
finds all is not smooth sailing
when she sets her craft for
the harbor of dreams!*



a novel by

JERROLD BEIM

CHAPTER I

THE SAME OLD QUESTION

KIP CARTER was at the wheel of his boat, the little fishing schooner called the *Annabelle M.*, but Denise Logan, whom everyone in their

little island town called "Denny" had climbed forward, something within her impelling a desire to experience the lash of the sea.

"Are you scared, Denny, darling?" Kip called to her.

"Scared?" Denise laughed gaily, al-

most wildly, holding her face up to the wind. "No! I'm having a wonderful time. I could go on like this forever!"

When Denny and Kip had started out together the sun had been shining brightly, and there had been no indication of an approaching storm. But suddenly a squall had arisen, as it so often did in the waters about Rock Island. In moments dark clouds had been gathering, the waves swelling to mountainous billows.

Kip had wanted to turn back immediately, but Denny had cried:

"No, let's ride it through! It's not going to last long. Let's not give in to a little bad weather, have it spoil our whole afternoon!"

Kip Carter had stared at her in bewilderment, but after all the years he had known her, the two of them having grown up on Rock Island together, he knew that Denny was a creature of unpredictable moods. And there was no use to argue with her, once she had made up her mind.

Gripping the rail of the boat to keep her balance, Denny knew herself that she could not explain her mood of the moment to Kip. She wouldn't even make the effort. But she knew, deep down in her consciousness, that the turbulence of the sea matched the frantic and unexplained excited beating of her heart. She hoped that the water which dashed against her face might in some measure clear away the doubts and inexplicable perplexity which were creating a confusion that filled her mind.

If the weather had remained calm, she and Kip would have been sitting quietly on the deck now, instead of battling a squall. His arms would have been about her, his lips finding hers, and he would again have been asking that question he asked so incessantly:

"When are you going to make up your mind about marrying me, Denny? I can't go on this way. You're part of my soul, you're the blood that pumps through my veins. Denny, you've got to marry me—you've got to give me your answer today!"

THE wind howled in her ears now, dimming those words she could hear so plainly, because they were so fam-

iliar. Though Kip hadn't spoken them today—not yet, and only because he hadn't had a chance—she had heard them so often from Kip that she was letter-perfect in the routine.

Denny couldn't understand herself. Why couldn't she love Kip, agree to marry him, when he loved her so much? She wished she knew.

Her eyes were closed to the rush of the wind as the schooner bounded along, but tears gathered on the long sweep of her lashes. The wind had tossed her scarf off at its first brisk announcement of taking over, and the leaping spray had made of her short-cropped hair a tangle of shiny dark ringlets.

Not a trace of makeup was left on her face now, as she defiantly dared the elements, but she had never been more beautiful, with her features so clearly chiseled, her rounded chin, pert nose and delicate high cheek bones. Because the weather had been so sunny when they left the island she had not brought along a sou'wester, and her wet blouse and thin, summery skirt clung to her slim, taut body, revealing every luscious curve.

Long years ago, when ships were young and romance rode the high seas, sculptors in wood had been inspired to carve girls like Denny on the prows of their great, wondrous ships. Her own father, Captain Logan, had told her about such ships of yore, some of which had still existed in his day.

She remembered every word he had told her when she had been a child. She still remembered, now that he was long gone, how he had told her that, way up the rocky shore of the island were the bones of frigates, merchant ships, and fishing schooners that had been wrecked by the treacherous currents and mists that swirled about their islands. She had often seen them, the proof of the truth of his words.

Captain Logan had told his daughter much more than just the legends of the island. She remembered all that, too, was recalling it now.

"Like a vessel on the water, you've got to be sure of your course in life, Denny," he had told her soberly. "Never set out for any place without knowing just where you're going, and the way



As Terry came down from the rail,
Denny was still shaking from the
ordeal she had seen him go through
(CHAPTER V)

you must steer to get there. Always make sure that you're master of your heart and soul, the way a captain has to be of his ship."

Kip Carter was manning the ship she was now aboard. Kip, with whom she had played when they were both sun-tanned kids running through the surf along the beach. Kip, who had held her hand years ago when she had got a fish hook into it and had said, "I'll take it out for you, Denny darling. Shut your eyes, grit your teeth, and I'll try not to let it hurt."

It had hurt fearfully, so that she couldn't even think of it now without a wince of pain. But she knew that it had not been Kip's fault, and something had grown in her heart at that moment, and until recently she had always thought it was love. For so long she had been sure it was love for Kip, whom she would one day marry, be happy with here on the island forever. And now—she wasn't so sure any longer.

What had happened to her in these recent months? Why, looking at Kip's lean, handsome face, those dark eyes and his straight blond hair, did misgivings surge through her when they never had before? Kip was no different from what he had always been. She loved Rock Island and knew that she wanted to stay here forever. Yet a restlessness had gripped her lately, and Kip's lips on hers somehow didn't seem to stir in her the old excitement she once had known any more.

"The storm's calming down now, Denny!" Kip called to her. "We can head back for shore!"

His voice brought her back to her present surroundings. She had been so far away. She realized that the schooner was riding more smoothly, and the wind had ebbed. But there was no calm within her, that inner turbulence was as riotous as ever, and she had no answer to the problem of how she felt about Kip. Instead she was almost dreading to go back to shore, to be faced by him again, demanding an answer to that ever-present question of his.

But ships always returned to shore. Kip was dropping the anchor of the schooner off the dock now.

"You'd better get into dry clothes

just as soon as you can, Denny," Kip said.

"I have some in the office, Kip," she called over her shoulder, as she leaped lightly over the rail to the dock. "I'll change right away!"

HER bare feet sped over the planks of Rock Island's main dock—her dock, because this was what Captain Logan had left his daughter. It was the dock that he had owned and which Denise owned and managed now. It was long, strongly built, jutting quite a way out to the sea, and a small office had been built at the water end.

Denny's heart glowed as she ran along, her thoughts all for the dock now. She was remembering how at first the islanders had been skeptical whether she could manage the business of the dock alone. It was one of the main arteries of life on the island because it was where the fishermen brought the hauls they caught, to be sent to the wholesalers on the main land. Here, too, they came for gasoline, ropes, nets, and all the supplies needed for their work.

When Denny had taken over the dock business, for a time she had been a bit discouraged, but then slowly, surely, she had managed to assume control of all the work, with a few hired men to help her with the heavy tasks. She handled the bookkeeping and financial end of things herself, too. By now the villagers just assumed that she would go on forever running the dock, knowing she was able to do just as good a job as her father had done before her.

And they were as proud of Denny as Captain Logan himself would have been! If Denny sometimes got caught up in the burdensome routine, and added chores fell on her shoulders because one of her helpers didn't turn up to work, she'd just grit her teeth and bear it, not complaining to anyone! Maybe part of the reason she couldn't bring herself to accept Kip, she thought, was the fact that she had thrown herself body and soul into making a success of the dock, while his heart belonged with his ships at sea. He could never take a real interest in the dock the way she did. After all, it was her job.

CHAPTER II

OFF-ISLANDER



AS Denny entered her little office, she looked around with the pleased feeling it always gave her. It was attractively furnished, though with few feminine touches added since her Dad had died. She had, how-

ever, always seen to it that the yellow bowl on the window ledge had flowers in it, and that the window itself was shining and clean, framing the beautiful vista of the harbor beyond.

There was a huge roll-top desk that had come off a ship, a few comfortable chairs and old-fashioned wooden filing cabinets. Also there were some modern touches, such as a new typewriter and some good pictures.

She always kept changes of clothes in the closet, too. She took off her wet ones hurriedly, and rubbed her slim body with a nubby towel until it glowed. Then she donned a yellow turtle-neck sweater and black skirt. It was hardly a suitable Saturday night outfit when the town went gala, but it would do until she got home.

"The sun's out, Denny!" Kip called from outside the office door. "Honestly, I almost think you ordered that squall to keep me from saying what I have on my mind."

He waited for her out on the dock, and his bronzed fingers reached for her wrist as soon as she appeared. He had changed into a dry white tee-shirt and jeans. He drew closer to her, pushing her back against the office door. Over his shoulder she saw the red sky of the setting sun. She felt his hands gripping her arms, his body close against hers, but—his nearness gave her no thrill.

"Denny, I love you," he said, his voice low, pleading. "You can't keep putting me off this way!" His head bent, and his lips touched her throat, then found her own red lips.

Why didn't her heart match the pounding of his? Again came that wondering which she could not under-

stand. Why couldn't she make Kip happy, find contentment herself, by being able to respond to him? It should be so easy, after all these years, and yet it was so—hard. Impossible!

"Are you ever going to marry me, honey?" His lips, still close to hers, murmured the words softly. "We belong together, Denny! We always have. You must know that."

"Kip—Kip!" she breathed desperately. "I want to say yes—believe me I do! But something holds me back!"

She put her hands to his chest. She saw the anxiety in his eyes. She had never given him a definite refusal because she had not been sure of herself, and didn't want to hurt him either.

"Oh Kip," she rushed on, "I don't know *what* it is that does hold me back, but I think it's because I'm not sure that I want to marry a fisherman. I've seen so much tragedy on this island. Girls married to boys who make a living fishing the way you do. Girls, young wives, even those who have grown old doing the same thing—always worrying, wondering if the next trip is the one when the men they love won't come back. I don't know if I could live through that!"

"Excuses," Kip said shortly. "I got it. You're just making excuses, Denny! If you loved me enough you'd go through any kind of life just as long as we could be together. If you don't love me say it now, Denny! Spit out the words to be, but for both our sakes, and for heaven's sake let's settle things between us once and for all."

She knew he was right. But she did love him, she told herself. She had always loved Kip whom she had known all her life. But was it the kind of love on which a happy marriage could be built? That was something else.

"Oh Kip!" she said tremulously. "I just can't say 'yes', and I can't say a 'no' that will send you out of my life forever. Hate me for it, Kip and I won't blame you. But it makes me just as upset and miserable as you—you can believe that. If you walk away from me this minute, Kip, never see me again, I won't blame you. But if you want to wait just a little while longer for an answer—maybe I'll come to the one

you want."

His hands fell from her arms. His voice was filled with weary resignation when he spoke.

"I've waited this long, Denny," he murmured. "One thing a fisherman is supposed to have is patience. All right, I won't pull my line in yet. I'll keep waiting and hoping. But you've got to let me know soon. Surely you can see that we can't go on like this for long. You'll go to the dance with me tonight at any rate, won't you?"

"Of course I will, Kip!" she said eagerly, and as he reluctantly released her they started to walk along the dock side by side. "I've been looking forward to this Saturday night dance."

JUST across from the dock was the village Main Street. As they came out onto it, the street already was bustling with Saturday night air. Fishermen stood in groups talking, looking forward to a day of rest tomorrow. Girls walked about, their hair in curlers, ready to be transformed into flowing beauty for the Square Dance that was to be held at Town Hall tonight. Boys came out of the barber shop, clean-shaven, exuding an aroma of bay rum.

Denny laughed happily. She loved all this. It was the breath of life to her, though she hadn't spent all her time on Rock Island. Her father used to take her on trips to Boston and New York, and since his death she had on several occasions gone to those cities by herself. She loved going to the theatre, smart night clubs, seeing how city folk enjoyed themselves.

She had come to the conclusion, though, that Saturday nights were pretty much alike the world over. Except that it was even more fun on the island because she loved it so much here, and she was positive she could never be content living any place else.

The Rock Island Inn where Denny lived with her Aunt Beth who ran it, was at the end of Main Street. Kip boarded at the place, too, had lived there ever since he had lost his own people. Reaching the inn, and climbing the veranda step, they entered the lobby which, now properly speaking, was a reception lounge. It was a cheer-

ful room, furnished with fine antiques and with good taste that always surprised off-islanders.

"I was worried about you two!" Aunt Beth called from behind the desk, with a cheerful wave of her hand, as she saw them come in. "Did you get in before the storm blew up?" Aunt Beth was a plump, white haired woman, who wore steel-rimmed glasses but had a young expression on her warm, friendly face.

"No—we got caught right in the middle of it!" Denny told her, and smiled.

"Well, I see you had sense enough to change your clothes," Aunt Beth approved, peering closely at Denny. "But get up close to the fire and make sure your bones are dry, too. I'll get a cock-tail ready for you and Kip. You probably need it!"

Aunt Beth went into the dining room and Denny turned to the glow of flame that blazed in the huge fireplace. A voice, suddenly speaking behind her, startled her so that she jumped.

"That was quite a squall that blew up, wasn't it? Wouldn't you like to pull up close to the fire in this chair?"

Denny hadn't realized that anyone was sitting in the Boston rocker before the fireplace. But a tall, broad-shouldered young man was rising to full height before her, and smiling down at her.

"Hello!" he said. "I know you. I've been hearing about you from your aunt. I guessed who you were when you came in from her description. I'm a new guest here, just arrived this afternoon. My name is Terry Hayes."

Denny took in the young stranger with a quick flick of her long lashes. "Off-islander" was her first reaction, judging from the clothes he wore. A smart red and blue plaid shirt was open at the throat, he wore gray flannel trousers and open strap sandals. The clothes told their own story, but his face and strong, arrow-straight body, couldn't be so easily catalogued, or dismissed.

Piercing blue eyes were staring at Denny appreciatively. She liked the strong line of his jaw, the firm lips that slowly widened into a friendly grin, and his rippling black hair, tossed back from a broad forehead.

"Your aunt told me you're the most beautiful, sensible, and wonderful girl on the island," he said, his eyes twinkling at Denny. "I thought she was just bragging about her relatives, but I'm not disappointed so far. Matter of fact, I don't believe she was enthusiastic enough."

He was holding a pack of cigarettes out to her as he spoke and she came closer to take one. She hardly understood just why she did that, either. Because long ago she had made herself a nice, iron-clad little rule about not mingling with any of the city folk who came to the island. They usually came there for one of three things—sword fishing, drinking, or to have fun on the side with a pretty girl, where no one knew them. Denny had seen too many of the local lassies succumb to an off-islander's charms and suffer from a broken heart when the season ended, to lay herself open to being taken in.

BUT here she was now putting this man's cigarette to her lips, letting this Terry Hayes hold his lighter for her. His eyes leveled behind the flame and she felt a strange electric stirring go through her whole body.

"Denny, here comes Aunt Beth with our cocktails!" Kip's voice sounded behind her, sharp and annoyed.

"Oh, you've met Mr. Hayes!" Aunt Beth said and smiled as she sailed in, and the young man came forward, relieving her of the tray. "Just set it down on that table, Mr. Hayes. I brought another one for you. Didn't think you'd mind."

"I'm delighted!" he declared and set the tray down. He picked up a cocktail, held it out to Denny with a bow. Then he handed one to Kip, too, who took it with reluctant fingers.

"I've got to get back to the kitchen," Beth said. "Dinner will be ready soon, and I've got to see to the service. Those girls! My land, you've got to watch them every minute!"

As she disappeared again, Denny sank into the rocker. The drink felt good, and she was aware of Terry Hayes staring intently at her again. That was rather pleasant, too.

"I hear you run the dock, Miss



"I give you fair warning, my lass," said Gilda, "that Terry is mine!" (CHAPTER IX)

Logan." he remarked.

"That's right!" Denny nodded, her eyes sparkling at him over the rim of her glass. Everyone was always surprised at that, the first time they heard it.

"That's quite a job for a girl, isn't it?" he asked.

"Not for our kind of girls!" Kip put in, and it was evident he intended to make no secret of the hostility he always felt toward off-islanders.

Terry Hayes didn't seem disturbed, however. He turned that wide grin of his on Kip.

"I hear you own some fishing boats," he commented. "I'd like to try my hand at sword fishing, though I've never done any. Could you possibly take me out tomorrow?"

Kip's jaw tightened. "Tomorrow's Sunday, and my day off!" he said coldly. "Besides, I don't like to watch amateurs fish, and see all the big ones get away."

The churlishness in Kip's voice made Terry Hayes flush. He had finally caught on that Kip had no intention of being friends. His eyes turned to Denny searchingly, to find out if she were going to brush him off with the same kind of treatment.

"Dinner's ready!" Aunt Beth called from the doorway of the dining room, and most conveniently, to save further embarrassment.

Kip reached out for Denny's hand, pulling her away without giving her a chance to say another word.

"Those rich city fellows who come here to fish give me a pain in the neck!" Kip grumbled as he led Denny into the dining room, and they sat down at a table by the window.

It was their usual table, one reserved for permanent guests. Denny saw Aunt Beth seating Mr. Hayes by himself at the other side of the room.

"You didn't have to be quite so rude to him, Kip," she said, picking up some oysterette crackers to munch. "He seems nicer than most of the men that we've had around here."

"They're all alike!" Kip said, and scowled. "Stop looking his way, Denny, or he'll get an idea you're interested in him. . . Wonder what your aunt has

for dinner tonight."

"Lobster stew," said Denny. "Why do you ask? You know we always have that on Saturday nights."

CHAPTER III

"SWING YOUR PARTNERS"



EATING the lobster stew, Denny wondered if it were not just such things as this, boringly familiar in spite of the fact that it was all a part of the life she loved, and would not exchange for any other in the world, that was responsible for all the restlessness which recently had so unaccountably swept over her. Was there such a thing as getting *too* accustomed to things—and people? Until you just got tired to death of them, at least for a while, and felt an unexplained uneasiness, subconsciously looking around for a change.

Simple things, like lobster stew every Saturday night. Or somewhat more complicated ones—like Kip Carter, and his eternal insistence on her marrying him. Could be, she told herself. Could be the tedious familiarity of everything—what she ate each night here at the inn, just what Kip was going to say every time he saw her, that constantly reiterated refrain, "I-love-you-Denny. When-are-you-going-to-marry-me."

There was no relief from the tedium even on Saturday nights when everybody was supposed to shuffle off the week's cares and have a good time. Because here in town every Saturday night there was a Square Dance, and always it was the same. Kip would take her, and they would dance the night through, then when he finally took her home he would kiss her, hold her tightly in his arms again before they said good night.

"What's the matter with you, Denise Logan?" she chided herself angrily, as she realized the trend of her thoughts. "You love this island, your life here—you know you do. Why should you suddenly be so discontented?"

But the lobster stew did not interest her any more. She left it untasted, and looked across at Kip.

"Kip," she said hesitantly, "I guess that storm took more out of me than I thought it did. I—I've got to go upstairs and rest a while if we're going to the dance tonight."

She didn't give Kip a chance to protest, but pushed her chair back, got up from the table in a hurry and fled from the dining room. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Terry Hayes' glance following her with concern, but she did not look in his direction, and made her way through the lobby and up the stairs.

Why should the mere presence of a strange man here at the inn have accentuated that restless feeling which had been dogging her? It was ridiculous. Because, as Kip had said, he was just one of those rich fellows from Boston or New York or somewhere who came here to fish, and she had just as much disdain for them and their idle lives as Kip Carter did.

Walking across her bedroom to the mirror she wondered if she ought to send word down to Kip that she didn't feel up to going to the dance tonight. Maybe she should tell him that she wanted to stay home, go to bed early with a book, or just sit before the fireplace downstairs.

And then—another utterly ridiculous thought—she was imagining Terry Hayes sauntering up to her if she did stay home, and his voice saying, "How nice you didn't go out! We can spend the evening together."

Denny pulled herself up short, staring at her reflection in the mirror. No! She must force herself to change her clothes, no matter what her inclination was, and she must go to the dance with Kip tonight.

Kip apparently took that for granted, because he rapped on the door of her room about an hour later.

"Hi, Denny!" he called. "All dressed up in your best bib and tucker and ready to go now?"

"Yes, Kip," she called back to him. "I had a little rest and feel much better."

She put her hand to the knob and

opened the door. She was all ready, and so was Kip. He had bathed, changed into a white shirt and tie and blue suit, and he looked nice. Eager, too. Denny felt ashamed of herself for having even for a minute considered not going to the dance with him.

His eyes took her in with affectionate approval. She looked lovely in a full, long-skirted dress of soft pink and blue plaid taffeta that had a low neckline and tiny puffed sleeves. With white blossoms in her hair, and a fringed silk shawl that had once been Aunt Beth's, for an evening wrap, she was ready.

SHE tried not to remember that this was like every other Saturday night as she walked down the street, her arm linked through Kip's. Other couples on their way to the Town Hall greeted them with cheery hellos. The sky was clear now and stars flickered brightly—their own 'Great White Way', as the islanders often called it.

Gay lilting music reached them as they approached Town Hall, and the doors were flung open letting out a friendly light. Other voices called out to them.

"Hello Denny! Don't you look darling tonight! . . . Hi Kip! Have a good haul this morning?"

Bob and Jo, Ted and Vivian, Kirk and Linda—all their friends, fishermen and their girls, were here!

"Get your partners for the next dance!" the caller was shouting as the laughing couples entered the hall, and the orchestra was tuning up again. "Swing your partners!"

Then Kip was leading Denny onto the dance floor.

The music grew louder, its steady rhythm coursing through her veins. She loved to dance, and since she had danced so much with Kip—ever since they had been children—they were perfect partners. In answer to the chanted calls they swung around, marched through the double lines, linked arms, with heads tossed back, and lips curved in happy laughter.

Denny was in her glory. These were her friends—her people—and this was a moment she loved.

Then suddenly the music seemed to

cease, her feet stopped dancing as she saw the deep blue eyes, the smiling face of the man who was before her.

"They won't throw me out of here, will they?" he was saying. "Your aunt urged me to come down. Said Saturday night was no time for me to be sitting home with an old lady like her!" And before Denny could think of a word to say, he hurried on, "Don't stop dancing on account of me. I'm an old hand at square dancing. Your boy friend's looking daggers at me, but what can he do? He's way down the line, and I'm the one who is here opposite you."

It was, of course, Terry Hayes who was speaking to Denny. She heard the music again, felt his hand gripping hers as he went into the dance, and her feet began to move.

Since they had never danced together, they took a few awkward steps at first, but then moved in unison, and it was with dash and rhythm such as Denny had never known she was capable of accomplishing. And she realized that it was not the music that furnished the tempo, either. It was the feel of his pulse as his hand gripped hers, and the pounding of her heart, as strong as the surf on a beach.

"This is fun, Denny," Terry said, after a while, "but it's awfully crowded in here. Do you have to stay here all evening? Would the local gossips point their fingers at you if you left the dance to take a walk with me? It's too beautiful a night out, Denny, to waste it indoors."

His words sent a throbbing to her ears from her accelerated pulses that blotted out all reason. She was ready to leave with him, when the music suddenly came to an end with a flourish. And another voice was speaking right beside her.

"Here you are, Denny. Come on, let's get some punch!" It was Kip, and then he was masterfully slipping his arm through hers and leading her away.

Fingers would have pointed at her! She knew that well enough now that she could think about it, and was away from the spell cast over her by Terry Hayes. The boys and girls would have been annoyed if she had ditched Kip for an off-islander.

Kip led her to the punch table. It was supposed to be just fruit juices but as usual some of the boys had spiked it with something stronger, which made it all the more refreshing.

"What a nerve that fellow has, bargaining in here!" Kip said, frowning. "He wasn't getting fresh, was he?"

"No, of course not!" Denny said quickly. "Don't be so unfriendly, Kip. He was just passing by—heard the music, and came in!"

Why was she making up excuses for a complete stranger, even telling a little white lie for him? She sipped her drink quickly and smoothed the worry out of Kip's brows by saying lightly.

"Come on, let's dance some more!"

They danced on until about eleven thirty, then Denny said wearily:

"Kip, I'm really tired out now. I don't want to take you away from here, but I'd like to go home."

"That's okay with me, Denny," he assured her. "I've had enough of it, too."

THEY slipped away unnoticed by the laughing, dancing crowd, and walked back to the inn. As they entered the lobby Denny saw that it was deserted; everyone had gone to bed. The screen was up before the fireplace but some dying embers still lay there, glowing softly.

"We'll have fun again tomorrow, won't we, Denny?" Kip asked eagerly, his hands drawing her close to him. "Let's pack a lunch and go picnicking way up the shore."

"All right—if it's a nice day," she promised him, but only gave her lips briefly as he kissed her—and once more missed the thrill. Was it gone for good? "I'm going to rush up to bed and get rested for tomorrow. Picnics can be wearing sometimes, you know, Kip."

She ran on upstairs to her room. There she tried to tell herself she actually was exhausted, so got undressed as quickly as possible and into bed. She wanted sleep to come right away so that she wouldn't be troubled by her thoughts.

If only she could make up her mind to marry Kip, could be decisive about her future, then her troubles would all be

over! Once she was married she would never think of looking at a stranger, responding to his eyes and smile as she had while dancing with Terry Hayes tonight.

But no matter how tired she thought she was, sleep refused to come. Turning and tossing in bed she finally gave it up and flung the covers back. She couldn't fall asleep, so she decided to go for a swim. Plunging through the cool water sometimes calmed her nerves. Maybe it would work tonight. Quickly getting into a bathing suit and throwing a robe about her shoulders, she quickly slipped out of the inn.

But when she reached the beach, instead of going into the water she found herself walking along the shore. On the damp sand where the waves rolled up gently, lapping her feet with soft caresses.

CHAPTER IV

NOTHING SERIOUS



DENNY walked on until she reached her favorite spot. This was the dangerous strand where so many doomed vessels had been wrecked. The skeleton hulk of one of them lay stark in the pale moonlight.

Here was a great twist of rope and seaweed, there the remains of what had once been a luxurious cabin.

How she used to love to come here as a child, to play and hunt for bits of treasure! And what she had found *had* been treasure to her child's heart—an old brass handle, a bright button and once she had found a lace fan, to wave flirtatiously and pretend that she was a great lady dressed in silk and satin for the Captain's Ball.

But she was jarringly pulled out of the past by a—

"Denny—Denny Logan! I hope you don't mind, but I saw you leaving the house, and came too. You walked so fast I couldn't catch up with you!"

She whirled about at the sound of the voice but even before she saw the face

she knew who it was. She had never heard that voice before today, but she couldn't mistake it. Terry Hayes was coming almost at a run, making his way toward her, his body looking broad and strong in swimming shorts he wore.

"Whew, but this is weird spot, isn't it, Denny!" he panted when he stood before her now, glancing about. "Do you come her often?"

"Whenever I want to be by myself and think!" she answered.

"Is that a hint for me to leave, lady?" he demanded, and grinned at her. "I suppose I should have known you wouldn't be taking a walk at night like this unless you wanted to be alone. I'm sorry—I'll go back!"

"No—it's all right!" she told him. Involuntarily her hand reached out, lightly touching his arm. Instantly she drew her fingers back, as if they had been singed with flame, and the shock of it sped all through her body.

"How come so many boats were wrecked here?" Terry asked, taking it for granted that her slight gesture meant that she really wanted him to stay.

"Don't you know?" Denny laughed softly, then she told him: "Why, in the old days, long long ago, Rock Island was called the Isle of Broken Hearts. There's a legend that the mermaids used to come out of the sea at night to sit here in the moonlight. They sang their songs here, calling to and enticing the men on ships and causing the wrecks when the vessels went on the rocks."

"The Isle of Broken Hearts!" Terry murmured, his eyes steadily on hers in the dim light of the stars. "It's funny, Denny, but I had the sensation tonight that you were calling me, somehow wanted me to follow you here, though of course you didn't say a word. Should I be scared of you? Are you going to take my heart, crush it, and strew the bits on this shore with all the other wreckage? I wonder, though, if the men who were wrecked here didn't find it worthwhile—especially if the mermaids were as beautiful as you!"

She felt his hands reaching out, touching her gently, and drawing her to him. She lifted her hands to push him away, but his touch sent flames

leaping through her body, so that instead of her fingers pressing against his chest they reached his broad shoulders, and clung involuntarily.

His lips lowered on hers. She felt their pulsating, their warmth, their demand which was like nothing she had ever experienced before. Her heart was pounding against his, with a wild, unleashed beating.

Bright bits of treasure! Always she had come looking for them on this spot. But never, never before had she found anything as wonderful and precious as this moment!

"Denny," he whispered huskily, "we should have come here hours ago—not wasted a whole evening on that hick dance!"

Those words he spoke first when they finally broke away, were like a douse of cold water on her emotions. His hands still held her, but his words were suddenly opening her eyes. And she was realizing, with deep shock that she hardly knew this man, but what he had just said revealed how different were their worlds, how deep the chasm which lay between them!

"I was one of the hicks at that dance!" she cried resentfully, and wrenched herself free from his grasp.

"Denny, I'm terribly sorry!" His voice was tremulous with apology. "I didn't mean it to sound like that! But I suppose I was just sort of getting even because everyone there seemed to resent my dancing with you."

"And why shouldn't they?" she challenged, and held her chin high. "I'm an island girl, and you're an off-islander. It never works out! Oh, I've seen it happen so many times, men like you coming here, making love to local girls while you stay, then going off and forgetting completely. This island of ours is called the Isle of Broken Hearts just as much for that reason as for the wrecks here. I guess you and I both lost our heads just now. The magic of the night, the starlight, probably. Let's forget about all this, before any harm is done!"

SHE turned and hurried away from him, speeding through the damp sand as quickly as she could. How *could*

she have been so foolish as to let him kiss her the way he had? How could she have responded to him with an emotion such as she had never felt when Kip kissed her? Even now, with it all over, her lips were still trembling with the bruise of his lips, her heart was still beating frantically against her ribs.

She was breathless from haste and an emotional let-down when she finally neared the inn. There was always a light left at a side door, and she had reached out to grab the knob when abruptly her fingers froze.

"Denny," a stern voice said, "what are you doing up at this hour? I thought you were so tired you could hardly wait to get to bed!"

It was Kip, coming from the main walk to the inn, staring at her with incredulous eyes. Kip, and from the look on his face she immediately knew that he had been out again, having a bit too much to drink with the boys after he had brought her home.

"I—I rested a little while," she told him, "and then found I couldn't sleep. I thought I'd go for a swim and that would make me sleepy."

"You don't look as if you got wet," he commented, as he glanced at her bathing suit. "What was the matter? Did the night air seem too cool? You're trembling, Denny! Come on, honey, let me put my arms around you. I'll keep you nice and warm."

He held his arms out—and just as suddenly dropped them. He was staring beyond Denny's shoulder, and she glanced back to follow his gaze. Her heart filled with panic—because there was Terry, coming from the beach toward them.

"Now I'm beginning to understand!" Kip said, in sudden savage anger. "You planned this date with him at the dance! Made excuses to come home and meet him afterward." Kip's hands tightened into fists.

"No, Kip—that's not true!" Denny cried fearfully. "I came home because I really was tired. I couldn't sleep—thinking about us—your proposal to me. . . . Kip, don't start any trouble—a fight! You'll rouse the whole neighborhood, have everyone talking about me—about us!"

As Denny saw the flames rushing toward them, she believed every word Terry was telling her
(CHAPTER XII)



Terry had reached them then. "Hello Kip!" he greeted easily, and smiled at the young fisherman. But in the next instant he sensed that something was wrong and guessed what it was. "There's nothing for you to be mad about, Kip," he said, with a wry laugh. "I saw Denny leave the house and followed her. But I had my trouble for my pains. She's not the least bit interested in an off-islander like me."

Denny bit her lips. She couldn't force herself to look at him as he spoke. But the expression she saw on Kip's face actually frightened her. It was no longer anger, but in his eyes was a sharp meaningful, glint.

"Still want to go sword fishing tomorrow morning, Hayes?" Kip asked.

Terry hesitated. "Well, we're up kind of late. But yes—I'd like to go if you're willing to take me."

"It's a date then!" Kip said. "Meet me at the dock at four-thirty this morning. That's the time we usually set out."

"At that rate I'd better catch myself at least a few winks of sleep!" Terry laughed. "Good night . . . Denny—" He seemed about to say something else, but his voice ended on an inflection, as if asking if she were all right and could handle Kip from here on.

"Good night Mr. Hayes," she said, without turning her head. "Have a nice—fishing trip."

She waited until she heard the door close, then whirled on Kip.

"Kip," she demanded, "why did you offer to take him fishing, change your mind about the trip? What are you planning to do?"

"Nothing serious, darling!" Kip reached for her, and drew her close. "Just rock the boat a little, get him good and wet the way we sometimes handle off-island slickers like him. Then maybe he'll lose interest in the sport and get off the island while the getting is still good."

Kip lowered his head, his lips finding Denny's. She endured his kiss, but got away from him as soon as possible, running up to her room, rubbing her hand across her lips. Surely it must be only because Kip had been drinking that she had found his kiss unbearable. What had happened between her and Terry Hayes on the beach was meaningless, could have nothing to do with it. Kip would teach him a lesson, get rid of him, and there would be no chance of any further wreckage—another broken heart on this island!

DENNY managed to get some sleep, but at a little before four-thirty she woke up. Running to the window she could see the dock and her heart sank because the water was calm, the air warm—everything needed for perfect fishing. She could just feel it in her bones, which was the way fishing weather was determined by almost everyone on the island. Through the mist she could see the tall mast of the sword fishing pulpit of the *Annabelle M.* Those moving figures must be Kip, Terry Hayes and the men of the boat crew.

What was Kip really up to? How far would he go to get even with Terry? She was suddenly fearful of Kip's intentions, didn't believe his explanation to her at all. Backing away from the window she quickly slipped out of her nightgown and got dressed in warm clothes. Hurrying down the stairs she found her old yellow sou'wester on the rack, clapped it on her head as she pushed her hair up under it, then thrust her feet into boots.

She got to the boat just as it was about to pull out and got aboard while the men were weighing anchor. They

grinned at her, welcoming her, because she had come along with them lots of times. But Terry, busy looking over the equipment, didn't notice the addition to the crew.

Some of Kip's men climbed into the rigging. One went to the topmost point, to keep watch until a fish was sighted. Others sat in the seats that were like children's swings. Kip took the steering wheel and talked to Terry who stood beside him.

Denny could see that Terry didn't have the patience of the fishermen. He became restless because it was a long time before a voice rang out from above:

"There he is!"

It was a cry that always sent Denny's heart to her throat with excitement. Standing on her toes to watch, she saw the black dorsal fin of the fish that had just been sighted.

Down the ladder and out of the pulpit came the man who had been on watch there. The dorsal fin came nearer and nearer. Then the tiny arrow-shaped harpoon was whirled through the air—and struck home!

"Okay, Hayes, think you can carry on?" Kip called.

Denny's eyes widened with panic as she heard that triumphant voice from the man at the wheel. And instantly she knew what Kip's plan was! He was letting Terry struggle with the line, the one-man battle against the fish to tire it out! It was the hardest and most dangerous job of all, and Terry was inexperienced.

She wanted to yell at Kip that this was unfair, but something held her back. Maybe it was the look of determination on Terry's face, the way he held the line with his strong, lean hands. Maybe he would be able to hold out, tire the fish, pitting his strength against that giant of the sea.

If he did, then Kip would have to lose that smug look. He would be the one to look like a fool.

The struggle went on, the fish fighting for its life in the water. Denny saw Terry's body held taut as he summoned all his power, and beads of perspiration were beginning to appear on his forehead. The veins on his hands

looked like blue bands of steel.

"Terry—Terry, hold out! Show them what you can do!" The words came silently to Denny's lips.

Her heart began to glow with happy excitement as the fish gave evidence of tiring. She saw the look of dejection on Kip's face and she wanted to laugh aloud and triumphantly at him.

But suddenly she saw something that made her heart seem to stop beating altogether. Did Terry know about that, too?

"Terry—jump!" Denny screamed. "To the rail!"

"Jump—jump!" men were yelling too.

The warning came just in time. The line had slackened, and a sharp, ripping sound came from the deck, just where Terry had been standing.

One of the crew shouted the question to Kip that was in Denny's mind.

"For good glory's sake, Kip, didn't you warn him about jumping in case the rope slackened? Maybe he didn't know that meant the fish was lunging forward! Look how his sword came up through the hull!"

Sure enough it had, sharp and deadly. Cold beads of perspiration stood on Denny's forehead, to think of what might have happened to Terry if she hadn't called out.

"I thought I warned him," Kip was saying. "I guess—I forgot!"

Maybe he had forgotten, Denny tried to convince herself that was the truth as her eyes flashed at him angrily. But it wasn't the kind of thing you forgot to tell someone you wanted to help and protect on a fishing trip!

CHAPTER V

THE MERMAID ROOM



TERRY HAYES came down from the rail to which he had leaped at Denny's warning. He stared at the sword as Kip changed the course of the schooner. Water

was coming through the hole in the hull, and the men were bailing.

Denny had seen this happen before and knew that they would get back to the island safely. She was still shaking from the ordeal, though.

"Denny!" Terry exclaimed: "I didn't even know you were here. But you saved my life!"

She tried to steady her trembling lips. "Not necessarily your life, Terry. But you would have been badly hurt."

"Hey, you two better give us a hand with this water!" one of the fishermen called to them.

The hard work of bailing calmed Denny by the time they reached the dock. But not for long. Then it was worse than ever, because she was aghast to hear Kip grumble:

"That's what I get for taking amateurs out! Ruining a boat!"

"Kip Carter, that's a chance you take every time you go fishing!" Denny cried angrily. "And the boat can be repaired easily enough. You know that too!"

"Well, it'll cost a pretty penny!" Kip retorted.

"Just how much do you think it will cost?" Terry put in. "I was the one who asked to go fishing. I'm willing to foot the bill."

Denny heard Kip name a price that astonished her. He was overcharging Terry—flagrantly. She checked an impulse to interfere. Everyone overcharged off-islanders, so why should she object to it now? "That seems fair enough to me," Terry said. "I'll give you a check at the inn, Kip."

Denny was on the dock now, and she ran as fast as she could for the street, not wanting to hear any more of what those two said. She didn't know whether she was angrier at Terry or at Kip. If Terry hadn't followed her on the beach last night, kissed her, there would have been no fishing trip like this. Let the rich off-islander pay for it in dollars, even though he didn't deserve to be forced to take the risk to which Kip had submitted him!

When she reached the inn she changed her clothes and went to the dining room for breakfast. She was just drinking her orange juice when she saw Terry enter. He was wearing one of his plaid shirts, with gray flannels. Denny couldn't help but admit

how good-looking he was.

"Mind if I have breakfast with you?" he asked. "I feel like I'm miles away from you when I'm over there, at the other side of the room."

She hesitated, glancing toward the door. "Kip usually sits there," she said, nodding at the empty place opposite her.

"I saw him drop into an eating place near the dock to have breakfast with his crew," Terry said, and dropped into Kip's chair. "Let him come—try to put me out anyway!"

They were served a delicious breakfast of flapjacks with homemade sausages. Denny was pouring a fresh cup of steaming hot coffee when Terry asked:

"What made you come out on that fishing boat with us, Denny? Was it to see Kip try to—make a fool of me?"

The cup almost fell from her hand but she managed to set it down.

"No, of course not!" she denied, and quickly added, "He told me he was going to make it a tough trip—rock the boat and all that. But I didn't think he'd neglect to tell you an important thing like that, or let you struggle to pull in a fish at all!"

"I enjoyed it!" he insisted. "It was worth the danger—to have you save my life!" He leaned forward, those dark eyes of his staring intently into hers. "Did you come along because you were concerned about me. Could it be, Denny, that you're just a bit attracted to me, as I am to you—greatly?"

Her fingers tightened on a spoon. "You're an off-islander!" She managed somehow to say what was in her heart. "You're just as bad—I mean, dangerous—for me, as that trip was for you!"

"There's always danger in love, Denny! The danger of surrendering your heart and soul to someone else forever and ever!"

"Forever and ever!" She laughed sharply. "It never happens that way. You're an off-islander!" she repeated, lashing that hateful accusation at him again. "It might be fun for you to make love to me while you're here. The forever and ever begins after you're gone, when you forget the girl on the island."

"Maybe I have plans to stay here forever and ever!" he answered. His hand reached out, his fingers curving over hers. "All right, Denny, let's not think too far into the future if that's what you're afraid of. Does that mean that you can't even talk to me, that we can't be friends? Denny, would you make a date with me for tonight?"

SHE glanced down at his hand which was possessing hers. She could hear the beating of her heart, telling her that she couldn't refuse.

"All right, I'll go out with you, Terry!" she answered him.

"You know the island better than I do. Is there anything that would be fun for us to do?"

She thought a moment, then said, "Aunt Beth usually closes the inn dining room on Sunday nights. It's the only evening she gets off, to rest. But there's really no other nice restaurant on the island. I'll arrange for supper here. We can go to the movie afterward. There's a Betty Grable picture at Town Hall."

Terry laughed. "I should waste my time looking at Miss Grable when I can see you! But it does sound like fun!"

"We'd better catch up on some sleep then," she suggested. "After all we've been up since four-thirty this morning."

It was late in the afternoon when Denny awoke, having slept most of the day through. Usually she went to a movie on Sunday nights with Kip, and she had to tell him she was going to break that standing date. He wasn't in his room, so she found Bobby and had him take a note to Kip who was undoubtedly downtown with some of the fishermen. She wrote simply:

I'm too tired to see you tonight, Kip.

She was laughing to herself as she re-read it. Too tired to see Kip—but not too tired to have a date with a man named Terry Hayes.

She went down to the kitchen then where Aunt Beth was finishing up for the day.

"Shoo!" she told her aunt. "I want the place for myself! I'm going to cook dinner for two tonight!"

Aunt Beth's eyes twinkled. "Not for you and Kip! You can't tell me! I saw that young Hayes holding your hand at the breakfast table today. I like him, Denny. And I think a change from Kip will do you good."

Denny was at the ice-box, staring into its contents. "What do you prepare for a sophisticated meal, Aunt Beth? The kind of entree that might be served at the Stork Club, I mean. Soup from El Morocco, main dish from the Cafe Chambord! Terry Hayes and I are going to all those places tonight!"

"You could make a wonderful hors d'oeuvres first!" Aunt Beth cried enthusiastically, entering into the spirit of the thing. "Then onion soup, and I have some wonderful filet mignon in the freezing compartment."

"With a chocolate soufflé for dessert!" Denny exclaimed.

There was no shooing Aunt Beth out of the kitchen after that. She had to help prepare the meal. By six-thirty everything was ready. Denny found Bobby.

Young Bobby Dodge, freckle-faced, and all of fifteen now, and beginning to look at the girls, though more at Denny than any of the others—when he was sure she wasn't looking at him—was sort of a fixture at the inn. He had somehow just drifted in when he had been left an orphan, and Aunt Beth, feeling sorry for him because he'd had to live with an old curmudgeon of an uncle, had let him stay.

Bobby had certainly repaid her, in many ways. He did chores, ran errands—all sorts of things. As Aunt Beth proudly said, it was good to "have a man around the house." And his devotion to Denny was something to see. There wasn't anything she could ask him to do that he wouldn't about break his neck trying.

That was how it was now, as Denny stood looking at him calculatingly, a bright idea coming to her.

"Bobby," she said suddenly, and smiled at the tow-headed boy who stared at her with adoring eyes, "you've helped wait on tables here lots of times when there was a rush. Want to make some extra money, darling? Put on one of the white jackets we have for the

waiters to use on special occasions and serve Mr. Hayes and me in the dining room tonight. Just as if you were a waiter in an elegant French restaurant!"

"Like in the movies!" Bobby said eagerly, and nodded his understanding with a happy smile.

Denny supervised the setting of the table. There was a fireplace in the dining room and the evening was cool enough for a small blaze there. The table which stood before the fire was covered with a gleaming white table cloth and was set with Aunt Beth's own cherished French china and shining crystal instead of the usual inn service. Tall candles flickered in holders with an arrangement of colorful flowers in the middle of the table. Denny turned on the radio softly to a station that played just dance music, then went upstairs to dress.

The frock she planned to wear was in her closet in a garment bag. She took it from the bag and held it against her slim body before putting it on. Bought two years ago when she had visited Boston it was made on such simple classic lines that it had not gone out of style. What an extravagance she had considered it at the time, but how glad she was to have it now!

The dress was of softly flowing white marquisette, shoulderless with a nipped-in waistline. White grosgrain ribbons encircled the fullness of the skirt, and were festooned in large bows in the front. Denny slipped it over her head, settled it into place, and added pearl earrings and a single strand around her throat, as a finishing touch.

This time she decided to call for Terry, so knocked gently at his door.

"You are cordially invited to dinner, Mr. Hayes," she called through the panels.

THE door opened and he stood there in gabardine slacks, white shirt and attractive patterned necktie.

"Denny!" he cried delightedly. "And I was just wondering if I were getting too dressed up! I wanted this to be a gala occasion, too. You look beautiful!"

He picked up a jacket, slipped into

it, and they started down stairs together.

"This is a brand new supper club, just opened on the island," she explained with a laugh when they reached the door of the dining room. "What shall we call it? How about—the Mermaid Room?"

She was proud of the way everything looked—the fire glowing so brightly, and candlelight seeming like sparks from it. Bobby hovered near the table, holding a chair back for her, and the radio was playing a lilting tune.

"It's a mirage!" Terry exclaimed when their cocktails had been served. And then, as they began on the delicious dinner he added: "Or a dream from which I'm going to awake at any minute. But don't let me wake up, Denny, until I've danced with you first!"

He was up from the table as he spoke, and his arms were held out to her. She glided into them. This was no square dance, but in her imagination the thronged floor of a smart night club. And this wasn't Kip who held her in his arms but a man whom she hardly knew, yet who already seemed to mean more to her than Kip ever had.

When they returned to the table Bobby announced:

"This is with the compliments of the management!"

Denny saw that he was opening a bottle of champagne and guessed immediately that it was Aunt Beth's contribution to the festivity. The golden liquid bubbled in their glasses and sent their spirits soaring still higher.

They ate, danced, talked, and laughed some more. Terry seemed to have grown genuinely fond of the island in his short stay here and asked her all sorts of questions about the place. She told him more of the legends, and anecdotes about the wonderful inhabitants, the people of sturdy stock who had lived and fished here for generations.

When dinner ended Terry asked, "What are those lights I see down on the beach now?"

Denny laughed. "Oh, that's an old Sunday night custom. Fishermen and their girls go there and each couple builds a little bonfire on the sand."

Terry's eyes sparkled. "It sounds wonderful! Would you want to go down there with me, Denny? Or aren't off-islanders allowed?"

Her answer was to rise, hold her hand out to him and lead the way. Outdoors she saw that the sky was clear, studded with stars. When they reached the beach they gathered driftwood for a fire.

There were at least two dozen couples on the sand, dim shadows in the light of the flickering fires. Some fisherman had a guitar with him and his voice rang out in folk songs.

CHAPTER VI

FOR ALWAYS



SOON Terry started the fire he was to share with Denny going, and then they stretched out on the sand. She struggled against remembering that she used to come here on Sunday nights with Kip. Somehow they had stopped coming ages ago, and now she knew why. She could admit it clearly for the first time as Terry's arm tightened, and he brought his lips to hers.

The fire before them burned as a single sheet of flame but it was not as intense as the emotion that scorched their hearts. This was love, Denny thought, come to her at last. The kind of love she had yearned for, had waited for, and struggled to find with Kip. But nothing like this had ever existed between Kip and herself, no rapture such as she knew now had ever possessed her heart, her body and her mind before!

"Denny," Terry whispered, "I adore you! More than that, I love you, want to be with you always. You feel the same way about me too, don't you, darling? I can tell from the way you kissed me. This is no casual thing for either of us, dear. This is real."

She felt his hands cupping hers, saw his dark eyes staring into hers. Why did she have to suddenly remember in a moment like this that she was just an

island girl and he was a rich young man? Why did there have to be any gulf between them?

"For always, Terry?" she whispered tremulously. "You do mean that? You didn't come to the island, just to amuse yourself?" she whispered with concern.

"Of course not, Denny darling. I'm here on the island for business purposes. Though I don't know what my boss would say if he saw me now!" Terry chuckled.

"Business purposes?" Denny sat erect in her surprise. "You mean you aren't just a rich young sportsman here for the sword fishing?"

"You saw for yourself that I don't know the first thing about sword fishing," Terry smiled widely. "Though I'm pretty good with a regular hook and line, going after less vicious monsters of the deep. But what I'm really here on the island for is to find a good building site for Colonel Hughes. You've heard of him, haven't you? He's the man who owns so many big fishing canneries along the coast."

Denny couldn't believe her ears. "Terry—you don't mean—you're thinking of building a fish cannery here—on Rock Island!"

"It's not my idea, darling," Terry told her, and laughed. "It's the Colonel's. He's the one who has all the money to invest. I just draw a pretty good salary from him by doing his field work, coming here to look over the place."

"I thought you loved the island—considered it a beautiful spot!" Denny cried, in sudden fearful realization of

what he was saying all meant. "How could you even think of ruining it by building a big, ugly fish-canning factory here?"

"Well, the place I have in mind is quite away up the beach," Terry told her, but was hesitant as he spoke. "The strand where all the wreckage is. It's not of much use, anyway, for anything else."

The strand—the wreckage! Did he mean that wonderful spot where she had played as a child, which was still so dear to her in memories.

"Terry! You don't know what you're saying!"

Had her heart been on fire just a few moments ago? Well, the fire had been quenched with cold shock now.

"You can't do a thing like this to our island!" she said desperately.

"Let's not talk about it now, Denny," he pleaded. "Let's not spoil our evening."

But the impact of his words, the revelation of why he was here on the island was too much for her.

"I want to talk about it, Terry!" she insisted. "This island is my home and I love it. We've had other people come here, talk about opening factories, too, and have always managed to get rid of them. Terry, you can't carry this through. Why, the fishermen would never agree to it!"

"I'm not so sure of that, Denny." Terry's dark eyes were serious. "I've been talking to some of them, and they seem quite interested."

Her hand tightened into fists. Just

[Turn page]

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how far had this man gone with his plans?

"They get good prices now from the wholesalers," she said. "They'll lose their independence, having to turn everything over to a cannery. Besides, they use my dock for transacting their business."

"I know, Denny," Terry said soberly. "That's something I want to talk about with you, too. We would have to take your dock over. Oh, of course we'd pay you a good price for it, probably more than you'd ever make from running it yourself. But we've learned from past experience, wherever we've opened other canneries, that its best not to change the setup of a town too much. The men are used to coming to your dock. People use it as a center of activity. So it would be essential for us to run it the same way."

AS she listened to him, her heart seemed to stop beating, her eyes widened with disbelief. It was more than she could bear! This man—and whoever it was he worked for—were deliberately planning, working out schemes to take her dock from her! Planning to ruin Rock Island!

How could she even sit on the beach with this person another moment? She sprang to her feet crying:

"I think this ends our date for the evening, Mr. Terry Hayes! You certainly kept the secret of your work from me long enough, but I'm glad to have found out about you!"

Terry got up too, stood before her. "Denny, don't run off," he pleaded. "Listen to me! I wasn't keeping it a secret. To be truthful, I don't know what happened to me, but I just found it hard to bring up the subject of the dock and the cannery to you. I guess I caught some of the feeling you have about the island, and let it stand in the way of my better business judgment. Denny, we can talk about this sensibly. Don't fly off the handle about it all this way—please!" His hand reached out, gently clasping her by the wrist.

She struggled to pull away. "Let me go! Not fly off my handle! And here you are, threatening to put me out of business. Oh, I know how your big com-

panies work! You'll offer me a fair price but if I don't want to sell you'll find some way of forcing me to!" She suddenly drew a sharp breath, her eyes narrowing at him. "Is that—that why you paid so much attention to me, made love to me? Thinking that I'd be more receptive to your deal—after your kisses?"

He now released the hold on her wrists as if they had burned him.

"Is that what you think, Denny?" he asked tightly. "Do you believe that is why I made love to you?" His voice was suddenly harsh and stinging.

Her eyes filled with tears. She found it hard to talk, because a sob was choking her throat.

"I don't know what to believe—what to believe!" she moaned. "I only know—that you're worse than I suspected, worse than any off-islander I ever met! And I know I'm sorry I helped—save your life today!"

She turned and fled from the beach, stumbling as she ran, blinded by her tears, but she finally managed to reach the inn. It was hard to make it up the stairs, but she got to her room, closed the door behind her and stood leaning against it in anguish of spirit.

She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror above the bureau. The girl standing there didn't look like anyone who would be concerned about a dock on an island! That girl in all her finery looked more like a debutante, a creature of pleasure, an off-islander who wouldn't care what happened to this place!

She walked closer to the mirror. Her fingers pulled off the earrings, unclasped the strand of pearls and all but ripped the dress from her trembling body. The palms of her hands mussed her hair, the way it looked when it had been tossed by the wind. Now she was an island girl again. A girl who wouldn't be fool enough to fall for an off-islander. A courageous, sensible girl who would resist listening to such a man's lying words of love and who would have the strength to push him away when his lips tried to find hers.

If only she had possessed that strength before! She put her hands to her lips. They still burned from the intensity of Terry's kisses. "I'm sorry I

helped—save your life today!” she had said to him. A shudder quivered through her body. She shouldn’t have said that, she didn’t mean that. But she was sorry that he had ever set foot on this island, that he had ever come near her—kissed her!

She tried to wipe away the taste of those kisses, with all memory of them. What she should do was go out and find Kip and let him kiss her and kiss her until not a trace of what she had felt for another man tonight remained. But would Kip—or anyone—ever be able to silence the frenzied beating of her heart?

She turned away from the mirror, went over to her bed and fell upon it. She knew what had happened to her! Her heart had been added to the collection—to the broken hearts of the island. She had to become one of those creatures she always scorned, a girl who had been fool enough to fall in love with an off-islander, and who would never recover from it!

So exhausted was Denny, both physically and emotionally, that she fell asleep almost instantly. . . .

WHEN she awoke the next morning she tried to go to work as if it were any Monday and nothing unusual had happened to her. She was relieved, however, to see that Terry was not in the dining room when she ate breakfast. Then she hurried to the dock and into her office there.

It was not a usual morning, by any means. Several people came in and asked if she heard about the plan to open a cannery on the island.

She was told that some young man from the city was going around this very morning, discussing it, feeling out everyone’s sentiments. People seemed in doubt themselves about whether they wanted a cannery on the island or not. Of course, it was argued by some that it had great advantages but it certainly would change the character of the place.

Kip came to Denny, too, giving her his version of the news.

“So that’s who that fellow is!” he declared grimly. “And he want’s to buy your dock, too! What do you think of the whole thing, Denny? What do you

think of *him* by now?”

She tried to answer, but knew she couldn’t think clearly about it. She was still too incensed about the way he had made love to her, before telling her the real purpose of his visit to the island. Besides, the Rock Island dock had always belonged to her family. How could she bring herself to sell it to off-islanders, strangers who didn’t belong here anyway?

“There are plenty of other islands where the fish are plentiful!” she found herself crying out to Kip. “I don’t want to sell out! I—I wouldn’t know what to do with myself, if I didn’t have the dock to run.”

“You could marry me the way I want!” Kip smiled wryly. “But if you want me to get a gang together and run that fellow off the island, I’d do that for you, too, Denny.”

She struggled against the panic that rose in her heart.

“Kip,” she begged, “don’t start any trouble. I have enough confidence in everyone around here to know that they’ll never allow his plans to come to pass. He’ll find that out and leave on his own accord—soon. I’m sure of that!”

Leave? She wondered about that. Would Terry Hayes one day pack his bag, check out of the inn, and take the boat to the mainland? Would that mean that she would never see him again? But it had to happen that way! She mustn’t let the slightest shred of hope that they could make things up ever enter her mind!

But that day of departure for Terry seemed less certain with every day that passed. She didn’t see him herself, but she began to hear rumors that Terry was making concrete propositions to the fishermen to purchase all their hauls when the cannery was built. She heard even worse news. Though everyone in town had always had free access to that rocky strand it was actually owned by some old family who had listened to Terry. And they were thinking over an offer he had made to purchase the land.

Maybe something was wrong with her, Denny thought, fighting as she was to preserve the life and beauty of this

island and resisting all offers to buy her dock.

One night she wandered up the beach to the strand where the wreckage of the old ships lay. She looked it all over as if she had never seen it before. Was there any sense in keeping all this? Why not a big red factory of bricks and windows, instead of all this flotsam and jetsam?

That was in her mind when she heard the voice—his voice.

"You still hate me, don't you, Denny! Do you come here still wishing you hadn't helped save my life that day?"

She saw him rising from one of the big timbers; Terry who had obviously been sitting here and brooding, too, as she was. She wanted to draw back, to escape from him, but he was coming nearer to her, and she must not let him think she lacked courage.

"Don't go away, Denny," he begged softly. "I've got to talk to you. I've been miserable without you these past few days. Denny, do we have to let my work, the job I have to do, stand between us? I still feel the same way I did about you!"

She mustn't listen to him! He would be sure to sell her a bill of goods, begin to convince her that he was right, the way he was doing with other people on the island.

"I'm sorry," she said with dignity, "but I think it's better if we don't see each other again!" But she wasn't moving, hurrying back to the inn. Instead she was listening to him.

"I don't think Colonel Hughes would approve of the way I come here and sit at night, Denny," he said. "The beauty of the spot seems to have got into my veins, too. Look at the cabin of that

ship. It once must have been wonderful. Can you see the men and women who must have traveled on it? In their beautiful costumes, dancing to the music at the ship's ball?"

HIS hand touched hers, then he was drawing her close to him.

"There's no time here, is there, Denny? The past, present and future are all one. You and I just belong together—out here!"

Was it the music from the ship's ball she heard echoing in her ears, or was it from her heart? His lips were on hers again, bringing again to her heart that leaping flame.

"Denny, you've missed me, too, haven't you?" he murmured. "Darling, I've got to talk to you about the cannery again. Can't you see how old-fashioned you are to resist the idea of it coming here? You've got to think how much it will do for the island and the lives of everyone here. You've got to listen to reason."

Listen to reason? She suddenly drew back in horror. How could he talk about the wonderful, old-fashioned past one moment, then bring up the cannery, accuse her of being old-fashioned about that? And then it suddenly became clear. She had fallen into his trap! Letting him make love to her—to convince her that the cannery should come to the island.

"Yes, you can bet I am old-fashioned!" she cried, pulling away from him. "And wise enough to see what you're up to, Terry Hayes! You've probably been sitting out here night after night, waiting for me to come along. So you could make a fool of me like you did before! Only this time I've learned my lesson for good! This time I'll see that your cannery never gets to the island if I have to die in the attempt!"

"Stop talking about it as if it's my cannery," he said sternly. "It belongs to Colonel Hughes and it's all his idea. Denny, please! There's so much more I ought to tell you. Denny, don't run away from me!"

But she was running as fast as she could, along the beach and back toward the inn.

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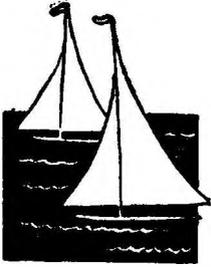
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CHAPTER VII

TRIP TO THE CITY



HOW Denny got to the inn she didn't know, but she finally reached her room. She was choking though, as she closed her door.

A fool—what a terrible fool she had been even to let Terry Hayes' lips touch hers

again! To wring her heart the way he could—and did! She felt more than ever a silly island girl who had succumbed all too easily to the charm of a stranger.

But this time she had learned her lesson for good. This time she would find some way to rid this island of Terry Hayes and his ideas for a cannery forever!

"Denny—Denny darling, are you crying in there?" she heard Aunt Beth's gentle, familiar voice saying outside her door. Quickly she tried to wipe the tears from her eyes so that Aunt Beth wouldn't see her like this.

"Denny, please let me in," Aunt Beth called again. "I know something is troubling you, dear. Maybe you'll feel better if we talk it over."

Denny knew that Aunt Beth was right. She was always right—and wise. And Denny herself knew she would feel better if she talked it over, didn't try to bear this torture alone. She opened the door and her aunt came in, holding out her arms. Denny went into their warm embrace.

"Denny, child," Aunt Beth murmured. "What's happened to make you feel this way?" She added hastily, "Oh, you don't really have to tell me. I'm sure it has to do with Terry Hayes. You love him, don't you!"

"Love him!" Denny drew back, aghast. "You don't know what you're saying, Aunt Beth! I hate that man, more than anyone in the world! Oh, he'd like to make me think different." Her lips twisted. "You should see him make love to me in the moonlight. But it always boils down to one obvious reason

—his plans to bring a cannery to the island."

Aunt Beth released Denny, and sat down in a comfortable rocker.

"I've been thinking about that more and more, Denny," she said. "Maybe Terry didn't handle this proposition right. Suppose he had come straight to you, offered to buy the dock—would you have been more sympathetic about the whole idea? Suppose he hadn't made love to you first, then offered you the proposition. Wouldn't you have reacted differently about a cannery coming here then?"

What was Aunt Beth talking about? Why, she almost sounded as if she were on Terry's side! "Of course not!" she cried vehemently. "I wouldn't have been interested in a cannery coming here, no matter how I was approached on it! I'd do anything in the world to keep it from happening."

Aunt Beth didn't answer for a moment. She sat rocking, rocking, the way she always did when she was most thoughtful. Denny recalled that from when she had been a child. Then her aunt suddenly spoke again.

"Denny, I think you ought to leave the island for a time. I think it would be a good idea for you to go see this Colonel Hughes himself."

"Leave the island? Go see Colonel Hughes?" Denny stared in bewilderment. "Why should I do anything like that?"

"For lots of reasons. In the first place it will take you away from the island and from Terry, too, for a time. It will give you a clearer perspective on your emotions, make you able to decide once and for all how you really feel about him. Besides, if you do want to keep the cannery off the island, why bother discussing it with Terry, since all you do is end up quarreling with him? Colonel Hughes has the say about whether it is to come here or not. If you feel so strongly against it, go talk to him. Why waste any more time battling it out with Terry?"

Go see Colonel Hughes himself? Denny stood there, absorbing her aunt's words, her heart beating more quickly as she considered the idea. How angry it would make Terry, going over his

head to talk things over with his boss! But it would serve him right, even be a way to pay him back for the tricks he had used on her to try to get the cannery here.

"Aunt Beth, I think it's a wonderful idea!" Denny suddenly exclaimed, and her eyes glinted brightly. She held her chin high. "I haven't had a vacation off the island in ages and I've got some money saved up for one, too. I'll go to Boston on the first boat in the morning. Without telling anyone, not even Kip and certainly not Terry, where I'm going!"

"I'll give you some money toward it, too." Aunt Beth laughed. "A couple of Christmas and birthday presents in advance. So you can look as smart as any off-island girl when you arrive in Boston. And, incidently, you might give Colonel Hughes my regards."

DENNY'S eyes widened again.

"Aunt Beth, you mean you know him?"

"Yes, I do!" Beth laughed again, gaily this time. "He used to come here sword fishing years ago and both your father and I got to know him pretty well." She held up a protesting hand. "Oh, there was no romance between him and me, so don't look like that. I just know him well enough to know he's a pretty reasonable sort of man, which is why I think you ought to go talk to him. I also think that he might be wise enough to realize that you're more against Terry himself, and the way you believe he treated you, than the idea of the cannery coming here. Maybe the Colonel will make you see that more clearly—drum some sense in your head! Good night now, darling. Get some sleep if you expect to leave in the morning."

Aunt Beth got up from the rocker, went over and kissed Denny, and left her pretty young niece standing there, stunned by what had been said. For a moment Denny felt that she wouldn't leave the island, if Aunt Beth thought she was wrong, was using the cannery as an excuse just because she hated Terry Hayes. But that wasn't the whole truth!

She walked to the window, and could

see the stretch of beach in the shimmering moonlight. She had loved this place all her life, didn't want to see it changed, ruined by ugly buildings and swarming with strangers.

She finally got undressed and into bed. She was glad Aunt Beth had told her how Colonel Hughes used to come here fishing a long time ago. Because he would never have forgotten Rock Island, she was certain, and he would know what she was talking about when she described the beauty of the island. He might be made to understand that the place shouldn't be ruined, and that her desire to preserve it had nothing whatever to do with the way she felt about Terry Hayes. . . .

The sun was hardly above the horizon when Denny got up the next morning. But she had to pack two suitcases, because of course she would take the best clothes she owned.

Kip was out fishing already and Terry Hayes must be asleep upstairs, entirely unaware of what she contemplated doing. She had to laugh, thinking how shocked he would be if he knew she was going to Boston to see Colonel Hughes!

A few hours later she was sitting on the deck of the steamer that plied between the island and Boston. The sun was shining warmly on her and she looked smart and lovely in a pearl gray gabardine suit with a bright coral blouse and a matching turban.

She was busy formulating her plans carefully. She would stay at a small and inexpensive hotel that she knew in Boston, and would phone Colonel Hughes at his office the first thing in the morning. She would go and see him in a firm, businesslike manner, so that he would realize Aunt Beth was wrong, that her emotions were not part of this at all. She would strongly, convincingly, try to make him see how wrong it was to try to ruin such a beauty spot of nature as Rock Island.

But as the boat finally neared Boston, and she saw the skyline, her heart began to be filled with apprehension. Why would such a hard-headed, practical business man as Colonel Hughes certainly must be, care about preserving any beauty spots? He was probably

worse than Terry, when it came to getting what he wanted. She had to struggle against an impulse to stay on the boat when it finally docked, and not even visit Boston at all. Maybe it might be a good idea to give up her plan and go back to the island on the return trip.

Why was she suddenly hearing Aunt Beth's words? "It will do you good to get off the island—clear your emotions, make you decide once and for all how you really feel about Terry." It was the memory of those words that somehow carried her off the boat, made her hail a taxi and give the driver the address of her hotel.

A little while later she was in the small, comfortable room to which she had been assigned, staring out the window at the crowded streets below. A clock on a church tower across the way told her that it was just a few minutes after five in the afternoon. How could she bear waiting until tomorrow to talk to Colonel Hughes? At least she ought to phone his office, make an appointment, and find out when she could see him.

HER fingers trembled from her excitement as she looked up his name in the book, gave the number to the operator downstairs. It took quite a while for her to get connected with the Colonel's secretary.

"This is Miss Farrar," she heard at last. "I understand you wish to make an appointment with the Colonel. He has a very full schedule. Could you tell me what it was you wanted to see him about?"

Denny hesitated before answering. How could she say, "I want to stop him from bringing a cannery to Rock Island." But then she summoned her voice.

"My—my name is Denise Logan," she explained. "I'm from Rock Island. Would you tell him that I'm the daughter of Captain Dan Logan. He used to know my father. And my Aunt Beth—"

"Oh, this is a personal call! Why didn't you say so? Just a moment, please."

The wait seemed interminable, or was that because Denny's conscience bothered her? This wasn't a personal call

at all! But then a hearty voice boomed in her ear:

"Denny Logan! You probably don't remember me but I used to bounce you on my knee when you were a little girl. What are you doing here? Come to see the sights of Boston? Well, you must come to my house for cocktails and dinner. Are you busy tonight? I could pick you up on my way home."

"I—I—" She was overcome, her cheeks flaming with embarrassment at the cordiality of the man's voice. "No, I'm not busy. And I wanted to see you."

"Good!" he said. "Where are you staying, Denny? . . . What? That little place! Well, young lady, you just have your bags all packed and be prepared to stay at my house when I come for you. Your father always treated me like one of the family when I visited the island, and I'm certainly going to do the same with you. I'll be there in about half an hour. You can wait until you get to my house before you change for dinner. See you later, Denny."

The phone clicked in her ear before she had a chance to say another word or make a single protest. It was incredible—impossible!

Here she had called just wanting only to make an appointment to see the man, and now she was invited to be a guest in his house.

She was glad she hadn't unpacked her suitcases yet. But as she started to ring for a bellhop to carry them down to the lobby she found herself thinking of Terry. He had made love to her almost from the first moment he had met her, then when he thought he had her, he had told her about why he had come to the island. Was what she was about to do now any worse than that? Or *was* it worse for her to let the Colonel treat her as a friend and guest, without having told him why she wanted to see him?

Maybe—maybe Aunt Beth had been right. Denny's heart suddenly soared with hope. Perhaps she had needed to get away, in order to see Terry in his true light. Perhaps now it would be possible to clear the tangle in which both of them had let their hearts get hurt.

Well, here was where she made a stab at it, anyway.

CHAPTER VIII

ENGAGED TO SOMEONE ELSE!



WHEN the taxi pulled up, Denny was waiting under the hotel canopy. A white-haired man in a gray suit got out of the cab.

"Denny Logan?" he asked smiling broadly. "But of course you are!

I'd have recognized you anywhere. There's not a girl in all Boston with such a wonderful suntan, and eyes that match the sea like yours do."

So this was Colonel Hughes, Denny thought, as she smilingly greeted him. He looked vaguely familiar to her, so she was sure she must be recalling him from when she had been a little girl. She liked the twinkle in his eyes, the way he stroked his modified handlebar mustache when he talked.

"Come along—come along," he told her, and motioned for the bellhop to bring her suitcases. He wouldn't let her tip the boy.

When they drove off he laughed, sinking back against the seat.

"Of course you may be sorry that I've taken you away from this quiet hotel," he told Denny. "Our place is usually a madhouse. I have two children, you know—my daughter, Gilda, and my son, Mel. We're always as crowded as a country club with all their friends. I want you to know one another well. . . . By the way, I wonder if you've met a chap who is doing some work for me on Rock Island? He's there looking over a proposition I'm interested in. A young fellow named Terry Hayes."

"Why—why, yes!" Denny stammered. She knew that this was the moment to tell him why she had really come to Boston to see him.

"Fine boy, Terry," the Colonel praised. "I love him like a son. Well, here we are. Beacon Hill isn't far from downtown. That's why we like living here, instead of being impressed by the long history of this part of Boston.

They had stopped before an imposing red brick mansion, apparently one of

those old homes which had a history of its own. It was partially covered with green vines.

A butler opened the door practically the moment they reached the top step.

"Good evening, Ames," the Colonel greeted him. "This is Miss Logan, who has come for a visit with us. Put her in the room with the view of the river. Miss Logan is used to seeing water from windows. Aren't you, my dear?"

Denny hardly heard his question. She was staring wide-eyed about the luxurious entrance hall. There was a great curving stairway in the middle, and a tinkling chandelier was suspended from the high ceiling. The walls were a soft blue and a deeper blue carpet, inches deep, covered the floor.

"Dad darling! I thought I heard your voice!"

Denny turned to the cry of a girl from the doorway. The girl, of course, was the daughter of the house, Gilda Hughes. Denny was instantly struck by the beauty of the girl.

Gilda was tall, svelte and blonde, with great black eyes and heavily made-up lips. She wore a stunning cocktail gown of yellow wool with a draped bodice and wide flaring skirt, a matching shawl with long sequined fringe giving it a Spanish flavor. Those eyes took in Denny's trim but inexpensive suit critically.

"Oh Dad, you haven't brought one of your secretaries home to do more work!" she exclaimed, pouting. "Don't you know this is my birthday? I thought we were all going out, having fun together tonight."

"I haven't forgotten that at all!" the Colonel retorted. "Miss Logan here isn't one of my secretaries, you silly child. Denny is the daughter of some old friends of mine from Rock Island and I've invited her to stay in our home while she is in Boston. Will you see that she's made comfortable, Gilda?"

"Why of course!" Denny felt better at the friendliness that sprang into Gilda's dark eyes. "It's grand having you, Miss Logan, and I'm sure Mel will be delighted, too. He's had a tiff with the gal he was supposed to bring along tonight, Dad, and I for one am glad of it. I didn't like her at all! One of Mel's

usual show gals." She threw a meaningful look at her father.

Colonel Hughes sighed. "Well, I'll see you later, Denny," he said. "I actually do have a little business to finish up in the library, but I'll be done with it by the time dinner is ready." He smiled, "And it will give you young people a chance to get acquainted."

Gilda was already leading her up the stairs, after telling Ames that she would look after her guest herself. In the upper hall she opened the door to a bedroom.

"I was sure Dad would put you here!" she said. "He often says he wishes he were a guest in his own house so he could sleep in here."

DENNY'S suitcases had been brought to the room, and opened for her, and she realized that she would be expected to wear an evening gown tonight. Anyway, she remembered now how the Colonel had casually mentioned changing for dinner as a matter of course. The only evening frock she had was the white one she had bought several seasons ago. It had seemed lovely to her, that night when she and Terry had dined and danced together at the inn. But how would it look in the contrasting luxury of this house?

Her eyes took in the exquisite room with its chartreuse walls, its swathing white glazed chintz curtains, and the white rug on the floor. She walked to the window and saw the slow-moving Charles River, and people walking along on its narrow shores.

Gilda came up and stood beside her. "I didn't want to ask you in front of Dad," she said, "but have you run into a fellow named Terry Hayes on Rock Island? Dad always says I interfere with Terry's work, so I try not to appear to concerned about him. But Terry and I are engaged, even though we haven't told Dad yet, so why shouldn't I be concerned?"

Denny whirled around, not sure that she had heard right. Gilda was smiling at her, waiting hopefully for an answer.

"Terry—Terry Hayes?" Words finally came to Denny's lips. "Yes, I've met him. He—he's on the island. He's interested in opening a cannery there."

"Oh, yes!" Gilda exclaimed. "And the deal's so important to us. Dad's promised Terry a substantial raise if it goes through, and that could mean so much! But there must be something delaying it. I can't imagine what, but I haven't heard from Terry for days."

Terry and this girl engaged to be married! Denny still couldn't believe it. But what more proof could she ask than Gilda Hughes standing here so confidently, talking to her about it so blithely?

Her hand reached out, clutching the window sill for support.

"What—time is dinner served?" she managed to ask. She couldn't stand to hear any more about Terry's perfidy. "I'm more tired from my trip than I thought. I'd like to have a rest, if there will be time."

"Why of course!" said Gilda. "How inconsiderate of me, chatting about my affairs this way. We don't usually dine until about seven-thirty. You can come down any time before that." She moved toward the door. "See you later, Miss Logan—Denny. I'm going to call you Denny. It's fun having you here."

Fun! Denny stared at the door that closed behind Gilda. It had been madness to come here, to walk into this house and to find that on top of all Terry had done to her, he was engaged to someone else!

How understandable it all was now! His coming to the island and making love to her. Because a substantial raise in salary, his marriage to Gilda, was the goal that he had in mind, and nothing else mattered to him. So what difference did it make if he kissed an island girl, tricked her with false promises, if things worked out his way?

But Mr. Terry Hayes had made a mistake! Somehow he would fail at his mission, because she, Miss Denise Logan, would see to that! If she had hated him before, had wanted to stop the cannery from coming to the island, she had double reason now to prevent it. Just how she was going to accomplish it she didn't know, but she would find a way!

Denny was not much pleased with the reflection in the mirror when she had donned the white marquise gown and looked herself over, but it would have

to do for tonight. She had brightened her lips, forcing what she hoped was a charming smile on them, and had combed her short-cropped black curls until they glistened.

Walking down the wide stairway into the wide lower hall she couldn't help remembering how Terry had talked about the wondrous balls that must have been held on the old ships. But surely those luxurious cabins could not possibly have been more elegant than this place, and apparently he was quite accustomed to the kind of life that was led here.

"Well, don't you look refreshed and lovely!" Gilda greeted her from the doorway of the living room. "My brother Mel is dying to meet you, and lots of the rest of the gang are here, too."

FOR some reason Denny didn't think that Gilda meant just exactly what she said. She might look refreshed, but how shabby her gown was compared to the one that Gilda had changed into. It was even more glamorous than the cocktail frock had been. It was of flaming red satin with a wide shirred skirt, and Gilda wore a black lace mantilla floating softly from her light hair. She reached out for Denny's hand, leading her into the living room.

"Attention everyone!" she cried gaily. "I want you to meet Denise Logan. Denny is from Rock Island, and it's up to us to see that she has a wonderful time while she's visiting in Boston."

Girls and young men clamored around them and Gilda introduced Denny to each of her friends separately. Denny had trouble remembering all the names, but saw that they were all as attractive and as expensively dressed as Gilda. The room was breath-taking, too, furnished as it was with fine English antiques, and bowls brimmed with exquisite flowers from the Hughes family's own garden at the rear of the big brick house.

"And this is Mel!" Gilda was saying. "He'll take care of you from now on, while I spend some time with my other guests." She glided across the room, leaving Denny to face a tall young man.

"Just think," he said, his eyes ad-

miring her, "that for all these years I've avoided going fishing on Rock Island. When I might have come up with a catch like you."

Denny stared at the young man before her. Her first impression was that he was terribly handsome, with dark eyes and wavy blond hair like that of his sister. But then, taking in his features more closely, she saw that while he resembled the Colonel a bit, too, he lacked his father's forcefulness. There was something weak, almost cruel, the way a petulant little boy is, about the set of his lips, the haziness of his eyes.

Nevertheless he was smiling at her, seeming most anxious to be friends.

"How about a cocktail, Denny?" he asked, and added, "My father and sister call you Denny, so I will, no. I recommend the cocktails highly because I'm the lad who supervises all the drinks in this house."

"That's recommendation enough for me!" she assured him, laughing.

He led her to a bar at the end of the room and gave her a tall-stemmed glass filled with a sparkling amber drink. It was a more potent beverage than she was accustomed to drinking, causing her to make a wry face as she sipped it.

"Sissy!" he laughed at her. "Don't tell me you can't take it!"

"I can, too!" She held her chin high, and tossed off the rest.

But it made her feel dizzy and when Ames, the butler finally announced that dinner was served she had to lean on Mel's arm to reach the dining room.

Food cleared her head, however. She had the place of honor beside the Colonel, at the head of the table, and Mel sat on the other side of her.

Something bothered her about the relationship between the Colonel and his son. She soon noticed that the father hardly ever addressed Mel directly, and she wondered why they seemed to get along so badly, almost snapping at each other when they did talk. It was obvious that Gilda was the pet of this family, for her father's eyes glowed with delight when he just looked at her.

The meal was delicious, from the creamy mushroom soup to the capon in wine sauce. Crepe suzettes were glowing with blue flame on a sideboard and

ready to be served when one of the soft-footed footmen entered the dining room and said something to Gilda in a respectfully low voice.

The girl excused herself and left the room. It was quite a while before she returned, but her eyes were shining radiantly.

"That was Terry!" she cried, and Denny's food caught in her throat at the very mention of the name. "He was calling to wish me a happy birthday, of course. He was sorry he couldn't get to be here. Said he was trying to close the deal to buy that strip of land for the cannery, Dad." She turned to Denny. "I mentioned that you were here visiting us. He was terribly surprised. Said he knew you'd left the island but had no idea you were coming here, or that you even knew Dad."

DENNY'S cheeks flamed, but before she could say a word the Colonel put in:

"I guess Denny didn't have any idea she was going to visit us herself. I talked her into that. Well, it's too bad Terry isn't here for your birthday, Gilda, but you'll probably see him soon."

"And that," said Gilda, "will be at dinner here tomorrow night!"

Denny was struggling to control the trembling of her fingers when the Colonel leaned toward her.

"I suppose you've heard about my idea of opening a cannery on the island. What do you think of it? It would bring a lot of business to the place."

Denny's hand tightened on her fork. Now was the moment for her to tell the Colonel what she really thought. Why didn't she blurt out the truth, all the hatred she felt? But a sudden realization had come to her that she would have to talk about Terry, too, and might reveal her hatred for him. She forced a lie to her lips.

"I haven't given it much thought, Colonel. Of course I heard about it. But I haven't decided whether it's a good or bad thing yet or not."

"Oh, it's good!" the Colonel assured her. "Think of the money we'll be bringing to people who never would have had a chance to sell their property for such prices. Like that strip of land

Terry seems to have found."

Yes, the shore strewn with broken hearts, she wanted to cry out. And a fancy price to be offered for her dock, too, though it meant putting her out of business. But this was no time to argue, not at a dinner table in front of all these guests. She was glad when the conversation changed to something gayer, lighter, and included everyone. For it was speculation about a new show that had opened in Boston before it did New York and which promised to be a big hit.

"Maybe I'll get tickets for all of us to go tomorrow night—Terry included!" Gilda said. "He'll probably like a change from the quiet life he's been leading on the island."

CHAPTER IX

UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL



FINALLY dinner ended and everyone filed back to the living room. But they didn't stay there long. Gilda hadn't had her birthday cake yet and it had been planned for that to be

served at a smart night club.

"Gilda, would you think it terrible of me if I didn't go on for the rest of your celebration?" Denny asked her. "But this is my first day in Boston and I'm still pretty tired from my trip."

"Oh, of course, darling!" Gilda was sympathetic. "I understand perfectly. Mel will be disappointed, though. Won't you Mel?" She flashed her brother a smile. "But we'll all see each other tomorrow. Good night Denny, and run on up to your room any time you're ready. There are lots of new books scattered around the house if you want something to read."

Denny didn't go right upstairs, though, but waited until everyone departed. Then she wandered back from the hall into the living room. She saw a copy of a new novel lying on a table and picked it up, flipping the pages to see if she wanted to read it. But she knew

that she couldn't read, any more than she would be able to fall asleep if she did go upstairs. What she really ought to do was go to the room, pack her suitcases and leave this house right now while she had a chance, so that she wouldn't be here when Terry arrived tomorrow.

Terry! How much at home he must be in this house! And tomorrow he was coming here to see the girl he really loved, Gilda Hughes!

Denny wandered through wide French doors opening from the living room and found herself on a flagstone terrace that overlooked an expansive garden. It was a beautiful, clear moonlight night. How often, she thought, Terry must have stood out here with Gilda, have taken her in his arms and kissed her! But with her the love he had offered had been real, and he hadn't been just amusing himself for an evening the way he had been with an island girl! And with an ulterior purpose, too—which made it worse.

A sob escaped her lips, at the memory of all she had endured because of Terry, and the book she had brought out from the living room fell from her listless hands to the flagstones.

"I'll get it for you, Denny! But you weren't planning to read out here in the moonlight, were you?"

She looked up, startled to see Mel Hughes standing before her. He grinned as he picked up the book and held it out to her.

"I had a hunch you wouldn't be going right to bed," he said. "You looked too upset when we left. It was something that Gilda said at dinner that bothered you, wasn't it? Something that had to do with—Terry Hayes!"

Her lips parted to deny anything of the kind, but he laughed again.

"Oh, don't try to fool me, Denny Logan. I'm not as dumb as my father—and Gilda—and that Terry Hayes think! Maybe you haven't caught on to the setup around here." His voice was filled with such bitterness that it frightened her. "None of them have much use for me, you know. Dad's been disappointed in me ever since I was a kid. Thought I wasn't tough enough to stand the gaff just because some boys beat me

up at school. Then he expected me to turn out to be a mathematical genius like himself, a fitting son for a big business tycoon!" He came nearer to Denny, a smile that chilled her playing on his lips. "Can I help it if I'm more interested in a different kind of figures?" His eyes wandered over the slim curves of her body. "I have a hunch that Dad's boy genius and protégé, Mr. Terry Hayes, became interested in you on Rock Island, too. Is that what happened, Denny? Is that why I saw such sudden hate flame into your eyes at the dinner table, at the very mention of his name?"

She wanted to pull away, not carry on this discussion any further. In a way she felt sorry for Mel Hughes. She understood his position in the family now, could realize that even though his sister might be fond of him, she spoke about him with a lack of patience and perhaps something of contempt. It was plain enough that it was Terry Hayes who rated as the promising young man around this household.

Did Mel see that he had struck a chord of sympathy? That appeared to be so, as he went on:

"Maybe you don't know what position Terry occupies around here! It isn't that he just works for Dad and is engaged to my sister—though I don't suppose Dad knows it. It began long before that. You see, we met him years ago when he was a kid. His parents were caretakers at our family house in Maine. He could always do things better than I could, even then. You should have seen the way he swam, and dived off the rocks into the sea!"

HER heart quickened at Mel's words. So Terry had been brought up by the sea, too! Then why wasn't he more understanding about what Rock Island meant to her? If the sea was in his blood, as it was in hers.

"Well," Mel said, "one night Terry's folks were killed in a forest fire, but he was lucky to get out of it alive. Dad brought him home to live with us. He never adopted Terry legally. I guess he always thought marriage to Gilda was a better idea, and has always more or less expected it would happen some

time. And of course Terry's fallen right along with the idea. Why shouldn't he—knowing that his job with Dad is assured for life when he marries her?"

"This is all very interesting," Denny said, because she had to say something to hide how she really felt about Terry. "But it hardly concerns me. Mr. Hayes isn't anything in my life."

"That's where you're mistaken, Denny," Mel said softly and moved closer to her. "Don't you own the dock on Rock Island? I heard Dad mention something of the sort. He's not as naive about you as you might think. He's probably guessed that you didn't get along with Terry and came directly to him to get a better price for your dock, and is ready to get in his own licks, with you right here."

"A better price!" Denny had to laugh. "You're the one who is mistaken, Mel. Yes, it's true I came to see your father about the island, but only because I refuse to sell my dock to anyone, for any amount of money, and will do anything I possibly can to keep the cannery from coming there. Yes, I had a fight with Terry—and that's what it was all about!"

"You mean you're holding out on them?" Mel's eyes gleamed with mischievous delight. "You mean the great Terry has failed in his mission, and that a girl like you stands in his way? Oh, Denny, that's wonderful! I'd love to see Dad's face when Terry tells him that. He thinks Terry is such an astute business man that he can succeed at whatever he does."

"Well, this is one time he failed!" Denny's eyes burned with the rage she felt, remembering the tactics Terry had used on her. "Oh, he tried hard enough to put himself across," she went on, with a hard laugh that she scarcely recognized her own. "Making love to me before he tried to buy my dock. But I got wise to him quickly. It didn't work at all!"

Mel's eyes were incredulous. "He made love to you! Say, he must have been pretty desperate to put this deal across. Of course he's always been rather proud about not taking more than a usual salary from Dad, but this was his big chance to get more by earning it."

"Yes, I know!" She drew a sharp breath. "Gilda told me he hoped for a raise through this deal, and intimated that they would get married then."

"You sure are sore at him, aren't you?" Mel's hands were suddenly on her arms. "Well, let me give you fair warning, Denny. They're a hard crew to buck, my father, Gilda and Terry together. But maybe if you and I lined up we could beat them at their own game!"

"Why, what do you mean?" she asked in bewilderment.

"I mean, suppose you and I decided that we liked one another," he said quickly, eagerly. "That it was a case of love at first sight between us! Such things do happen, you know. But can you understand the repercussions it would bring to this household?"

The very notion of falling in love

[Turn page]

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with Mel seemed fantastic to Denny. But she was curious enough about what else he had said to ask:

"What *would* it do to this household? What repercussions?"

"In the first place Dad would be as pleased as Punch. He likes you, even though I think he knows what you're here for—to talk him out of bringing the cannery to the island. I'm frank to admit I've been chasing around with all sorts of girls. There's nothing that would please him more than to have me settle down. Why, I'll bet I could even get him to drop all his plans for bringing the cannery to the island—as an engagement present to us."

AN engagement present! No—she could never marry Mel. Not even to save the beauty of the island. That would be too big a price for anyone to expect.

"What's more, it would put a crimp in all the plans Gilda and Terry have been making," Mel went on, his voice rising in his enthusiasm. "It would mean that Terry had flopped on this particular mission, and he won't take a raise from Dad unless he feels he has really earned it. So his wedding to Gilda will have to be postponed still longer, because he won't take a cent from Dad, even if Dad should tell them to go on and get married, but insists on living on his salary. And my sister has very fancy tastes, as you may have noticed. So if you're looking for a way to get even with Terry Hayes, this is it!"

"No," Denny said firmly. "I'm sorry, but I don't want any part of anything like this at all!" She started to pull away from Mel, but his fingers held her tightly.

"Look, Denny!" he said pleadingly. "I know you haven't fallen for me. I have a hunch you don't even like me much. But I don't mean this as any real engagement. What I'm getting at is for us just to pretend that we like one another long enough to take Terry down a peg or two. Wouldn't that be worth something to you? You hate him, too—I saw it in your eyes tonight!"

"I'm sorry!" she repeated, still firm. "It just doesn't sound like anything I

want to do. Yes, it's true, I do hate Terry!" She couldn't control her anger against him even now, because of the way he had lied to her, concealing so many things about himself and his household. "But I'll have to work out my own plans for revenge—if I'm to have any. . . . Thanks anyway for trying to help, Mel, but good night!"

She turned then, running back into the house and up the winding stairs, to her room. The moonlight still filtered through the window and she walked to it, looking out at the Charles River flowing serenely in the night.

Why was it that all that Mel Hughes told her made her feel worse than before? Terry had come from origins not unlike her own, had lived near the sea. He had been taken into the Hughes household and the Colonel treated him more like a son than he did Mel. No wonder Terry had the interests of the cannery so much at heart, especially since his marriage with Gilda hinged upon it.

Mel had offered her a way to delay that marriage, but why should she bother? If she managed to keep the cannery off the island, it would be for her own happiness and future, and not because it had anything to do with Terry.

She tried to convince herself of that as she finally undressed and got into bed. But Mel's offer kept ringing in her ears: "I could get Dad to drop all plans as an engagement present to us. . . . You were looking for a way to get even with Terry, and this is it! . . . You hate him—I saw it in your eyes."

She buried her face in the pillow, trying to shut out the echo of those words. She mustn't think of entering into any bargains with Mel Hughes. She must talk things over openly with the Colonel as she had planned, and leave here before Terry arrived tomorrow!

That was easier to decide than to accomplish. In the first place the Colonel had left the house before Denny went down to breakfast the next morning. Ames, the butler, informed her that he had gone out of town on business and wouldn't return until evening.

"Mr. Terry is returning tonight too," the butler observed. "We're all glad of that."

So Terry was a favorite even with the servants! How had he managed to ingratiate himself so in this house?

Gilda came down to breakfast looking smart in a tweed suit and pastel cashmere sweater, though her eyes were sleepy.

"Nothing wakes me up after a late night but a game of golf," Gilda said, as she picked up her glass of orange juice. "Interested in driving out to the country club with me this morning, Denny?"

"I—I'm afraid not," she excused herself. "I don't play golf."

"Well, that will please Mel," Gilda laughed. "He's taken a grant fancy to you, Denny. I don't know whether you've noticed it or not. I bet he'd like to take you around town today. Why don't you do it? A girl like you might do my brother some good."

"You don't have much respect for Mel, do you?" Denny said, and was ashamed of herself the next moment.

GILDA'S blue eyes leveled at her.

"To be perfectly honest with you, I don't. Mel's the typical son of a rich man, wild and spoiled. Maybe the right girl could knock some sense in his head. Or maybe a poor girl would find it worth while putting up with him because of the luxuries he could give her. That's something for you to think over!"

Denny realized that Gilda was merely being frank with her, but she didn't consider it a compliment. To be told that she ought to go after Mel, even though he wasn't considered too highly, even by his own sister, but that it would be a good match for a poor girl like her was not appealing to Denny.

She held her chin high and said, "I'm afraid Mel is hardly my type." She couldn't resist adding, "I met Terry Hayes on the island, you know. He looks more like the sort of man every girl dreams about!"

Had she said that just to tease Gilda, or because she really meant it? Gilda's eyes narrowed at her intently.

"Of course you met Terry on the island," she said coldly, "and you'll meet him again when he gets here tonight. But I might as well give you fair warning, my lass, that man is mine. You

concentrate on Mel, if you know what's good for you!"

CHAPTER X

"I'M GOING TO MARRY MEL!"



GILDA ate quickly, and left the table with only a perfunctory good-by to Denny. Denny sat there, wondering why she had bothered to provoke Gilda's hostility. But the two of them could never have really been friends, although the Colonel desired that. How could they be friends when Terry had made love to her, Denny, when all the time he had been engaged to Gilda?

"What are you looking so thoughtful about this early in the morning? Are you still considering my proposition?"

The voice came from the doorway, and Denny saw Mel Hughes grinning at her.

He wore an expensive tweed jacket, and almost looked handsome, if the inherent weakness in his face were ignored.

"I've forgotten your proposition completely!" she retorted, but tried to be affable toward him. There was no reason to estrange herself from the entire family. "Have you any idea what time your dad will be back?" she asked. "According to what I've heard you people just come and go as the spirit moves you. That makes it rather bewildering for your guests."

"Dad knows that Terry will be here for dinner tonight," Mel said, "so my hunch is that he'll be here also. He'll want to catch up on what gives about the island—and because he has to see his darlin' Terry!" There was mockery in Mel's voice as he began to eat breakfast. "Gilda's gone out too, hasn't she? That leaves you and me with the day on our hands. What are you planning to do, Denny? Let me show you the sights of Boston."

She knew that she couldn't bear spending the entire day alone in the house, with all the thoughts that were torturing her, so she nodded. She went

upstairs, put on her gabardine suit and the coral blouse, and rejoined Mel. They left in his car, a long gleaming black convertible.

"I'll take you to see Harvard first, where I flunked out!" he said.

It was not far to Cambridge, and when they reached the famous institution of learning he pointed out all the prominent buildings to her. She learned from him that Terry had studied here also, and had done well. Mel was mocking as usual about it, but Denny somehow got a picture of Terry striving to make good because the Colonel was giving him a university education, and Terry would have felt that he must succeed. But the next moment she hated herself, for so unconsciously always coming up with a defense for Terry, when by rights she ought to feel the way Mel did about him!

They went to Bunker Hill where one of the most famous Revolutionary War battles was fought, and Denny was so interested that it was time for lunch before she knew it.

"Let's make it the Ritz!" Mel suggested, and Denny agreed.

During lunch Mel kept on talking about the glories and the history of Boston, but Denny found it hard to listen. She was thinking that Terry, who would be coming to the city today, must be on the boat from Rock Island right now. It was going to be hard to face him in that luxurious house. She had no other evening frock except that same old white one he had seen before, and she hated the idea of having him see her in it again. Gilda, of course, would be sure to wear some glamorous creation.

She looked up at Mel with sudden inspiration.

"Mel," she said eargerly, "since you're up on everything about Boston, do you know where I could buy a new evening dress?"

"Gilda always goes to Madame Christine's," Mel told her. "Everything she ever buys costs a small fortune. But I'll treat you to something there."

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" Denny protested. "I have money enough to go haywire for once. Just take me there."

As soon as lunch was over they drove to Madame Christine's, which was located in a brownstone house. Madame herself was a haughty-looking dowager with white hair. But she knew Mel, inquired of his sister and father.

"I expect Gilda to come in for her wedding gown any day now," she said. "Don't she and that nice Mr. Hayes expect to be married soon?"

Denny saw that the question annoyed Mel.

"Let's not worry about my sister, Madame Christine," he said impatiently. "Miss Logan would like something attractive to wear this evening."

MODELS displayed the gowns and Denny had never seen such gorgeous creations in her life. One that made her actually gasp at its exquisiteness was of amber tulle, with a straight bodice held by straps of seed pearls, and great clusters of roses strewn from the waistline to the bottom of the trailing skirt.

"I'd love to try that on!" she said.

"Go right ahead!" Mel urged her.

A few minutes later she appeared before him in it. His eyes widened almost possessively.

"That's it, all right!" he exclaimed. "Take it along with you."

"But how much is it?" Denny asked.

"Seventy-five dollars," Madame Christine said suavely.

Denny felt relieved and agreed to take it. What she could not even guess was that Mel had signaled to Madame Christine to keep the price low, that he would assume the difference, whatever it was—in this particular instance a couple of hundred dollars.

They left Madame Christine's and spent the rest of the afternoon at the famous Gardner Museum, looking at the beautiful pictures. Then they stopped at the Merry-Go-Round Bar, in the Copley Plaza Hotel for cocktails. A gang of people gathered around them, and Denny was not at all sure that she liked them. They were a flashy crew, who humored and flattered Mel, and she couldn't help noticing that they let him pay their bills at the end without making a move offering to do that themselves.

It was not until they had returned home and Denny had gone upstairs to dress that she realized she was as bad as that gang at the bar. Because as she put on the gown, seeing how exquisitely made it was, she became aware of how naive she had been. Seventy-five dollars, while a lot of money to her, was not much for a creation like this! Mel must have paid for it after all, letting her just put a token seventy-five dollars out for it!

But she couldn't let him do that! She didn't want to be obligated to him in any way. She would rather wear her old white gown tonight and take this right back in the morning than to splurge in a frock bought with the money of someone else.

She was about to take the new dress off when she suddenly heard the sound of a car pulling up to the terrace in the rear of the house.

Her heart quickened as she went to the window. She saw a tall, familiar figure below, paying the taxi driver. And then he turned around and as she had thought it was Terry—Terry Hayes, arriving at last!

She backed away from the window, not wanting him to see her, if he should happen to glance up. But she had glimpsed that lean, tanned face, the rugged features and rippling black hair. She heard the butler greet him at the French doors:

"Mr. Terry! It's wonderful to have you back!"

Denny whirled around, facing her reflection in the mirror again. She knew that she had never looked more beautiful in all her life than she did in this dress. How could she take it off, let Terry compare her with Gilda if she wore the other frock which seemed actually shabby to her now. Maybe if she just wore it this one evening it could be returned tomorrow anyhow. Or perhaps she could somehow manage to pay Mel back for whatever the difference was that he had paid. She would certainly find out what that was!

But she suddenly knew that she had to wear this dress tonight, had to see Terry again, and wearing this!

She didn't go downstairs immediately. She fixed her hair, did her makeup

over several times, her hands trembling with excitement. But after a while she heard the sounds of laughter from below and felt certain that everyone was assembled there. She even heard the boom of Colonel Hughes' voice and knew that he also had returned.

She steeled her nerves, rose from her chair before the dressing table, and left the room to go downstairs as steadily as she could.

It was Terry she saw first when she entered the living room. He was laughing gaily.

"I know it was silly of me, to bump into a door that way," he was saying. "But that's how I got this nasty bruise under my eye."

She saw the mark of discoloration under his eye, knew that was what he meant. Her heart leaped with concern, but then she saw his eyes widening, taking her in from head to foot, as if she were some apparition. She knew it was the loveliness of the gown that startled him, because of course he knew she was here. Denny startled everyone else, too.

"Well, my goodness!" Gilda cried. "Look what's happened to the gal from Rock Island!"

"Denny!" Colonel Hughes exclaimed. "Don't you look beautiful! I wouldn't have recognized you."

MEL stepped forward, a lift of pride in his voice. "I can take some of the credit for the vision of loveliness," he said. "I helped Denny select that dress today. It was just one of the things we did together. Isn't that right, Denny?"

For a moment she resented the hint of intimacy in Mel's voice, but she saw how surprised Terry looked, the way he glared at Mel almost savagely. That prompted her to answer as Mel wanted her to.

"It's true," she said. "I wouldn't have been able to get this dress, without Mel helping me!" Did anyone else know that she was referring to the price of it, she wondered.

"You and Terry know each other, don't you?" Colonel Hughes asked. "You met on the island, I believe."

"That's right," she heard Terry's

deep, husky voice say. "Denny left unexpectedly, before I had time to finish discussing a lot of things with her."

She was glad to hear Ames announce dinner then. She planned to talk to Colonel Hughes about the island by herself later, not in front of the others. Mel offered her his arm, to lead her into the dining room.

"Things are working out all right so far," he whispered. "I wish you'd go through with the rest of my plan."

She didn't answer him.

Gilda chatted brightly with Terry through most of the meal. She warned everyone that they would have to eat fast because they were going to the theatre afterward. When dinner finally was over they all left in Mel's car.

The show was a musical comedy, trying out before playing Broadway. It was fast, liltng, but Denny found it hard to concentrate on it, too consciously aware of Mel sitting on one side of her, and Terry on the other. She could see his clean-cut profile in the dimness of the theatre. How far away all this was from their moments alone on Rock Island!

Glancing down she saw Gilda's fingers entwined through Terry's, and he was holding them tightly.

"Let's go off by ourselves when the show's over, shall we?" Mel whispered.

Denny didn't promise him anything. And when the play ended, Gilda said:

"There's a new night club in town, Terry—the Pink Angel. Would you like to go and look it over?"

"Whatever the others want," he said, but his eyes turned to Denny.

"That sounds like fun, Mel!" she exclaimed, but she saw that Mel was annoyed because she wouldn't go off alone with him. She didn't care.

The Pink Angel turned out to be a charming place, done in an amusing style with cherubic winged dolls suspended from the ceiling among the clouds of pink tulle. The music was liltng. Terry had the first dance with Gilda, while Denny danced with Mel. Colonel Hughes seemed content to sit at the table and watch them. When the music paused for a moment between numbers the two couples happened to be near one another. Or had Terry man-

aged that? Because he asked:

"Shall we change partners for this one?"

Before Denny could even protest he had her in his arms.

"A far cry from your aunt's inn, and that night we danced there together," he murmured. "I'll take the sea and stars to this night club life any time."

She bit her lips, unable to bring herself to say that she preferred being here as Mel's partner, because that wasn't true. Then Terry had moved toward the doorway to a terrace, and was leading her out to it.

"Well, there are stars out here after all," he said. "And I have a lot to say to you, Miss Denise Logan, so you've got to listen to me."

His hands were on her wrists and she tried to pull away.

"I heard all I ever want to from you, out on the island," she said in a very angry manner.

His fingers tightened. "Want to know how I really got this bruise on my face, Denny? I had a fist fight just before I left the island with your friend Kip Carter."

"Kip?" She stared at him. "What do you mean?"

"I mean you left me in a spot, running off the island and just leaving word with your aunt that you were going to Boston. When I decided to come here, too, Kip came down to the dock and accused me of having arranged it for you to go first, then for me to follow you. He had the incredible idea that this was a planned elopement."

"Incredible is right!" she cried. "Though I'm sorry he hurt you."

HE laughed a little.

"If you think my eye is bad you should see Kip!" he said. "But why did you come here, force your way into Colonel Hughes' house?"

"I didn't force my way, as you put it!" she said defiantly. "He invited me to stay here, insisted on it. I came to see him to talk about the cannery, see if I could persuade him not to bring it to the island."

"That business is in my hands, Denny," Terry said grimly. "My dear girl, you just can't be so impetuous about

things. You've got to let me handle them."

"Let you handle them!" she cried. "I let you make love to me, only to find out that what you wanted was to buy my dock. And you completely neglected to mention the fact that you were engaged to another girl—to Gilda Hughes."

"All right, Denny. I admit I was wrong about that. But you and I hadn't known each other long. I never got a chance to tell you everything about myself. What actually happened was that I lost my head on the island—by falling completely in love with you! But I felt if I could buy the dock, put the deal across for the Colonel then I'd be able to ask my release from Gilda, since I believe it is a matter of pride with her, more than anything else, and be free to love you! Because it's you I love, Denny. You, whom I found on the island."

He was pulling her to him, his lips finding hers. It was hard to struggle against the overwhelming longing that possessed her, to override the tumult that seared her veins. But she finally pulled away.

"What kind of a fool do you think I am!" she demanded. "How long do you think you can go on playing the same game with me? Don't you imagine I'm smart enough to see that you're playing the same game again—talking about buying the dock and making love to me at the same time. Well, I'm no longer interested in you, Terry Hayes. This trip to Boston has been quite an experience for me. Because I've fallen in love with someone else. I'm going to become—Mrs. Mel Hughes!"

"Mel Hughes!" Terry's eyes widened as if he hadn't heard right. "Denny, you don't know what you're saying. Mel isn't fit to marry a girl like you. He's a wild, irresponsible playboy. His own father will tell you that, and so will his sister."

"And he told me, too," she cried vehemently, "how all of you are against him. How you ingratiated yourself with his family, pushing him out of his rightful place as his father's son. Well, maybe he isn't as clever at accomplishing big business deals as you. But he's handsome and rich and cares about *me*

—not whether he can buy my dock or not. I'll take him to you anytime!"

"Denny, you can't do it! Denny!" His voice was calling after her, but she was running inside, not wanting to hear him.

In the crowded night club again, she saw Mel searching for her.

CHAPTER XI

"THAT'S WHERE I BELONG"



PANIC struck Denny so when she saw Mel that she had to stand still for a moment. What had she said out there on the terrace, committing herself to become engaged to Mel? She knew that she had only blurted out the words she had said in her anger against Terry. But she had said them. She didn't love Mel. How could she go through with becoming engaged to him?

Mel had seen her now, and was making his way across the room to her.

"Denny darling," he said, when he finally reached her, "I've been looking everywhere for you."

"I—I was outside with Terry," she explained hesitantly.

"That's what I thought." He shrugged. "Gilda was mad as hops, and started to complain to Dad about you. She said she thought you had a crush of some sort on Terry. But I explained that you and I liked one another. You should have seen the way Dad responded. He likes you, Denny—would be crazy about the idea of you and I becoming engaged."

"Yes, Denny was just telling me about that!" came a voice from behind them — Terry's voice — and Denny's heart leaped to her throat. "Let me be the first to congratulate you, Mel. You're a lucky fellow!"

Mel stared from her to Terry with wide-eyed delight.

"You mean, you told Terry—you've accepted me?" he cried. His arm encircled her waist. "Then let's tell Dad and Gilda about it, too! Come on, darl-

ing! This is our engagement celebration tonight!"

Joyously he led her back to the table, and told the news to the others. The Colonel was incredulous at first.

"You mean, you'll marry Mel?" he asked Denny. "I always thought the right girl could be the making of him. Denny—this is wonderful." He was behaving gowns like the one she was wearing.

She stood there, wondering what she was getting into. She didn't love Mel! She loved Terry—though she couldn't even bring herself to look at him now, afraid that he might read the truth in her face. But apparently he was not much impressed. He was interested only in Gilda, in getting the dock and putting the deal through so he could marry that girl, no matter how many lies he had to tell to bring that about.

Denny glanced at Mel again. After all, why shouldn't she become engaged to him? She might even grow fond of him, be able to go through with the wedding. It would have its compensations. For one thing it would mean having gowns like the one she was wearing tonight all the time. Given time she could at least grow as fond of him as she was of Kip. And she had seriously considered marrying Kip before Terry had come along. Why shouldn't she try to make a go of it with Mel? Why shouldn't someone else beside Terry Hayes take advantage of the chance of a marriage into this fabulously wealthy family?

"Yes, of course it's wonderful!" she managed to get out, and nodded. "Mel and I will be—happy together."

"This calls for champagne then!" she heard someone exclaim, and she was shocked to realize that it was Terry's voice. It sounded as if he were rejoicing in her engagement, had decided it was a good idea after all.

Mel was holding her hand, leaning over and kissing her cheek.

"We'll have an even more wonderful day tomorrow darling," he promised. "We'll go back to Madame Christine's and I'll buy you a whole trousseau of wonderful clothes. We'll pick out an engagement ring, something that will knock everyone's eyes out."

"Yes—whatever you say, Mel," she said, and nodded again.

The champagne came, sparkling in tall-stemmed glasses as it was poured. Toasts were drunk to Mel and Denny, but she found it hard to swallow the wine, because her throat felt choked and tears threatening to spill from her eyes.

She had done this to hurt Terry rather than to help herself. She was well aware of that, but now he seemed to be taking it all matter-of-factly. As if, since it were what she really seemed to want, it was all right with him. He was paying elaborate attention to Gilda, talking and laughing with her. Well, wasn't that the way engaged couples should act?

Denny turned and began to talk brightly to Mel. They laughed and danced together, too, and then she suggested that they leave before the others and go home alone.

"Of course, darling," he said eagerly. "An engaged couple deserve a few minutes together, don't they?"

He didn't understand that she was just tired, and that all she wanted was to escape to her room and be alone.

WHEN they reached the house he tried to get her to stay up a while, coaxing with his arms about her, kissing her ardently. She tried to summon response but the attempt was flat—to her, at least. She pulled away as soon as she could.

"Mel," she said, "we have a big day ahead of us tomorrow, if we're going to do all you said. Besides, we want to talk to your father together, too. Remember you promised me that if we became engaged you'd get him to drop the cannery project—as a present to me."

"Yes, I remember." Mel laughed. "But you leave that end of things to me. Let me talk to him about it alone, while he's in such a good frame of mind about me. You just think about all the beautiful things I want you to have, mean for you to have."

He kissed her again, then reluctantly let her go to her room.

All the beautiful things she was to have! She was thinking of that as she walked to the mirror, saw herself in

the stunning gown. How beautiful and important it had seemed, earlier in the evening! But that was because she had bought and worn it to impress and dazzle Terry. But Terry had only tried to use her again, had even made love to her again to accomplish his purpose—so that he could marry Gilda. But she had fixed him, had turned the tables on him by becoming engaged to Mel.

She took off the dress and tossed it on the bed almost with a feeling of repulsion for it. Was finery what she really wanted? Could she go through with marrying Mel, and be satisfied with substituting luxuries for happiness?

Happiness? She laughed bitterly as she fell on the bed, burying her face in the pillow. The very thought of the word brought bitterness. What happiness was there for her? She had thought she found it one night on the beach, but it had been lost forever, washed away as in the tide. She was better off here, and maybe she could learn to act like Terry and all the other people she had met here. Out to get whatever they could in life, to grasp the material things, to try and find happiness that way. . . .

The next day Mel took Denny on the shopping spree that he had talked about. They went back to Madame Christine's, where she was able to order gowns without being concerned about how much they might cost. A fabulous array of gleaming satins, rich brocades, sequined crepes made up into evening gowns, dinner suits, cocktail outfits. Furs were paraded before them and Mel insisted on ordering several coats to be made for her. He would have gone on and on selecting things but she suddenly protested, made him stop.

"Mel," she declared, "we have ordered too much already. We can always come back, if we want to!"

"All right, darling," he said, and beamed. "We have to select an engagement ring, anyway."

It was Mel who did the final choosing of that, too. Denny couldn't bring herself to decide on anything definitely, and he finally took up a huge pear-shaped diamond in an exquisite setting and put it on her finger. She was some-

how glad that it didn't fit, had to be left behind and readjusted to her size.

"We really ought to go apartment hunting, too!" Mel told her, and laughed as they got into the car. "That's going to take a long time."

"Mel," she said anxiously, "surely you're not serious. I couldn't look at another thing today. Please let's go back to the house."

He agreed, though reluctantly. When they reached home Ames admitted them as usual.

"No one else is home," the butler announced.

"I think I'll go upstairs and rest before dinner," Denny said when she felt Mel's hands on her arms.

"Come into the living room a minute, darling," he asked. "I want to talk to you."

She followed him with lagging feet. He had done so much for her today, that she felt guilty about even being alone with him, knowing she could never love this man as he had every right to expect.

She was startled by his first words when they sat down in the living room. It was as if he had read her very thoughts.

"Denny, I've done a lot for you today. You'll have to admit that. Would you do me one favor, give me one gift in return?"

She looked at him with bewilderment. "Why, of course, Mel. What is it you want?"

He hesitated and she saw the muscle of his jaw tighten. There was something almost humorous about it, the way a small boy girds himself, summoning up all his courage to ask for a favor. But his words came as a complete shock to her.

"I want you to sign the dock on Rock Island over to me, Denny. I want it in my name."

"The dock?" She couldn't believe she had heard right. What could he possibly want with anything of the sort? "Mel, why would you want me to do a thing like that?"

HE came closer, and suddenly his hands were gripping her arm.

"Because I want to be the one to

stand in the way of Terry completing his job!" he said tightly. "I want to make it impossible for him to get the cannery on the island. Let me do it, Denny, have the satisfaction of getting even for all the humiliation I've put up with these past years."

"But I don't understand!" she cried. "You were going to ask your father to abandon the project completely as a favor to me. Why would it matter who owns the dock then? I'm not interested in revenge against Terry any more. Our engagement was supposed to accomplish that."

"It isn't enough!" The sharp and bitter tone of Mel's voice frightened her. "He doesn't seem to give a rap about our being engaged! I want the dock signed over to my name. If you're going to be my wife you've got to trust me, let me handle all your affairs from now on. I want the dock. We'll get a lawyer, take him out to the island to handle all the details about transferring ownership of it to me. Denny"—his voice lost some of its sharpness—"aren't you going to do this for me?"

She stood there shocked and silent, and suddenly the room seemed to be whirling about her.

"Mel," she thought, bitter now herself. "Even Mel doesn't really love you—just wants the dock from you. Revenge, all that he feels against Terry, is more important to him than you are!"

She was suddenly laughing, wildly, hysterically.

"Oh Mel—Mel!" she choked out. "Of course I'm not going to sign the dock over to you. It's all I have in this world, all that life holds for me—my dock, my work. I can see that now. I don't belong here, no matter what kind of existence you're willing to give me. Marriage would never work out for you

and me because there isn't any real love in our hearts—just a mere liking, because we've been drawn together by one thing. We both want to get even with Terry, hurt him! But this is the end of us, Mel, and our engagement. I'm going upstairs to pack, and I'm going back to the island right away."

"No, Denny, I won't let you go!" Mel cried. "You can't do this to me. Why our engagement is in all of today's papers. People will say you walked out on me, threw me over. You can't make a fool out of me, the way everyone always does and always has!"

She wasn't listening to him. She ran upstairs, threw her clothes hastily into her suitcases, carried them down herself. Mel was at the door, trying to block her way, but she managed to swing it open just as a taxi pulled up to the curb. Her heart leaped to her throat, seeing Terry and Gilda getting out and coming toward her.

Mel hadn't seen them.

"If you go you'll be sorry!" he was calling after her. "If you don't turn that dock over to me, you'll be sorry—you'll see!"

Something about the tone of the frantic, almost childish threat made her shudder as she signaled the taxi to wait for her, and she ran past Terry and Gilda.

"Denny, are you leaving?" she heard Terry's voice ask.

"Yes, back to the island."

She had to lift her eyes, to see his face once more. But he seemed undisturbed by her sudden departure, though his voice was almost kind as he said:

"Yes, go back to the island, Denny. That's where you belong."

That was where she belonged. She knew it now. She got into the taxi, directing the driver to the pier. She didn't know what time a boat left for home but she didn't care, as long as she was away from the Hughes house, free of the entanglements she had got into there. As long as she got back to Rock Island as soon as possible.

It had been a mistake for her to come to Boston, to think she could ever have found any solution to her troubles and heartaches here!

WE RECOMMEND

HALO FOR A SINNER

A Novelet by JEAN FRANCIS WEBB
in the November issue of

THRILLING LOVE

15c AT ALL STANDS

CHAPTER XII

BROKEN DREAMS



KIP was telling Denny exactly what he thought of the whole matter of her trip to Boston.

"Well, I hope you learned your lesson, Denny," he said. "The idea of running off like that. You sure gave me

a scare, thinking you were going to marry Terry Hayes."

Denny had been home for a few days. At first it had seemed wonderful to be back on Rock Island, to breath the cool, clean air, to walk the wide beach, to try and forget all that had happened to her when she had gone away from here.

But Kip had sought her out immediately after her return, and he had hung around her ever since.

She looked at him now—dark-haired Kip who was so much part of this island, whom she had known all her life, and she had once thought she loved. But even as she looked at him she had to check an impulse to smile, because he still bore some of the bruises from the fight Terry had told her about. The anger in his eyes sobered her though as he suddenly gripped her by the arms, held her to him.

"Have you learned never to get mixed up with off-islanders again, Denny?" he demanded. "Are you convinced at last that you and I belong here together, that we ought to get married?"

Married? Mel had wanted to marry her, too. She had agreed to become engaged to him, even though she didn't love him. At least she felt some affection for Kip, having been friends with him since childhood. But it still was not the right kind of affection for a happy marriage.

"You need someone to take care of you, Denny," Kip went on. "You thought you could solve the problems of your dock by going to the mainland yourself, but you see that you couldn't. I don't want anything to do with the dock, Denny. I have my own boats, my own work. But I can help protect you.

Help you forget all that you've been through, too."

His last words were the ones which appealed to her the most. Would marriage to Kip drive away the memory of all she had endured? Could Kip make her forget a man named Terry Hayes, the way he had lied to her and cheated her?

Kip saw that she was considering his proposal, was closer to acceptance of him than she had ever been before.

"Let's get married quickly, Denny!" he plunged on. "This is Thursday. We could have the wedding Saturday night. We could make it a big affair, have the whole town celebrate with us. I suppose your aunt would turn the inn over to us for it. And since you've just been away I'm sure you'd be happy with a honeymoon on the island. I know I would. Because the island will always be our home—is where we belong."

Where she belonged? Wasn't that what Terry had told her, too? "Go back to the island," he had said. "It's where you belong!"

"All right—all right, Kip!" Denny's voice was an impassioned cry. "I'll marry you! As soon as possible. This Saturday, as you say!"

Kip swept her into his arms and kissed her. She felt a certain comforted feeling, but that was all. Still no thrill.

Denny went home and told Aunt Beth she was going to marry Kip, but even as she spoke the words she knew that what she was doing was only an escape. She was trying to find a way to deaden the torture of her heart, to erase forever the memories of what Terry had done to her.

"Yes, I'll turn over the inn to you for the wedding, if that's what you want, Denny," Aunt Beth said quietly.

"I—I'll need a wedding dress, to," Denny said. "Isn't there one in the attic, that belonged to my mother?"

"Yes, there is," Aunt Beth answered. Her eyes leveled steadily at Denny. "But you can't have that."

"But why not?" Denny asked incredulously. "Wasn't it meant for me to have when I got married?"

"Indeed it was. Your mother was specific about it when she packed it away. I remember her saying, 'This

will be for my baby girl, when she falls in love and gets married, too.' The thing I'm thinking about is that you aren't in love with Kip, Denny. You never have been and never will be. You can't fool me—you still love Terry Hayes, no matter what happened between you."

"No—that's not true!" Denny cried. "I hate him, have already forgotten about him!"

But Aunt Beth only smiled wryly, shaking her head and returning to the kitchen.

It wasn't true that she still loved Terry! She *had* practically forgotten about him already. But suddenly Denny realized that she had to get out of the inn. She had just asked if she could be married here, but she was remembering how Terry and she had dined here that night, and what a wonderful evening they'd had before they had gone to the beach and built that bonfire.

SHE fled from the inn, up along the beach until she reached the strand where the shipwrecked boats lay. But this place was haunted too—not just by the tragedies of long ago, but by her own memories! Here Terry had taken her in his arms, and kissed her. Here he had spoken his lying words to her! She had to flee again knowing that her heart lay on the strand, as broken as all the others that had been wrecked here.

The only place where she found any refuge at was in her little office at the end of the dock. That was because she could bury herself in work at her desk. She did, all the next day and into the evening, too. She knew that Kip was going around town, inviting everyone to their wedding, ordering liquor to make it a festive affair. She ought to be having some sort of wedding dress made, but she couldn't bring herself to do anything about it. She just drove herself to work on and on, going over details of things in which she had got behind while in Boston.

In Boston? Was Terry still there, dancing on some starlit roof with Gilda tonight?

Glancing through the window she saw the stars. She remembered when Terry and she had sat on the beach, making a bonfire for themselves be-

neath just such a sky—before he had said those words which had made the sky fall on her.

She had to stop thinking of him, had to forget him! She reached for the cigarette she had been smoking, and then her eyes narrowed because she saw that in her nervousness she had put it out.

That was strange, because she had imagined that she smelled the smoke from it. She put her hand to her forehead. She couldn't go on this way, losing her grip, torturing herself.

Then she suddenly looked up with apprehension again. The smell of smoke seemed so real that she rose from her chair and opened the door of her office. Maybe there was a fire somewhere on the island.

There was smoke! Her eyes widened with panic as she saw the thick cloud of it at the far end of the dock and through it she saw a lick of orange flame! Her heart leaped to her throat as she started to run toward it. She must be imagining this! It wasn't—it couldn't be her dock on fire!

"Denny—Denny!" a voice shouted to her. "Don't go that way! You'll be hurt!"

She had to stop, catch her breath, reaching out to one of the upright posts for support. What had happened to her that she was imagining such things? She must be losing her mind, because she thought she heard Terry's voice!

"You can't go that way, Denny!" the shout came again. "You'll be hurt. Is there any other exit from this place?"

The tall, lean figure seemed to come to her out of the very smoke itself. If she closed her eyes a moment, then opened them again, maybe he would disappear. But then she felt the touch of a hand on her arm, and knew that it was Terry!

"I haven't time to explain how I got here now, Denny," he said in a rush of words. "But your dock is on fire. You can't get through this way."

"My dock—on fire? What are you talking about?"

But staring beyond his broad shoulders she saw the enlarging cloud of smoke. Cold shock poured through her.

"You've come back to make me more

trouble!" she cried frantically. "Because I wouldn't sell you the dock you're getting rid of it this way!"

"All right, Denny, believe that if you want to!" She saw a flicker of pain in his eyes. "I don't suppose you'll believe anything else I ever try to tell you. I didn't set the dock on fire, but I know who did. If you'll just have a little faith in me now, cooperate with me, we'll end your troubles once and for all."

"Have faith in you?" She laughed wildly. "You mean let you burn my dock down so you can marry Gilda? So that the Colonel can reward you with a raise in salary for getting the cannery here."

"Denny, I have no intention of marrying Gilda," Terry said firmly. "When I came to Boston, following you, I was going to try to get the Colonel to abandon his plans for bringing the cannery here. But I saw that someone else was working on plans of his own. Mel—becoming engaged to you, working things out in his wild and reckless way to get even with me through you!"

"Mel?" she cried. "Why bring him into it now? I left him for good in Boston."

"That's what you think, Denny!" Terry said, as he rushed her along the dock. "Do you remember the day you left Boston? I had just come back to the house in a taxi with Gilda. I had been out with her—breaking off our engagement, which never really had amounted to much, after all. Sort of a boy and girl affair, was all. But I couldn't tell you about it then. Because I heard Mel's last words to you. I decided it was better for you to come back here, to see what Mel intended to do to get the dock from you."

SHE was suddenly hearing Mel's threatening words again! "If you don't turn the dock over to me, you'll be sorry—you'll see!"

"I hardly let him out of my sight after you left," Terry was saying, "knowing he had some plan up his sleeve. He took a late boat to Rock Island today. I had to charter another boat to follow him without being seen. I was afraid of what he might do before I caught up with him, but he laid low until it was

dark, and I couldn't find him. Then I saw him come here just a little while ago, carrying a can of gasoline, splashing the dock and setting fire to it!"

She looked over her shoulder as they ran and saw the flames rushing on toward them. She saw Terry's eyes then, his lips that had kissed her so tenderly. Maybe she was being a fool again—a fool—but she believed every word he was telling her!

"Terry, Mel must be mad, to do a thing like this?" she cried.

"Mad?" Terry laughed brusquely. "I'll tell you more about him later. But is there another way for you to get out of here?"

"Yes, there is," She nodded vigorously. "There's a rear door to my office, but it opens to the water."

"That means you'd have to swim to shore? It's a long way from here."

"There's a boat below," she said and then his hand was on her arm, hurrying her toward the office.

She opened the rear door, showed the ladder leading down to the boat.

At that moment they heard the shrill sound of the fire alarm. The dock fire had been discovered, and the volunteers would be on their way to put it out. Kip would be among them, for he was a volunteer fireman. But what would he think if he knew she was here with Terry—trusting him, loving him?

"Here, Denny, put these on." Terry had grabbed her yellow sou'wester and a coat from the rack, was holding them out for her. "Listen to me carefully now. I want you to row off to some safe spot, and stay there for about twenty minutes before you come to shore."

He was thrusting her toward the door. She suddenly understood he had no intention of going along with her!

"Terry, how will you get back?" she asked anxiously. "And why should I wait in the boat so long?"

"Weren't you going to trust me, darling? We can't talk now. I have a plan, and I'm not even sure it will work, but it's our only chance. Don't worry about me, I'll make it safely somehow, knowing our happiness depends on it."

He pulled her to him, his lips on hers for a brief moment. But it was a mo-

ment that mended the pieces of her broken heart.

Then she was going through the open doorway, letting herself down the ladder cautiously, until her feet touched the swaying boat.

"Remember — twenty minutes darling. I'll see you then!"

His voice was a hushed whisper, then the door closed above her, blacking out the light. She felt shut off from Terry just when she had found him again. Fear gripped her as she saw how the fire was spreading along the dock, getting nearer and nearer to her office.

Row to a safe place he had said. She grasped the oars, and pulled with all her might.

CHAPTER XIII

SINGING HEARTS



IT didn't take Denny long to get to a safe spot. She was thankful for that, because she couldn't have rowed a minute longer if her life had depended on it—and it almost had. Her eyes strained toward the dock. And

then she saw Terry, his lean figure silhouetted against the flames! She saw the firemen at the front end of the dock, shooting sprays of water from their hoses, struggling against the fire.

The dock—how little it meant to her now with Terry's life threatened by it! How little anything else in the world meant, compared with Terry's safety! He had to get through—had to get through somehow. Her hands clenched the oars tightly though she held the rowboat still. Her heart stopped as she saw Terry walking cautiously along the outside edge of the dock the flames all around and about him, it seemed. And then hope flared!

It looked as if the fire hadn't touched this outer edge—not yet—and that he might make his way through if the wind didn't shift. Unless the dock was so weakened that it gave way beneath him, hurling him into the water! But no—such a thing *must* not happen!

He had to make it, for he could never swim if he should be flung into the water with fire all around him, hemming him in. Her lips moved in agonized prayer. He had to make it!

She wanted to close her eyes, afraid of what she might see, but she couldn't do that either. They were fixed, staring, as if she were hypnotized. Terry, you've got to get through, now that we've found each other again!

She heard sounds from the shore. People's voices piercing the air with excited shouts. Of course—the whole village was out by now, watching the fire, helping if they could. The crowd had seen Terry, too, had been watching him with anxious eyes, and suddenly a cheer went up. Because Terry had made it! He was past the fire, running toward the people at the dark end, people who were rushing to meet him.

How long had she been out here? Denny wondered, because she had lost all sense of time and was only vaguely aware of the tears that were pouring down her cheeks. Had she waited twenty minutes yet? It seemed more like a lifetime. She had to see Terry right away! She leaned forward, starting to row for shore.

She landed on the beach a short distance from the dock. Leaping out of the little boat she stumbled along the shore, hurrying as fast as she could until she reached the street that led to the dock. People were running along with her, not recognizing her in the dim light and with her sou'wester pulled far down on her head.

She finally reached the dock, and was trying to make her way up front when a strange sensation went through her at what she heard.

"Denny—Denise Logan was in there!" voices were exclaiming, screaming, sobbing. "Denny was killed in the fire!"

What were they saying? What was this crazy rumor on everyone's lips?

"It's not true!" she wanted to cry out. "This is Denny—I'm alive!"

But something held her back. Some instinct told her that this was part of Terry's plan, why he had wanted her to stay out in the boat until he had put that plan across.

She pushed her way further through the crowd until she had reached those in front, near the dock. And then she saw a familiar face.

There was Aunt Beth, a shawl clutched around her, and her eyes looking as if they had just looked upon a thousand deaths. Aunt Beth must believe that she had been killed in the fire, too! She couldn't let Terry do this to Aunt Beth. She was pushing toward her aunt when she heard Terry's voice ringing out:

"I saw you set fire to the dock! Do you know what this means—what will happen to you? Denny was in her office working! I tried to get through to her, to help save her, but it was impossible. It was too late, the flames were too high! And *you* were responsible for her death! You killed her just as much as if you had deliberately planned to murder her!"

DENNY saw Mel standing there then, his hair disheveled, his eyes wild. Had she ever thought him handsome? He looked so weak and frightened now, tripping on his own words as he cried:

"No—no! I tell you I didn't set fire to the dock! Why should I? How would I even know she was in there? I saw the light in the office but thought it was just left on for the night. Not that I didn't hate her!" His eyes glinted at Terry with cold fury. "I hated her and you and all my family for the way all of you have always treated me. But I wouldn't kill anyone—I'm not a murderer! Setting a fire doesn't make you a murderer!"

In that moment Denny felt sorry for Mel. He was so mixed up, so filled with mingled hate and fright, that in denying the truth he had given himself away! It was enough to satisfy the sheriff.

"I think we'd better take him along," the lawman was saying. "We won't have any trouble getting to the bottom of this business from him."

Denny waited until Mel had been led away by the sheriff and his men. And then she heard Terry's voice ringing out again, high above the shouts of the crowd: "Denny—Denny darling! Are you here yet?"

She had to laugh, gaily, exultantly, as she saw the expressions on the faces of all those people she knew so well, saw the joy in their eyes as they took up the cry.

"Denny! He says she's alive!"

They stared at her as she rushed forward, the people of this island where she had always lived. It had been almost worthwhile to go through all this just to see how much they loved her.

Aunt Beth was standing before her then, touching her as if fearing she might fade away.

"Denny—Denny, it is you!" Aunt Beth said, crying and laughing at the same time. "You don't know what I suffered, thinking you were gone. And there's not even a scratch on you!"

"Not even a scratch!" Denny laughed as she threw herself into her aunt's arms and they hugged and kissed each other.

Someone else had reached Denny then, speaking to her in a choked voice. "Denny, you're alive!" It was Kip, happy, yet with a regretful sadness on his face, too. "When I heard you were trapped in the fire I went crazy, trying to get to you, and all the while I was blaming myself bitterly. It's your fault, Kip Carter, I told myself. It's a judgment on you because you were forcing her to marry you, and you knew she didn't love you. You knew she loved Terry! I guess I can't hold you to your promise to marry me, Denny—not now. And I even take back everything I ever said about Terry."

Kip turned without another word and rushed away, and then Terry was there. Terry! Denny's eyes were on him searchingly, making sure that he was safe and sound.

"The fire's out, Denny," he was saying. "But your dock is gone."

She saw the scorched, fallen-in timbers, with only the pier posts still standing in the sea. The dock which everyone had wanted, had tried to take from her! But Terry was alive and that meant more to her than anything else.

Her hand reached out, her gesture telling him without words what she felt in her heart. His bronzed fingers gripped hers tightly and he started to lead her away. Aunt Beth smiled after

them. They were in an excited crowd, but might as well have been alone.

Denny knew where they were going. They walked along the beach, on and on to the rocky strand, where the shipwrecked vessels lay.

"Remember the first time we came here, Denny?" Terry asked softly when they were so far away that no crowd sounds came to them. "I told you that I was interested in it as a site for the cannery but it opened a whole flood of memories for me that I couldn't talk about. It was recalling how I had been raised on the coast of Maine, near a rocky shore like this."

"I learned about that later from Mel," Denny murmured.

TERRY'S hands reached for her, turning her gently toward him.

"Yes, I suppose some people might have envied me, being taken into Colonel Hughes' house, brought up to mean as much to him as his own son—maybe more, in some ways. But having me for a 'brother' didn't help Mel, who was a weakling anyway, and only made him more wild and rebellious, trying to compete with me. And then Gilda and I sort of drifted together, because we both knew the Colonel had his heart set on that, and there wasn't anyone else for Gilda—there."

"If only I had known all that, Terry!" Denny cried. "I might have been a little more understanding."

"But I wasn't clear about anything myself, darling. Not until I came to Rock Island—and found you! Yet I was torn with conflict, wanting to do my job for the Colonel, and still wanting to give up my life in Boston. I decided to tell him how I felt. But then you went to see him first!"

"And found out you were engaged to Gilda!" Denny cried. "How could I help thinking you just wanted to get the dock from me so you could marry her?"

Terry smiled, drawing her still closer. "That wasn't what I wanted at all. Gilda didn't either. And then when I got to Boston I found Mel trying to get the dock from you, playing his old game of trying to outshine me in his father's eyes. I'm sure he thought if he burned

down the dock you'd be desperate for money, forced to let the cannery take over. Besides, I suppose he believed he was getting even with you for 'jilting' him, as he called it, making a fool of him before his cronies. He can't stand to be laughed at, and he is so spoiled, so used to having his own way, that I guess he went haywire when he was crossed. But I never thought he would resort to anything like this. The Colonel will be all broken up."

"I suppose I should hate Mel," she answered softly. "But I can't help feeling sorry for all of them."

"I know. I had a long talk with the Colonel, told him how grateful I am for all he has done for me, but that there came a time when a man had to stand on his own feet. I said I would always be devoted to him, but that I was going on my own now, and he agreed—regretfully. I'm sure he understood."

"But Gilda—did she give you up that easily?" Denny cried.

"Easier." Terry grinned. "Oh, we are fond of each other, but ours was only a token engagement—to bring the real lad in her life to book. I couldn't let Gilda down by confessing that, even to you—and it worked. Gilda's boy friend has come around, and she's happy. And the Colonel is abandoning the idea of the cannery here. There are other sites that will work out just as well. He's doing that, hoping all of us can be good friends." Terry sighed. "I'm afraid there's no changing poor Mel, though, and he'll have to be punished for what he did."

"Terry, are you going to stay on the island?" Denny asked.

"That depends on you." He drew her still closer. "You once thought I wanted to take your dock from you. What I want to do now is rebuild it for you. And we can rebuild our lives with it. Working there together. If you'll let me be your partner—and husband."

Did he need an answer? Couldn't he read it in the wonderous stars over Rock Island? Couldn't he hear it in the dashing of the waves against the rocks? No—a man needed more tangible evidence. She gave it to him with her heart alive and singing, her lips his to possess forever!



"Don't you think I'm tired of waiting!" Walt hurled back

Only to Borrow

By FRANCES STIERHEM

PANDORA BLAKE had everything—diamonds, emeralds, ermine. But none of it was hers. She posed under white-hot lights, wearing the clothes she wanted, modeling for the

man she wanted, and everything in the world that she wanted seemed just beyond her reach.

Walt Jones moved his lights in toward her, one by one. The halo light

Everything Pandora Wanted Was Beyond Her Reach!

to turn her hair to a dazzling gold. The spotlight to bring out the diamonds against her bare throat, and finally the five-hundred watt, tilted up from the floor to lighten the vivid blue of her eyes.

"Pandora," he said, half to himself. "Pandora from a Greek myth. She was the one who opened the box she was forbidden to open and let out all the trouble. I used to think that was a crazy name for a girl—Pandora."

"And now you think it suits me!" Pan said, with a little downward smile.

"It suits you like that studio make-up you've learned to put on since you started modeling, so that what you are underneath seems almost to be forgotten and lost."

He stooped to throw the light switch. The quick glare of the overhead turned his hair copper-bright and lighted his thick, stubborn lashes. She could see the strength of his shoulders beneath the clean blue of his shirt. And in that instant Pan loved him so much it made her throat feel tight. She loved him so much, and everything was so wrong, wrong, wrong!

"Nothing's lost, not really," she tried to protest. "But how can I be the way I was that first day I walked into your studio, when I'd just come up from Texas?"

He looked at her out of clear gray eyes that never hid what he thought.

"But that was the girl I fell in love with, Pan. Remember? A blond kid who got a kick out of Coney Island and an elevator ride to the top of the Empire State. You loved hot dogs and spun sugar candy, and when we rode on the chute-the-chutes, you could take your chance with the best of them!"

She looked away from him and down at the bracelet she was modeling. It was a wide bracelet, diamonds with tiny rubies that spiraled into a sculptured rose in the center.

SHE touched it. It felt cool, heavy, secure. And she had never seen anything, anywhere, that she wanted so much to own. A year ago, she wouldn't have given it a second glance. But a year ago, she had thought she was going to have something better than dia-

monds. A home. A wedding ring. Walt.

She looked up from the bracelet, her eyes bright and dark, almost as if they had tears in them.

"I'd still take the Big Chance," she reminded him. "I'm the one who wants to get married on what you and I are making! And if I seem different, it's only because I'm so tired of waiting. For everything I want. For everything I've ever wanted."

He took a step toward her, then stopped. He was trembling.

"And don't you think I'm tired of waiting?" he flung back. "Waiting for money that only dribbles in, when I want it to pour?"

"There's my money," she tried to reason.

"Your money is your money! If I can't keep my business running and a marriage going at the same time, I'd better not get married! And if you don't think that's harder on me than it is on you, that's only because you can't see the way you look to me right now. Beautiful, angry, and my girl—who isn't really mine! Oh, Pan!"

He said her name with a tight, hungry sound, almost like a groan. The film plate he was holding dropped from his hand and he came toward her and caught her up, diamonds and all, in a swift, urgent embrace.

His face was so near she could feel the warmth of it. And a sudden flood of tenderness, of almost unwilling understanding, had washed the anger from his eyes.

It was the way he had looked at her that first day when she handed him her photographs and stood waiting, hoping tremulously for his approval that would give her a chance to pose for a photographer.

"You're scared," he had said. "Don't let it get you! New York's nothing but another hick town under the fancy finish."

Nobody else had known she was afraid. Nobody else had cared. And while she had stood looking up at him, something had happened to her, warm and good, like sun on a spring day.

"Oh, Walt, what's the matter with

us?" The question she had tried to hold back now broke out in a sharp despairing cry. "Why are we letting everything go so wrong?"

The quick double-ring of the reception room bell, rose above her words. And before Walt could open the door, Julian Durand walked in.

Still unsteady, Pan turned her gaze toward him. A gaze that scarcely saw him.

She had met Julian Durand only once before. Last week, here at Walt's studio when he had been selecting models. He had looked up from a stack of photographs of other girls and Pan had been surprised to find that the heir to the Durand millions was not old. Scarcely more than thirty. He was even rather nice-looking in a gaunt, leather-tanned way. He had thrust aside the photographs.

"I think I've found the girl," he had told Walt. And Walt had frowned a little over the way he said it.

Now he crossed the studio and flung aside his hat.

"Glorifying my diamonds?" he asked Pan, and to Walt he said, "Not set up yet? What's the delay? We've got to have these shots by noon tomorrow, y'know."

Walt glanced at his watch. "Matter of fact," he answered, "we're a half-hour ahead of schedule. It takes time to set up a good shot."

"And you think yours are good?"

Julian Durand seated himself on a stack of Walt's sample photographs and lit a cigarette. He was smiling, half-jesting. But there was a kind of under-current beneath his words and Walt didn't miss it.

"I'm good enough to have done your work for the past six months—with no retakes and no kicks to date," Walt shot back in the same tone, that was either a jest or a retort, according to how you wanted to take it.

Julian shrugged. "There are a lot of photographers in the business, Jones. I guess most of them have had a fling at my account, at one time or another."

WALT'S back was turned. He was stopping down the lens. But Pan could tell by the stiffness of his should-

ers that Walt was losing his temper. And Durand was Walt's best client. Durand money paid Walt's studio rent.

"Look here, you two," Pan said with uneasy gaiety, "you're running up a big model fee while you argue this one out."

Walt half-turned. His glance touched her searchingly—the gown she was wearing that floated from her shoulders like slow twilight, the tag that dangled from it with a ruthless price mark of \$295. And the ermine. The diamonds.

"Okay, Pan," he said. "Let's get to work."

His hands on the lights, on the camera, on the plates were swift and expert. His face was enigmatic.

"Chin up. A little to the right."

There was the remorseless *click, click, clicking* of the shutter, the endless clatter of plates, and finally Walt's voice, deliberately flat and professional.

"All right. We've got it now."

Julian swung himself from the table. "That's that!" he said with a grin. "And now, since I'm so weary from watching you two work, I think I'll freshen up with a cocktail at the Stork. You'll join me, Pan, won't you?"

With the klieg lights off, the room felt suddenly cold.

"I had a sort of date with Walt, Mr. Durand—" she began, and though she hadn't meant it to, her voice sounded regretful.

"Don't let that stop you!" Walt ripped out. "Go right along. I'll be tied up here the rest of the night, putting these prints through."

Pan was shivering. She gathered the ermine wrap close about her, but the warmth was only outside, and inside her heart felt cold.

"Okay then," she said, "I'll be leaving, Walt."

She waited a moment, hoping he would try to stop her. Instead, he turned to Julian.

"Shall I send the diamonds back with a messenger?" he wanted to know. "Or will somebody from your place pick them up later?"

"Neither," Julian decided cheerfully, "Pan's going to wear the diamonds. To the Stork with me."

With her hand on the dressing room door, Pan whirled and stood staring at Julian Durand, her lips parted, her breath coming uncertainly.

"You mean wear them, as if they were really mine?" Her fingers touched the diamonds, lingered against them. "Oh, I might like that just once! Not to have a bonded messenger waiting to carry them back to the shop! Not to have a uniformed guard stop me at the end of the runway and take them away!"

She broke off as a chair overturned, caught by the violent swing of Walt's outflung arm. He let it crash to the floor, not stooping to pick up.

"Yes, do wear them!" he flung out. "And have the whole town saying, 'There goes part of Julian Durand's jewel collection—I wonder who's the latest?'"

And suddenly, the quick-flaring spark of his anger touched off her own.

"What if people do talk?" she heard herself saying. "They talked enough when we almost got married and didn't! It might be pleasant to have them say I got something I wanted for a change!"

And before the wrenching sob that rose in her throat could make itself heard, Pan turned and fled blindly into the dressing room. She heard the angry slam of the darkroom door, closing behind Walt. Heard it with the panicked feeling that it might be closing upon everything in the world that mattered.

The diamonds looked all wrong with her afternoon dress—gaudy and unreal. But she wore them anyway. Partly because she was stubborn; but mostly because they had cost her so much. So much too much already.

"You're definitely the type for diamonds, Pan," Julian observed as Pan came out of the dressing room, wearing her sixteen dollar and ninety-five cent dress, and the little green velvet hat that she had bought at a sale at Bonwit's.

He held open the outer door for her, and as it clicked shut behind them, Pan glanced back over her shoulder. And there it was, the red-and-black lettering that had grown familiar and dear to her as the sight of Walt's red hair.

For a moment, her gaze lingered on the tiny stick-figure cameraman that had always been Walt's trademark.

Then the elevator door slipped shut, cutting it from view.

JULIAN DURAND'S car was waiting at the curb. Low-slung and chauffeur-driven, it dazzled almost blindingly in the late afternoon sun. It was the kind of car that always whisked past Pan, snug and aloof, as she waited at a bus stop or a street crossing, shielding herself against the wind or the rain, while she envied the storm-sheltered people inside the car.

But now, as Julian Durand turned to look at her, Pan had the strangest feeling that *he* was envying *her*. It was in his brooding glance as he said:

"You couldn't be more than twenty. Twenty-one at the most. How long have you been modeling?"

"A year," she answered. "And I'll be twenty-one in November, Mr. Durand."

"Julian," he said, and his hand closed over hers.

She moved a little away, and leaned forward to look out as the car swung down bright Fifth Avenue, past the milling home-bound crowds, and the tall sun-struck buildings. Past the great Durand jewel shop with its gilded clock pointing to five past five, and its wrought-iron door shutting it off from all but the very rich. And suddenly, as she gazed at the towering building, Pan was no longer seeing it as it looked now in the dying October sun.

For memory had slipped back to that warm morning in June when she and Walt had come walking by on their way to lunch.

"Durand Jewels," Walt had told her. "Better look twice, Pan. That's my new account." And she had tilted her head back to stare up, up at the proud tower that climbed the June sky. "Met Julian Durand yesterday," Walt had said proudly. "He's heir to the whole business. One more account like that and we'll really be on our way."

Now Julian drew Pan's hand back. "What are you staring at?" he wanted to know.

Something inside her answered,

"Only a dream. A dream that never came true." But aloud she said: "Nothing." And a sigh slipped through her lips. "Nothing at all, Julian."

And she settled back uneasily against the smooth leather upholstery of Julian Durand's car.

"You're never from New York," Julian said abruptly. "Not with that fresh look of yours! I've lived here all my life—and so've most of my friends. But we don't grow them like you in this city!"

The flame from his lighter flared briefly up into his lean, tanned face. An unhappy face, filled with a kind of queuing disappointment.

"No, I'm not from New York," she said, and she started to tell him about Texas and the little town where she had grown up. . . Main Street, and the depot, and how everyone back home clipped her pictures out of the magazines.

But she had a sudden feeling that anything she could say about an out-of-the-way town of four thousand people wouldn't really interest Julian Durand.

And because she didn't know what else to say to him, she sat wordless until his car pulled up at the Stork. The bright mirrored Stork Club, with its icy champagne tubs and its dazzling celebrities, and its high prices that had always made Pan and Walt walk past slowly, but never quite dare to go in.

"Some day," Walt had said. "Meanwhile, we'll settle for Nick's Place."

They had always laughed over that, and strolled on by. But sometimes, Pan would turn to look back over her shoulder and she would catch a glimpse of a mink-coated picture star stepping out of a car. So sheltered, such girls always looked. So secure and unworried and free from all the problems that held back her marriage to Walt.

The Stork Club seemed to be waiting for Julian. Doors opened to him. The velvet rope dropped for him. And everyone seemed to know him—the headwaiter, people at the tables they passed, and a black-haired girl in a leopard hat who waved from across the bar.

"Hi—hi!" he greeted them all briefly, his eyes darting restlessly from one to

another, as if he were hunting for something he scarcely hoped to find.

Pan saw her own reflection, rushing along close beside her in the mirror-paneled wall. The diamonds, the black dress, the little green velvet hat. She looked very young. But not at all happy.

"Smile," she told herself. "A lot of girls would be on top of the world if they were having cocktails at the Stork and dating Julian Durand."

But she and Julian hadn't been at the Stork long before she discovered that a long succession of girls had dated Julian and, quite casually, he had let them wear his diamonds.

SHE saw how it worked out for Julian, and for any girl who caught his fancy when the gossip columnist from the *Courier* dropped by their table while they were having champagne.

Julian set down his empty glass, and stretched out his hand cordially. "This is Ted Ware, from the *Courier*," he told Pan. "And this is Pandora Blake, Ted. She's new. A model. And twenty years old. Give her a build-up, Ted. Pandora's going places."

Ted grinned. "Going places? Where and how far, Julian? Or haven't you made up your mind? Where do you find your talent, anyway? Always the prettiest. The most dazzling. And always loaded with diamonds."

He winked at Julian. Julian smiled back.

And suddenly, Pan wasn't wearing the diamonds any more. The bracelet lay on the table between herself and Julian. She had loosened the clasp of her necklace and now, as if it had a life of its own, she saw the thing uncoil, slide, glide down over her chest to the table. Julian lifted the curled necklace between his fingers, and Pan sprang to her feet.

"Never mind the write-up," she told him.

For suddenly, looking into Julian's bleak and somehow blank face, Pan saw the whole pattern. Every so often, when he was bored, he would buy youth and a fresh viewpoint on life, just as he might buy fruit out of season or a sun-warmed winter in the South. He wanted her verve, her interest in living.

He would pay what he had to pay for it, and take it from her and she would never get it back.

"Here, sit down," he said. "Nobody meant to set off that Texas temper of yours." He smiled, as if it pleased him to have her flare up at him and fling his diamonds back. "Ted's just leaving, and I want to talk to you about Walt Jones."

"About Walt?"

Her knees seemed to let her down so that she could no longer stand. What had she been thinking of? Why hadn't she seen that she might be risking the whole Durand account when she first started out with Julian.

She leaned across the table, her breath coming unsteadily.

"You won't shift your account? You'll let Walt keep it, won't you?"

Julian didn't answer for a moment. When he did, there was an amused light in his eyes.

"We won't shift," he told her then. "Why should we? Walt's good. A little bit better than good. But I can't afford to let him know it."

"Why not?" Pan demanded.

Julian laughed. "It's a policy of mine never to give anyone too much. He'll raise his rates soon enough as it is. A friend of mine from Hanson Silver is throwing his whole account Jones' way—this afternoon, I believe."

The Hanson account! That was the one Walt had dreamed about.

"If I get it," he had said, "we'll be set, Pan. Our worries will be over!"

So long they had waited for the Hanson account. And now Walt had it. Now, when it was too late!

Julian dropped the diamonds into his pocket and pushed back the table.

"You want to go, don't you?" he said.

"I am tired," she said, slipping into her black cloth coat. "I've never been so tired."

When they were out in the dusky night, humming through Central Park, Julian had the windows rolled down. They were passing under the trees and Pan could hear the dry rush of the autumn leaves above them, and the far-away hoot of a tugboat on the river. All about them, the lights from the skyscrapers mounted like arrested fireflies

into the night sky.

She had seen the park this way a hundred times before. With Walt. Tonight, it brought a lump to her throat.

"It's almost too beautiful," she said, more to herself than to Julian. "Sometimes, when everything's gone wrong, New York can be the loneliest place!"

"Lonely? For you? With that fresh face of yours and everything in life still ahead of you?" Suddenly, urgently, he swept her into his arms.

She did not even struggle. Instead she said with a little choked laugh:

"The freshness—what you call freshness—was something else. It was Walt. Being in love with him, the way we felt about each other."

He let her go a little away from him. But he did not release his hold upon her. And he said with that light determination that was in his touch, in his glance, in every word he spoke:

"If it was there for him, and you quarreled, why should it not be there for me? You and I got off to the wrong start, Pan. And maybe that was my fault, because until you pitched those diamonds back, I had you all wrong. I figured you out according to the usual run of girls. But you're not like any of them. Not like any I ever met before. And that's what I like about you!"

UNDER the glare of the quick-shifting street lamps, Pan saw in his face an unguarded need. And she saw something much more. Julian Durand knew she didn't want him, nor his carelessly offered jewels, and because she could say no to him, he wanted her and he would almost surely take her on her own terms. Marriage included.

She gave a long, shaken sigh.

"It wouldn't be any use, Julian, our fooling one another. I couldn't give you what you think I could. And what you could give me, wouldn't be enough."

They were turning in at Pan's street now. In another minute, they would say good-by. He would be gone, only part of a day in which she knew she had done everything wrong, from that first angry word that she and Walt had spoken in the studio.

"Well, it's good-night, Pan, and good-by, for now," Julian was saying.

He took a cigarette from his thin platinum case. In the brief flare from his lighter, his face looked bleak, almost blank. And the old questing boredom was back in his eyes again.

"I'll see you sometime, Pan," he said impassively.

And even as she wondered just what he meant by that, Julian was leaning forward to give his chauffeur another address on Park Avenue.

"And that," Pan decided, "is the last I'll see of Julian Durand and his diamonds."

She was wrong about the diamonds. She found that out next morning when she was awakened by the abrupt and violent ringing of her house phone. The doorman mumbled something that sounded like "package on the way," and slammed the receiver up before Pan could question him.

She recognized the box immediately. It was oblong and velvet. Blue-purple velvet. And she knew, even before her fingers sprung open the catch, that the gold stamp inside the satin lining would read "Durand Jewels, Inc." She did not know that it would be the same bracelet. The one she had worn yesterday. The lovely, lovely bracelet with its dazzling diamonds and the rubies that spiraled so delicately, so bewitchingly, into a rose in the center. But it was.

She hunted for Julian's card, among the tissue, in the wrapping. But there was no card. He must have decided that the firm name, stamped inside the box was more potent than any message.

Pan lifted the bracelet out of its velvet nest with a slowness that was uncertain, almost fearful. She could put it on for a moment, only a moment, just to see how it looked here in her own apartment in the bright light of day. And then she would have to send it back quickly before something happened to it. Or something happened to her.

She had thought fleetingly yesterday how it would look with her hyacinth blue satin hostess gown. The loveliest thing she had. She snatched the gown from the closet now, knocking three others to the floor, not stopping to pick them up.

It zipped up the side, her gown, fluid

and clinging, with a great clump of violets that fastened on one hip. The sleeves were long and loose, slit from shoulder to wrist to show the ivory warmth of her skin.

It was a gown she had bought especially for a color shot, and she'd had to pay too much for it. It demanded an occasion. It demanded—diamonds. She knew it now, as she saw herself in the dressing table mirror. She revolved slowly, in her very best fashion-show manner and the diamonds caught the bright morning sunlight and flung it back into her mirror.

And then the sight of Walt's picture stopped her like a spoken word. She tried to look away from it and back again at the bracelet. But it was no use, for in that moment she missed his morning phone call. And she knew, with an angry rise of tears that she would miss him this way for as long as she lived. Waking or sleeping. When she went out into the crowded streets of Manhattan and when she came back into this lonely little room where she had been so much happier than she knew.

Suddenly she couldn't see the diamonds. They were a blur before her eyes. And Walt's picture was wet—wet with Pan's tears because she was holding it so close. They were hurt tears, bitter and almost angry, because just Walt's photograph could make the things she thought she wanted seem so vain and useless.

When the bonded messenger left with the bracelet she was sending back to Durand's, Pan felt a wave of relief. And all that day she worked frantically, rushing from one appointment to another, trying not to think.

SHE would have managed all right, except that wherever she worked, people kept asking how Walt was. They always had. Partly because even Walt's rivals liked him, but mostly because Pan had spoken of him so often.

At her first appointment, they asked for him, and at her second. And finally, on her third job, at four o'clock Pan's modeling agency called her.

"Hair looking lovely," they told her briskly into the phone, "and bring along

a smart medium-tone suit. The sort you might wear for travel. Five o'clock. Walt Jones Studio."

Pan dropped the receiver back. She was trembling so that she had to lean against the wall. Julian must have done this. Julian Durand, who couldn't take no for an answer. When she had sent the bracelet back, he must have figured this was the only way to see her. The only sure way. And this time he had figured right.

When she flung open the door to Walt's studio, Julian was nowhere about. Lights blazed down on a beautifully set-up dinner table and the camera was wheeled into place, but the studio was deserted.

And then from the back of the place, Pan heard footsteps. Walt's footsteps. She sat down on the nearest chair. She had to, because she was suddenly too shaken to stand.

"Pan!" he said.

He came toward her, quick and eager, and pulled her to her feet. She tried to say his name and her lips moved, but no sound came from them. She just stood looking at him, finding him again. His gray eyes that were so alert and so warmly alive. His red hair that was combed back firmly, but never would

stay flat. And most of all, his mouth that was gay and tender and always ready to laugh. He was laughing now. Holding her, shaking her gently.

"Who do you think you are," he demanded, "sending back my diamonds? Here, I invested my whole advance from the Hanson account, and you send the bracelet back. Not to me, but to the place where I bought it!"

She stared at him, stunned. "You bought it? You sent me the bracelet? But Walt, I thought—"

"You thought it was from Julian Durand. I know, because they returned the note you sent him along with the bracelet."

He was looking down at her the way he had that first day. The way he used to when they went to Coney together and rode the elevators to the top of the Empire State.

"Pan," he said. "Pan, still the same crazy kid!"

She raised her eyes to him, wide and shining with tears. And she thought, "Not quite the same—never, never again!" For it had taken the break with Walt to show her that the diamonds and furs and all the fabulous things she had worn and wanted could actually make her poor.

Look Forward to _____

LOVE CASTS A BALLOT

The novel of the year—a glamorous romance of a girl who enters politics—with Cupid as her campaign manager!

By MONA FARNSWORTH

and

HOSPITAL NURSE

A novelet of the quest for happiness!

By LILY K. SCOTT



Coming Next Issue



There was insolence in Dolores' smile, and Cathy didn't like it

*It's only a business date,
but look out, Cathy—your
heart is showing!*

LOVE ALONE

by POLLY SWEET

CATHY BENTON was a good secretary, but she could never control the pounding of her heart at the sound of Mark Rogers' voice.

And it was pounding as she heard him say:

"Miss Benton, will you come into my office, please?"

Mark was young, handsome, and her boss. He was far too young to be an executive, but when he had been discharged from the Navy, his father had retired and handed him over the business to run. It was a successful advertising business and Mark did an excellent job of managing it.

Cathy was proud of Mark, and terribly in love with him. All of which he knew nothing about. To him, Cathy was just an efficient secretary, a patient associate who listened to his problems, and at times even a congenial companion at a quick, mid-day lunch.

He had never dated her, even before his engagement to Dolores Mathews. He had never said anything to her more personal than, "Good morning, Miss Benton."

Cathy picked up her note book and pencil and went into Mark Rogers' office. He was sitting at his desk and for a moment he seemed almost unconscious of the fact that she was there.

"Yes, Mr. Rogers?" she said.

"Oh, Miss Benton, please sit down. I want to talk to you. I—I need your help."

Cathy would not have been more surprised if he had said, "Miss Benton, I am madly in love with you," or something equally as impossible. She sat down stiffly, on the edge of the chair.

"Will you be free for the next two or three evenings?" he asked.

"I—I don't know," stammered Cathy in amazement. "I have a date with John Andrews for tomorrow evening and—"

"Are you engaged to this Andrews or anything?"

"Really, Mr. Rogers!" Cathy got up. Her eyes flashed indignantly. "I am hired as your secretary. My personal life doesn't concern you."

"I'm sorry," said Mark contritely, and smiled at her.

Immediately, Cathy's anger melted.

"It's just that I don't understand," she said, trying to keep her voice calm and businesslike.

"It's like this," Mark went on. "A couple of important clients are visiting New York for the next two or three days and want me to show them the town. They want me to find girls for

them so they can go dancing, and I thought perhaps you knew a couple nice girls in the office. I'd pay them for their time."

CATHY was still uncertain, bewildered.

"But why ask me?" she demanded. "Why not Miss Bellows? She's in charge of the girls in the office. Or Miss Davis? She's personnel."

"I know, but you see I want you to go along, too—with me."

Cathy gulped. "What about Miss Mathews, your fiancée?"

"Oh, Dolores would be bored to death. She hates any talk about business. That is why I thought you could pick out two girls who could stand a little shop talk, and you—well, you could be a great help to me. You know so much about the different accounts."

"Thank you, Mr. Rogers, but it seems sort of crazy to me. I'm afraid I can't do it."

"But you must!" he insisted. "It's just like—like working overtime at the office, only we'll be at night clubs or shows. You can explain to the other girls."

"I'm sorry Mr. Rogers—" Cathy began again, but Mark interrupted.

"Please, Miss Benton. I need your help. I haven't done much to improve the business since I took over. This is important to me. Somehow, I had the feeling I could depend on you. You seem so—so dependable."

In spite of herself Cathy laughed, and after a second, Mark joined in.

"You understand?" Mark asked.

"And you won't let me down?"

"I understand," Cathy replied, and added as Mark's eyes lighted with relief and pleasure, "I won't let you down."

"Good girl," said Mark. Coming up to her he put strong hands on her shoulders. "You're wonderful."

There was boyish delight and admiration in his eyes—nothing more. Cathy tried to calm the pounding of her heart. Her voice was almost natural as she said:

"I'll go ask the other girls. Nora Smith and Betty Allen live together. I'm sure I can get them."

"I'll leave everything up to you," he told her. "I'll call for you at eight this evening. Then we'll pick up the others. We'll have dinner at the Red Rooster."

"How do you know where I live?" Cathy asked in surprise.

Mark smiled. "I can find out from the office records."

Cathy flushed. Her question had intimated that she thought he already knew, that he had been interested enough to look it up.

"Yes, of course," she said. "I'll be ready at eight." She turned to leave the office and had reached the door when Mark's voice stopped her.

"Miss Benton, do you like to dance?"

Cathy turned around. Perhaps it was the eager light in Mark's eyes. Perhaps it was just her own anticipation, but she felt a tremendous uplift of spirit, a swift feeling of joy.

"I love it," she said.

"So do I."

Cathy went on out and explained to the girls, and they were delighted and Cathy, herself, was thrilled to be going out with Mark Rogers. But she could not help remembering that it was purely business and that Mark had asked her solely because she was an able secretary.

That evening, she was ready long before Mark arrived. She looked lovely and glamorous, and she hoped Mark would approve. She knew that he did the moment he saw her. His eyes lighted with pleased surprise.

"Why, Miss Benton, you're beautiful." Then, grinning, he said, "Kind of silly calling you Miss Benton on a date. Okay if I call you . . . Gosh, I don't even know your first name."

"Cathy," she said, "and it's all right if you call me that."

"Wonderful. Call me Mark."

"All right—Mark," she said softly.

She had said it so many times in her day dreams, but it was the first time she had ever called him Mark to his face. She flushed slightly and to cover her embarrassment.

"Shall we go?" she murmured. "The girls will be waiting."

Mark nodded and held her coat for her. The touch of his hands on her shoulders sent little thrills of delight

through her. It was going to be wonderful going out with him—wonderful, and just a little heartbreaking always remembering that this was entirely business.

They found the girls waiting. Nora Smith and Betty Allen were both pretty girls, and intelligent ones also. Mark greeted them warmly, and with obvious approval.

"You'll like Jim Preston and Bob Crandle," he assured them. "They're both young, ex-Navy, trying to get ahead in the business world. They represent a big corporation whose advertising account I am anxious to land."

"We understand," said Nora, and Betty nodded.

Cathy almost jumped as she felt Mark's hand on hers, pressing it warmly.

"Cathy," he said in a low voice. "I knew I could depend on you."

HER fingers trembled in his grasp and she started to withdraw her hand, but Mark's fingers tightened over hers.

"What's the matter, Cathy—frightened?"

"A little," she admitted. She knew that Mark's question referred to something different from what she knew her reply meant.

"Don't be," he said gently. "It will all be simple, and we should have a grand time. I'm sure Jim and Bob will like their girls—and I like mine."

Cathy did withdraw her hand then. "Do you think Miss Mathews would approve?"

Mark was silent for a moment. "No, I don't suppose she would," he replied, a little grimly. "But right at this moment getting this account is about the most important thing in the world for me. It's what the business needs, and it's necessary for it to be improved before Dolores and I can get married."

"I thought the business was doing well," said Cathy, the competent secretary. "The reports certainly show it."

"I know," he said, "but it must do better. Dolores is used to so much. Besides, she doesn't think much of the kind of business I'm in, anyway. Thinks I'm wasting my time. Her father has

offered me a splendid job managing one of his factories."

"You mean your fiancee isn't entirely satisfied with the money you make, and unless you make more there might not be a marriage?" Cathy's voice was suddenly edged with sarcasm.

"Something like that," Mark admitted, then hastened to defend Dolores. "It isn't Dolores. It's just that I want to offer her as much as possible."

Ever since he had been speaking of Dolores, Cathy's spirits had been sinking lower and lower. Now sudden fury took possession of her.

"Mark Rogers, you're a—a dope!" she cried. "You like your work, the business you're in, don't you?"

"Of course. I've grown up in it. It's the only thing I know really well."

And Cathy said again, "Mark, you're a dope."

"Thanks," said Mark. "But it looks to me as though I'd be pretty smart to change. I'd make more money—and please the girl I'm engaged to marry."

"And be utterly miserable," Cathy said.

It seemed impossible to Cathy that any girl would want the man she loved to give up the work he enjoyed doing.

"I think I can manage my own affairs," Mark said coldly.

"Then why don't you?" snapped Cathy. "Instead of letting some—some female—"

Cathy stopped short. What was she saying? Mark would be furious, for after all it was none of her business. She looked up at him quickly, and he was smiling.

"You certainly can get mad," he said. "If I weren't busy driving, and we were alone, I'd kiss you. That always cures Dolores."

"Don't you dare!" cried Cathy in alarm.

"Certainly not." Mark laughed. "We're not alone."

Cathy's face flamed. "I—I didn't mean it that way," she said. "I meant it wouldn't work with me. When I'm angry—"

Mark interrupted. "Don't be too sure, Cathy. Perhaps the next time you're mad, we'll be alone."

"Mark Rogers, you're the most—"

But whatever she intended to say was forgotten as he announced:

"Here we are, girls — the Red Rooster."

Jim Preston and Bob Crandle were waiting inside. They had already reserved a table. After introductions were over both young men promptly asked the girls to dance, and Mark turned to Cathy.

"Dance?" he asked politely. Cathy was aware of a sudden wall of reserve surrounding him. She nodded and rose.

She had often wondered what it would feel like being in Mark's arms, and now she knew. It was heavenly. His arms were holding her gently and not too close to her. Involuntarily she moved her head just a little so that she could feel his cheek against her hair. She forgot about being angry.

"Mark," she whispered, "I'm sorry—about what I said. I know it wasn't any of my business. Please don't be angry."

She thought that Mark's arm tightened just a little, that he turned his face so that his lips touched her hair. Perhaps it was only her imagination, born of wishful thinking.

"Forget it, Cathy," he said gently. "It is quite all right, and I wasn't really angry. I think I was a little surprised. I hadn't realized I was letting Dolores, or anyone run my life for me. I guess I just didn't like the idea."

CATHY looked up quickly and her dark eyes met his. Her heart was crying out to him but she managed to control her lips and force them to say:

"It's just that she is eager for you to get ahead. She must be very proud of you."

"You think I'm doing all right?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," Cathy answered.

She knew then that it was no imagination on her part that Mark's arm tightened around her and that his lips were pressed gently against her hair.

Her entire being cried out to respond, but she knew she must not. Mark's caress might mean life itself to her, but to him it had been a spontaneous little sign of friendship and appreciation.

She was thankful that the music stopped then. She felt that she must

say something — something to break this feeling of intimacy between them.

"Mark," she said, again efficient, "don't forget your office is now prepared to handle any account, no matter how large, and that in the last three months you have added two substantial accounts to the list, those of Messrs. Saunders and Rand and the Freemont Manufacturing Company."

"I won't forget," he told her, his voice warm with boyish enthusiasm.

All during the rest of the evening, Cathy kept thinking of Dolores Mathews and how she was likely to ruin Mark's life, trying to force him into work he would hate.

As for the others, they seemed to be having a wonderful time. Already they were planning entertainment for the next two evenings, and by the time the evening was over the account Mark wanted so badly had been promised him. Everything had turned out beautifully, with the contract to be signed the next day.

Leaning back in the car as Mark drove her home, Cathy was aware of keen satisfaction, a deep enjoyment from working with him. She was so happy about his success that she almost forgot about Dolores, and the hopelessness of her own love for him. She only knew that Mark was happy.

Cathy was glad that they were alone. Jim and Bob had taken the other girls home. She closed her eyes and her lips parted in a little smile of satisfaction.

"Tired?" asked Mark.

"A little," she admitted.

"It was a wonderful evening," he said reminiscently.

"I enjoyed it, too, Mark. It was also a successful evening. I'm glad everything worked out so well."

"Thanks," he said, but his mind seemed to be elsewhere.

They rode on again in silence for a time.

"I owe a great deal to you, Cathy — for your help, your faith in me," he said then and said it slowly, as if he himself had realized something new and strange — and wonderful.

Cathy sensed again that feeling of close understanding growing up between them. For a moment, there was

panic in her heart. Mark must never know how she felt about him. Tonight his feeling toward her was actuated by gratitude. She must not forget that.

"Dolores will be delighted to hear about your success," she commented, to bring back a reminder that he was engaged.

Mark seemed to be aroused from his thoughts. He acted a bit startled. Then he smiled.

"Yes, I guess she will. Success means a lot to some girls."

"I guess it does to all girls," said Cathy.

"But in different ways."

Cathy didn't answer that. She just looked ahead at the white ribbon of a road stretching before them.

"Cathy," he said abruptly, "if you loved a fellow would you care if he didn't make a lot of money? If he thought — well, maybe if he had a dream or two which seemed more important, would you mind much?"

Cathy's heart leaped. She knew what she wanted to say but she must be careful, very careful not to let Mark know that she loved him. Just because he was grateful for her help didn't mean a thing.

"I don't think I can answer that, Mark," she said slowly. "How can I be sure how I'd feel, under such circumstances? For of course money is important."

Mark seemed disappointed. "I guess you couldn't know."

They rode on in silence again until they were in front of the apartment house where Cathy lived. Then he stopped the car and turned to her.

"Thanks, Cathy, for tonight," he said, "and thank the girls. I'll let you know tomorrow about plans for the evening." He waited a minute as though he were considering something deeply, then said swiftly, "And I'll remember about money being important. Maybe it would be better if I spent less time dreaming, and instead, making more of it."

"I didn't say that." Cathy knew immediately that she had said enough, that if she went on, she'd probably make a fool of herself, but somehow it didn't matter.

"You certainly did," Mark declared, but he was smiling a little.

"I—what I said was that it was important, but I guess nothing is as important as our dreams," she said quickly.

MARK nodded. "I must tell Dolores that," he said. "You know, you're the best secretary I ever had."

"Thank you," Cathy said coldly, and she thought, "of course, tell Dolores." She swung away from Mark. "I really must go now, Mark. If there are any more questions I'll be at work in the morning at nine o'clock. Ask them then."

"Why, Miss Benton, you mean you won't be late?"

"I'm never late," Cathy flashed at him.

"Is that good?" asked Mark, still grinning.

"Of course it is."

She stopped with a little gasp. Mark was moving swiftly, taking her into his arms.

"Don't you ever think of anything but being efficient?" he whispered.

Before Cathy could answer that, he was kissing her thoroughly. She was too surprised to resist. For a wild, ecstatic moment she clung to him. Then, reason returned and quickly she moved out of his arms.

"How could you?" she demanded, her face flushed.

"I'm sorry, Cathy," Mark said slowly, but his eyes still regarded her searchingly. "It seemed so—natural. But that wasn't part of the bargain, was it?"

"No it wasn't!" she flung out, and suddenly was furious—at herself, at Mark. "No, it certainly wasn't."

"I said I was sorry," he said a little humbly. "It won't happen again."

"There won't be any again," she said. "You put through your business deal. You don't need me any more."

"But tomorrow evening!" he protested. "Jim and Bob will think it strange."

"Take Dolores along. There's no necessity of talking business now."

"Very well." Mark got out of the car and went around to the other side

and opened the door for her. "If that's the way you want it."

"Certainly it's the way I want it," she said candidly. "I have a date with Johnny Andrews tomorrow evening anyway."

"I see," said Mark. "Thanks for everything—and have a good time."

"Good night, Mark," Cathy said.

"'Night," said Mark abruptly, and stalked to his car. . . .

Cathy was at work on time the next morning, but Mark wasn't in the office. The hours passed, and still no Mark. To make it worse, a telephone call from Bob Crandle informed Cathy that he and Jim Preston were returning home late that afternoon and that it was important for them to have the papers signed by four o'clock at the latest.

Cathy prepared the papers Mark would need, but found it almost impossible to concentrate on any other work. What could have happened to Mark? He knew the importance of getting the papers all signed and in order.

For the tenth time that morning, Cathy went into his office and carefully looked over his desk to see if he might have left some word for her. For the tenth time, she straightened the desk blotter, stacked Mark's mail in a neat pile, then stood just looking down at it—and dreaming. Lightly her hand touched Mark's chair and as she ran her fingers along the back of it, a tender smile touched her lips.

"Well!" A sharp feminine voice roused her from her reverie. "I thought this was Mark Rogers' office, but it seems I'm mistaken."

"I'm his secretary, Miss Mathews," said Cathy quietly.

This was the first time she had ever spoken to Dolores Mathews, although she had seen her enough times going in and out of Mark's office.

"Then you are Miss Benton—Cathy, the efficient secretary." Dolores' voice was like liquid honey except for the little acid that slipped into it when she said, "You are also beautiful, far too beautiful to be allowed to go out night clubbing with my fiance."

"It was entirely a matter of business," Cathy told her coolly.

"I wonder."

There was insolence in Dolores' smile, and Cathy didn't like it. Perhaps Mark Rogers had to endure this girl's horrid disposition and bad manners, but she didn't. It infuriated her further because she knew that her face had turned red.

"If you had gone with him yourself," she said steadily, "you wouldn't have to wonder."

"Right you are," Mark said gaily, as he strolled into the office. "I told you, Dolores, that she is a perfect secretary, knows all the answers."

"Perhaps she knows the answer to this one!" Dolores flung out, her eyes burning with hate. "Could it be that all this perfection is because she, the marvelous secretary, is in love with her boss?"

"Look here, Dolores," Mark began sternly, "I won't have you—"

"Oh, you won't?" Dolores broke in, her voice raised almost to an hysterical pitch. "I suppose you think I can't see how things are around here!"

"Miss Mathews," Cathy interrupted sharply, "you haven't given me a chance to answer your question. You just asked me if it could be that all this perfection is because the little secretary is in love with her boss. The answer, my dear, is 'could be.'" And then before either Mark or Dolores could speak, Cathy added defiantly, looking straight at Mark, "But she isn't. She simply hates to see a good piece of work ruined because her boss is too—too weak-kneed to—"

UP to now she had maintained perfect self-control. She was in command of the situation, completely. She had told Dolores off, and also had put Mark in his place. Everything would have been wonderful—if only Mark hadn't laughed, and if his eyes hadn't mocked her so and made her feel as though her heart were laid bare before him. She had to get away from that amused smile.

"Oh, I hate you!" she said, and her voice broke sharply. "I hate you both!"

Whirling, she ran out of Mark's office.

When she reached her own desk she was trembling. She almost believed

then that she did hate Mark. How could any man, especially one who had been through a war and won glory for himself, let a girl like Dolores wind him around her finger?

A little later she heard the door of Mark's office open, and Dolores called back to Mark, "I'll be expecting you, darling."

Then Dolores was beside Cathy's desk. Again her voice was like liquid honey.

"I'm so sorry I lost my temper, Miss Benton. I— I should have known that Mark has too much sense to become involved in any way that would hurt his prospects. I do hope you'll forgive me."

Cathy had a wild impulse to slap Dolores Mathews' face. She kept her eyes glued on the typewriter in front of her. She counted ten slowly.

"I'm not sure we understand each other, Miss Mathews," she said then. "The question you asked me in there, I can answer now. Yes, I love Mark—too much to see him ruin his career by throwing himself away on someone who hasn't the slightest interest in him, who wants him to give up the work he loves, so she can have more money."

"And just what do you intend to do about it?" asked Dolores insolently.

"Have you ever heard of competition?" Cathy asked blandly.

"But you are just—a secretary," Dolores taunted.

Cathy looked up at Dolores and said quietly: "But I am also a woman. If you really loved Mark, that would be different. But you don't love him—really. I know that now."

"But," insisted Dolores, "we're engaged. Mark would never break our engagement."

"You're counting on that?" Cathy laughed, a little mirthlessly. "Aren't you? You know Mark is too much of a gentleman to do that."

Dolores smiled. "Something like that." She added confidently, "Besides, he's in love with me."

"But you'll kill that love if you force him to give up the work he likes for a job your father has made for him," Cathy told her emphatically.

"That's ridiculous! Mark is smart

enough to know what is best for him."

"I hope so, Miss Mathews," said Cathy quietly, "and now if you'll excuse me, I have work to do—important work."

Dolores laughed. "Go ahead and amuse yourself, darling. I'm not worried."

As soon as the door had closed behind Dolores, Cathy gathered up the papers she had been working on and turned to go into Mark's office. Mark was standing in the door, and for a moment Cathy thought he must have heard what Dolores had said, and her own reply. If he had, though, he showed no sign of it. He had his hat and gloves, and was ready to go out.

"Mark," she said quickly, these papers. They should be signed this afternoon. Mr. Crandle and Mr. Preston are cutting their visit short and want everything finished up today. I put a memorandum about it on your desk."

He nodded. "I saw it, and I talked to Crandle over the phone. I'm sorry, but I've got an important engagement now and I have to go. This will have to wait."

Cathy tried to keep back the bitter words that came to her mind.

"Suppose they won't wait?" was what she did say.

"Then I guess the deal won't go through."

"What is more important than this?" flashed Cathy.

"Love," Mark said smiling. "When one is in love there are certain things that must be done. Perhaps you'll understand sometime—if you love someone enough."

He turned away then and without another word was gone. Cathy's lips trembled as she went into his empty office. She put the papers on his desk and automatically began to straighten things. All right, she thought, let him lose the account for all of her. Let him marry Dolores Mathews and go to work for her father. It was what he deserved.

Her hand touched the picture of Dolores that Mark had on his desk and her breath caught in her throat. The picture lay face-down. In his haste Mark had knocked it over, and had not

stopped to right it again.

WITH trembling fingers Cathy set it up and found herself gazing fascinatedly at Dolores' cold beauty. Tears came to Cathy's eyes, tears of heart-break, tears of fury that Mark was—such a dope. She smiled wryly. Whatever he was, she loved him—so much she couldn't let him lose his chance at success in the work he liked. She would take the papers to be signed.

She turned Dolores' photograph face-down again and gathered up all the necessary papers. Then she put on her hat and in a few minutes was in a taxi headed for the hotel where Crandle and his friend were stopping. She would make some excuse for Mark's not coming, would get their signatures and assure them that Mark would sign and have the papers forwarded to them the next day.

Mark might be angry. Certainly Dolores would be, but someday Mark would thank her for helping him stay in his chosen work, and Dolores, if she really loved Mark, would be glad, too.

Cathy was trembling as she went up in the elevator to meet Jim Preston and Bob Crandle. When she stepped into the room, her lips parted to greet them, but the words froze on her lips. She gave a little gasp of amazement. Mark Rogers was standing there smiling at her.

"You're late, Miss Benton," he said quietly. He had addressed her in his most businesslike tones, but his eyes were smiling at her and they were tender.

Cathy's world whirled dizzily. She had suffered so much, making up her mind that Mark was lost to her. Her very act of trying to get the papers signed had been only her desire to help him. Not for a moment had she thought of Mark's ever really being in love with her. When he had walked out to meet Dolores, the last hope had died in her heart. Even now it might not mean a thing, except that Dolores had relented.

Then Mark's fingers were firm on her arm.

"Thanks for bringing the papers, Cathy. Please sit down. It will take only a few minutes to get things cleared

LOVE ALONE

up here. Then I'll drive you home."

"I'll just run along," she said hesitantly. "If there's nothing else."

"There is something else," he said firmly. "Please wait."

Cathy sat down then, her hands clasped tightly in her lap. Mark wanted her to wait. He had something to tell her. Was it that Dolores had agreed for him to go on with his work or could it—could it *possibly* be something else? Her heart raced madly.

A few minutes later Mark was saying good-bye to Bob and Jim and they, in turn, were thanking Cathy for her assistance and expressing the hope of seeing her again on their next trip to New York. Then Mark was guiding her to the elevator.

He said nothing all the way to his car. Once she glanced up at him inquiringly, and he smiled back reassuringly while his fingers on her arm tightened their pressure.

She thought she couldn't stand it another minute. She felt she must tear away from him and run as fast as ever she could or she must hide herself in his arms, close to his heart. Then they were in the car and he was drawing her close.

"Cathy, sweetheart," he said huskily,

"I thought I'd never have you in my arms again. It took all my courage to walk out of the office today to go with Dolores, but it was the only way. I had it all figured out. I'd tell her once and for all that I would not give up my job, and I'd tell her other things that were almost certain to make her angry enough to break the engagement. Then I'd hurry over to the hotel and get things cleared up there with Crandle and Preston."

"Suppose I hadn't gone there with the papers," said Cathy.

"I was sure you would, darling," he murmured confidently. "I knew you loved me."

Close in his arms though she was Cathy's face flamed with sudden embarrassment.

"Oh, Mark, was it so apparent?" she pleaded. "I tried so hard to hide it."

Mark only drew her closer and whispered tenderly:

"I think it was your kiss that betrayed you—betrayed us both. It was then I discovered that I loved you. I am so thankful."

"Oh, Mark," she whispered back, "Kiss me again and make very sure!"

He laughed softly. "How's this?" he asked, and kissed her.



The Lost Heart

*Once, in a dreamy reverie,
I woke up with a start—
And suddenly I knew, alas,
I'd gone and lost my heart.*

*I searched both high and low for it,
And great was my despair—
Until I looked into your eyes,
And darling, it was there!*

—HELEN ARDSLEY

STRANGER TO

A Novelet
by

MONA FARNSWORTH



"Lamy!" the girl said, and stood still, her eyes adoring him

CHAPTER I

NO TIME FOR SENTIMENT

SARI'S rubber soles were noiseless as she pattered along the white walled corridor and she held her slim shoulders trimly erect. Her chin was high and her eyes were bright and she looked very capable and efficient—as, in her opinion, an intern in High Middleton Hospital ought to look. It was her cross that she was also devastatingly pretty, with her wheat-gold

hair shiningly drawn into its bun and her eyes blue as sunlit lakes.

Dr. Sari Mayfield hated her prettiness. She'd have given anything she owned, except her hard won medical degree, to be raw-boned and tailored

LOVE



*There was no room for
romance in the medical career of Dr. Sari
Mayfield until she needed a prescription for a broken heart!*

like Doctor Amanda Graves, the famous surgeon. What chance had Sari, looking the way she did, to succeed as a surgeon? Who on earth would be will-

ing to trust his life to hands that looked like fallen apple-blossoms?

Pattering down the hospital corridor she came to 420 and turned in. If

you wanted to stretch a point you might say that Larry Collier in 420 was a patient of hers. At least she'd been on the ambulance the night the emergency call had come. She'd decided it was appendicitis long before Doctor Blore had said it was and she'd been around pretty constantly all that night. So that made Larry Collier, a little indirectly maybe, her patient. She dropped in for a daily call, anyhow.

She went in now, through the door that was left open for ventilation and around the screen that was put up for privacy. He was sitting in a deep comfortable chair by the window. The sunlight put a blaze in his thick chestnut hair and it flowed down in a thin golden line along the strong leanness of his jaw. His eyes were gray under his bronze winged eyebrows and, now as he looked at Sari, there was a faint twinkle in them.

"What in the world do you want to be a doctor for?" he asked. "A girl as pretty and cute as you should have been contented with—"

"Marriage?" cut in Sari sweetly. She'd heard this before, a thousand times before. She knew all the questions and all the answers. She said, "What has marriage got to offer any girl except a kind of plush slavery?"

"Plush slavery," repeated Larry. "That's a new one."

"I'll let you use it," offered Sari generously. "The next time you do battle in court."

LARRY was a lawyer, a darned good one. He was also, according to rumor, going to run for District Attorney come next election. He was young for that, but he was smart. And ambitious. Sari admired that—she was ambitious too.

Larry said, "When you talk about marriage being a form of plush slavery, don't you ever consider that love might make it more plush and less slavery?"

Sari laughed at him. "Love," she said in her most professional tone, "is purely a matter of attitude. If you like the idea, you'll fall in love with love itself—and you'll hang it on the most eligible male in sight. You don't fall in

love with a person, you fall in love with an idea."

"Well, well," said Larry. "It's nice to hear it explained so simply. Some people seem to believe it's pretty complicated. I suppose you'd think they were just being stupid, wouldn't you?"

"Very stupid," said Sari firmly.

The door opened and the nurse came in.

"Miss Hawley is calling," she murmured. "Do you wish her to come in?"

"Oh!" A light rose in Larry's face, his eyes sparkled. "Sure, tell her to come in." His eyes moved eagerly to the door.

She came in, long limbed and slim and beautiful. Her dark hair gleamed on her shoulders, her eyes were dark pools, her smile a lovely dream.

"Larry!" She stood still just inside the door, her eyes adoring him. "Why didn't you let me come before? I called your office and they said you were out for a few days but they didn't tell me why, so I called your house and Brooks told me you were here but that you didn't want to see anyone till today. Darling, why didn't you? I so wanted to come!"

Larry smiled at her. It was a beguiling smile that, Sari could see, would make almost any woman's heart go softer.

"Blame my vanity, Beth," he said amiably. "I couldn't bear the thought of you seeing me pajama clad and wracked with pain. But now that I have a becoming lounging robe on—" He grinned at her. "Come here and kiss me, Beth."

She crossed the room quickly, with a lovely graceful step, and stood by his chair.

"Still love me?" he asked cocking a quizzical eyebrow at her. His gray eyes were amused, teasing. But there was nothing amused in Beth Hawley's eyes. Dark, limpid, they were wells of love and tenderness.

"Oh—Larry!" she breathed. And dropped to her knees beside his chair.

Sari left the room, her snapping eyes telegraphing her disgusted scorn. Love! Look what it did you. That Hawley girl was making a fine fool of herself, and Larry Collier was making a bigger fool

of himself playing along with her. Ugh!

An unreasonable anger pounded at Sari and quickly she forced her mind to concentrate on the balance of her morning's work so she wouldn't have a chance to think of Larry Collier any more. Why would she want to think of him anyhow? He was just a man. She plunged determinedly into her routine.

It was long past noon when her chance came to go down to the cafeteria for lunch. The hospital food was good and the line was long so, by the time she finally got her tray filled all the tables were filled too. She trotted around here and there looking for a place to settle.

"Hi!" A male voice yelled above the rattle of talk and laughter and dishes. "Hi!"

Sari didn't turn. That would be Steve Kendall and, of all the doctors on the hospital staff, he annoyed her the most. It was just like him, she thought crossly, to yell at her across the whole cafeteria. If he wanted to call her, let him call her by name. Hi, indeed!

Then he did call her by name. Blithely, gaily, as if her name were some kind of a joke, he yelled it.

"Doctor Mayfield! Oh, Doctor Mayfield!" And he got up to come after her, his napkin in hand.

SARI couldn't stop the curl of smile that came to her lips. It was such beautiful music to hear someone say Doctor Mayfield. So wonderful to realize that, after all the work and dreaming, she was really a doctor—or almost one.

Because, if you were honest, an intern was hardly more than the bud of a doctor. You had to get out and have your own office with your own practice before you really deserved the title. But legally, even now, it was hers and hearing it like this made small butterflies of delight dance across her shoulders. It made her feel as if, cradled in her hands, she held a shining jewel. Doctor Mayfield!

Steve, tall, slim, wiry, reached her. He was grinning and his red hair was disordered like a small boy's, as it always was with the way he ran his fingers through it.

He said, "Look, Sari, there's lots of room at my table—let me take your tray." He lifted it out of her hands and made off with it, his tall lean figure weaving between the tables, his cheerful voice hailing practically everyone he passed. If Sari wanted her lunch there was nothing to do but follow him.

"Here we are," he announced happily. "I nabbed a whole table for us. And look what a good waiter I am." Deftly he flipped down her napkin and silver, setting the dishes out and putting her plate in place. "When I'm no longer any good with a scalpel, I'll take this up as a profession." Then, as he went around to his own place he added, "You're unusually beautiful today. Has anyone told you?"

"No," said Sari. There it was again. Nobody ever told her how smart she was as an intern; they just told her what pretty blue eyes she had.

Steve said, "If I can wangle a couple of free hours tonight, will you go dancing with me? Unless somebody has a baby or needs me to yank their appendix out, I have the evening on my hands."

"Well, I haven't," said Sari putting on a professional air. "I'm busy."

"That's a lie and you know it," said Steve cheerfully. "I made inquiries before I offered to date you. You're not on the ambulance tonight. You're off duty at seven and you're free as air. And what girl as pretty as you doesn't want to dance?"

Sari felt her cheeks grow hot. Here it was again. Every doctor on the staff treated her the same way. They refused to take her seriously. They refused to acknowledge that a girl who was so little and golden and cute could possibly do more than dance and flirt, that she could possibly have an idea in her head beyond a burning desire to get married and keep a man's house for him.

She glared at Steve, "Believe me or not," she snapped. "I tell you I haven't time to go dancing with you, I don't want to go dancing with you—and I won't go dancing."

For a second Steve looked a bit baffled. Then he grinned.

"All right, all right, forget the whole

CONFESSION OF LOVE

thing." For an almost imperceptible instant he paused then went on smoothly, "It was just an idea. Polly and I thought you might like to go along with us. We could probably get Phil Madden for you."

Sari's eyes whipped to Steve's face. She felt a surprising jab of shock. So Steve hadn't even been asking her to go dancing with *him*. He'd just asked her to tag along with another man that, maybe, he could whip up for her. Of all things! And this Polly person?

She said, "Do you mean my little sister Polly?"

Steve said, "Sure. Polly's a cute kid. And she dances like an angel could, up in the sky."

Sari said nothing but she thought busily. What on earth could a man like Steve see in a girl like Polly? She was too young! She'd just gotten out of high school and she was romping around like a colt trying to decide what she wanted to do. She ran with a bunch of half grown boys and girls who were gadding about just as giddily as she was—and how could that interest a full grown man, and a doctor to boot, like Steve Kendall?

She thought about it, though she certainly didn't mean to, all afternoon whenever her duties left her free to think about anything. She couldn't understand it. She decided Steve Kendall couldn't be the brilliant surgeon she'd thought he was or he wouldn't romp around with half-grown kids like her sister Polly.

Once, during afternoon visiting hours, she met Beth Hawley in the corridor leading down to Larry Collier's room. Beth's arms were full of magazines and books and chocolate bars and a pastry box. Her eyes were like jewels and she was smiling at everybody.

Jimmy Link, another intern who was with Sari, said, "Gee, girls show it when they're in love, don't they? Just look at her!"

Sari preferred not to look at her.

NEXT ISSUE

Fascinating Novelets by
MONA FARNSWORTH and
LILY K. SCOTT

PLUS MANY OTHER ROMANCES



AFTER eating a late dinner in the hospital when she was off duty, Sari went home. She lived on Elm Street with her family and hated it. She would much rather have interned in New York—say at St. Luke's—and lived independently. But her father had been so glowingly delighted when he'd found she could go to High Middleton that she hadn't had the heart to do anything else.

It was getting along toward nine when she turned into the neatly hedged walk leading up to her father's house—and there, sure enough, through the living room window she could see Steve Kendall talking to her father and no doubt waiting for Polly.

Sari stopped a second in the walk to look at him. He was laughing, gesturing with his slim strong hands as he told some story to her father. The sight annoyed Sari, she felt suddenly cross and hurt, the emotion washing over her like a wave. No sense to it, of course. No reason for it. But just the same she felt as if someone had slammed a door in her face.

Abruptly she ran the rest of the way up the walk, dashing into the house and running up the stairs with just the merest "Hello, folks!" to the group in the living room.

She read herself to sleep with the newest issue of the *Medical Journal* that had come that day—but she dreamed she was dancing with Larry Collier and that Beth Hawley, when she saw them dancing together, had begun to cry in the most awful, heartbreaking way. And Larry, instead of comforting her had laughed at her and, not only did he keep right on dancing with Sari but he kissed her long and thoroughly.

Sari woke up with a start, her breath feeling tangled and tight and Larry's kiss so real on her lips that she touched them with her fingers almost expecting

to feel it there, tangible and warm. Then, fully awake, she turned over crossly. Why in heaven's name should she dream about Larry Collier? And how that Beth Hawley had cried. Sari could still hear those heartbroken sobs. She'd hurry up and get back to sleep again and forget the whole thing.

But it had been a vivid dream. So vivid that when she went into Larry Collier's room next morning she remembered it and, to her annoyance, she realized she was looking at his mouth and thinking of the way he'd kissed her in her dream. She felt her cheeks get warm.

He said, "Look here, Doctor Mayfield, I've been thinking. With this walking cure they put you through now, I'll be going home today, and I'll be in the office Monday. They tell me I can go dancing if I want to, but I don't know whether to believe 'em or not. Dancing's kind of strenuous."

"Oh, no," said Sari. "Not too strenuous anyhow. Exercise is really a fine thing. We've been all wrong all these years believing that inactivity was the thing. Now we know that active muscles and tissue heal much more quickly and healthily."

Larry laughed softly. "You're wonderful," he said. "But even if you are so sure I can dance painlessly, I think I'd rather have professional attendance when I do it."

"What do you mean?" asked Sari, and for some reason her heart began to jump.

"I mean I want you to go dancing with me when I try it first. Then if anything goes wrong, I'll have a doctor right at hand."

"Oh," said Sari. Was he making fun of her? Or was he serious? Whichever it was, she suddenly knew she'd go. "Thanks," she said. "I'd love to." This was a practical approach to dancing that she could appreciate. There was a reason for this and a good one. She smiled at Larry Collier.

That noon, down in the cafeteria, when she came along with her filled tray, Steve hailed her as usual. But he didn't tell her how pretty she was. He didn't come any where near even hinting for a date. He simply talked about

Polly. Polly was gay, Polly was fun, Polly danced like an angel. She looked like one too in that froth of white net she'd worn the night before, so much more becoming than a stiff white doctor's coat.

Sari said, "All right. So it is more becoming—and who cares? I like a doctor's coat. I don't own a white net dancing frock and I don't want one."

STEVE laughed at her. His eyes looked very merry. He said, "Hoity-toity, who's treading on your toes? Who's talking about you anyway? I was talking about Polly. Gee, that's a girl."

"Yes, she's wonderful," said Sari and the words came out with surprising bitterness. The way she felt was surprising too, anger, a kind burning fury within her and her heart heavy as lead.

Polly liked Steve too. Brown haired, pert nosed Polly with the dancing hazel eyes and clothes that showed the hours she spent planning them. Polly was wild about Steve.

"He's the hunkiest hunk of man I ever saw!" she raved. "You should have seen Phyllis' and June's eyes pop when I walked in with him. And right away they wanted to know how serious it was."

"Well," said Sari, "how serious is it?" She hadn't meant to ask that, she certainly didn't care, but the question seemed to get out by itself.

Polly said, "I honestly don't know how serious it is, but I honestly know this much. If Steve Kendell ever asks me to be Mrs. Steve Kendall—boy! will I snap him up."

"I'm sure you will, dear," said Sari. And there was the bitterness in her tone again. What on earth was the matter with her? Did she care because Steve and Polly had fallen flat on their faces for each other? How silly. The very idea made her laugh. She said, "Ha ha," to herself as she went up to her room just to prove it.

Three nights later she went dancing with Larry Collier. She'd bought a white net dress for the occasion and, she told herself fiercely, it had nothing whatever to do with Steve's remarks. Steve would certainly never see her in

it so how could his taste have influenced her?

However, she knew a swift prick of regret when she turned slowly in front of the tall mirror in her room just before she went down stairs. Frothy skirts, gold hair brushed to her shoulder in shining waves, eyes shining, lips smiling, cheeks pink—maybe it was too bad Steve couldn't see her. But instantly she threw the thought away. For heaven's sake! Wasn't she the girl who hated her prettiness?

LARRY took her to the Starlight Roof. It was the best place in town with the best floor, the best band and the best food. The tables were small, flowers were everywhere and stars blinked in the dark expanse of midnight ceiling. A moon hung there to furnish almost all the light there was.

"Romantic, isn't it?" asked Larry as they came to the table he'd reserved. And then he chuckled. "Except that you're the girl who scoffs at romance, aren't you?"

"I think it's silly," said Sari. "It seems to me you can get along fine without it."

Larry's eyes met hers squarely across the little table. "You know," he said, "I wouldn't wonder if you didn't have something there. I've been thinking about it and I believe you're pretty smart."

Sari smiled. She suddenly felt relaxed and comfortable. Here was a man who understood her. Here was someone she could really talk to. A pal. A friend. She began to enjoy herself.

Larry didn't dance much. After all there was no sense going too far, but whenever he did dance it was perfect. Rhythm flowed through him, he guided her with a light touch that was almost no touch at all so that they accomplished intricate steps with ease.

He said, "You're wonderful. You dance like a cloud."

And she winced. That was exactly what Steve had said about Polly.

They went home early for, after all, he was getting over an operation and she had to be on duty at seven in the morning. But when he said good night, he smiled happily.

"We'll do this again soon," he said. "It's a real relief to be able to have a good time with a girl without having to be burdened by the romantic touch. See you soon, Sari."

She mentioned her dancing to Steve the next noon. She couldn't help it. The words came out practically by themselves.

She said, "The Starlight Roof's got a good floor, hasn't it?" And she made her voice sweetly careless.

Steve almost jumped. "The Starlight Roof? What do you know about it?"

"I was there. Last night. But—" and this was positive inspiration, "—they aren't too careful with those spiky brass things on the rail. I tore a long strip of white net on my skirt." That was a clear lie but it was a good one. It got across exactly what she wanted to get across.

Steve's eyes widened. "White net?" He sounded as if he were speaking from a dream. "You—in white net." He paused a moment obviously imagining it. Then, "You must have been beautiful," he said softly.

"I was all right," said Sari crisply but for some reason pleasure flowed all through her.

That night, when she went off duty at seven, Steve was waiting for her his car parked under the big back port-cochere which the doctors and nurses used.

"Get in," he said firmly. "I'll take you home."

"Thanks," said Sari. "I can walk."

"I said get in," said Steve. And she got in.

He drove down Maple, which was all right, and he turned into Orchard which a couple of blocks further on crossed Elm where Sari lived. But when he reached that corner, he didn't turn, he kept right on going.

"Hey!" said Sari. "I live up there. Remember me?"

"Yeah," said Steve. "I remember you all right. I wish I didn't." And he kept on driving.

Sari flicked a sideways glance at him. He looked grim, his jaw firm, his eyes straight ahead. She said, "You got a patient out this way?"

"No," said Steve. And he kept on driving.

FINALLY, out by the old Stand Pipe where there was a clearing in the trees that let you see the whole view across the valley, he stopped. No one else was out there, it being too late for the picnickers and too early for the lovers who would drive out and park later.

Steve braked the car on the edge of the valley rim but for a long moment he sat still, his hands still relaxed on the steering wheel, his jaw still looking firm if not belligerent.

Sari waited for whatever might be coming. Maybe she'd done something at the hospital that he wanted to talk to her about. Maybe he wanted to tell her that he'd decided to ask Polly to marry him. Well, that was his business. Why drag her into it? She sat waiting and she discovered she didn't feel well.

She'd felt all right when she left the hospital but she certainly felt on the sick side now. Through the open window the sound of crickets came and somewhere a night owl offered his first hoot. The air was sweet and clear and way low in the West one star was out.

Suddenly Steve turned to her. "I don't know how to say this. All I know is it's got to be said." His voice was gruff; he sounded angry. "I love you and I wish to God you'd marry me and stop all this foolishness. Why on earth you—"

"What foolishness?" Sari couldn't believe what he was saying. Maybe he wasn't even saying it. Maybe the words didn't mean what they seemed to mean. Of course he didn't love her. There was a catch in it somewhere. Maybe he'd gone momentarily crazy and thought she was Polly.

He said, "This foolishness about wanting to be a doctor—"

"I am a doctor."

"I know you are, but, good grief, you don't have to give up everything else in life! You can still fall in love and marry!"

"And give up any hope of practicing? I won't give it up!"

Steve gripped her shoulders. He

started to shake her, then he dropped his hands. A flat hopeless look moved across his face.

"Sari," he said, his eyes holding hers. "Do you love me?"

"No," said Sari.

"Then you wouldn't want to marry me?" asked Steve.

Instead of answering Sari said, "I thought it was Polly you were falling for."

Steve smiled thinly. "Polly's all right," he murmured. "I took her out hoping it would arouse you enough to want to go out with me. She was just—bait." His voice sounded weary. "She's a cute kid but I'm no more interested in her seriously than she's interested in me."

"Oh?" Sari remembered all that Polly had said. "You're sure of that, are you?"

Steve didn't bother to answer, or maybe he was so wrapped up in his own thoughts that he didn't realize she had asked a question. Anyhow, all he did was release the brake and back the car down the little rise into the road.

Halfway back to town he said, "I've made an unholy botch of this. But I thought—with a girl like you—"

Sari said, "I wouldn't have agreed to marry you no matter how you went about it. I'm going to be a doctor and—"

"Nobody's asking you not to—"

"—love is a waste of time," Sari finished crisply as if Steve hadn't spoken.

Steve didn't answer that and they accomplished the rest of the trip in silence.

CHAPTER III

ROAD ACCIDENT



WHEN S a r i went into her house Polly was in the living room. It looked as if she'd just turned away from the window.

She said, "Steve brought you home, didn't he?" Her eyes were shining and

her soft mouth looked wistful. "Why didn't you ask him in?"

"If you want him," said Sari, "you can ask him in."

During the week that followed Larry Collier took Sari dancing three times and on two other nights he was waiting for her when she came off duty and took her home after driving around a bit. That left only two evenings out of the week for anything else he might want to do or anyone else he might want to be with.

Sari thought of the tall and lovely Beth Hawley and wondered if she felt neglected. She remembered the look in Beth's eyes that morning she'd first come to see Larry in the hospital and she remembered the glow that Beth had carried like a halo when Sari met her in the corridor on her way to Larry's room.

What was Beth doing these evenings when Larry was with her? The thought, whenever it popped into her mind, troubled Sari though she didn't bother to think farther and find out why.

Through that week Sari was aware too that Steve and Polly were going places. She didn't know where, she didn't ask. But Steve's car seemed to be parked a good deal at the curb and two or three times, when she was wakeful, Sari heard Polly laughing and calling good night to Steve.

Well, that was all right. Steve wanted love and if Polly fell in love with him, everybody would be happy. She was very happy too, Sari would tell herself as she'd turn over to try to get to sleep again. Very, very happy.

Sunday Sari had the whole day to herself because, on Monday she went on night duty again. Sunday morning, at eleven o'clock Larry called her.

"If we drove a mere forty miles," he told her, "we could swim in Granite Ledge Cove, or if you want the surf, we could drive on to Crescent Beach. What about it? Dinner in Cliff House and dancing if you want it."

"Sounds fine," said Sari. "I'll be ready in an hour."

She left the phone feeling grateful for a man like Larry. Someone to take her out, have fun with, and no nonsense. He never bothered even to hold

her hand and she'd never had to even think about the nuisance of fighting off kisses. Apparently Larry had no more use for time-wasting romance than she did.

She was ready, dressed in crisp pale green linen with her dressing case packed with swimming necessities, when he drove up in his maroon convertible. She went down the walk swinging the case and smiling at him.

"You're a lovely girl," Larry said as he opened the door for her. But he said it impersonally as he'd say "It's a nice day." Sari approved of compliments like that. She stepped into the car and settled herself in the deep leather seat.

They swam in the cove and they dined on lobster and steamed clams at Cliff House. Larry poured into her ears, as he always did, his plans and dreams for the future. Becoming elected to the office of District Attorney was only the first step. From there he'd move into the Governor's Mansion and then—maybe the White House.

"Why not?" he'd ask belligerently. "Other men have done it. Why not I? I'm as smart as most and a darn' sight more brilliant than some. Do you know what throws a lot of men?"

He'd asked this question before—it seemed to be a habit of his—and Sari knew the answer. But she asked, "What?" anyway.

"It's the wives they marry." Larry's keen gray eyes shot a look at her across the table. "The wrong kind of wife can ruin a man."

"Not if the man is as strong as he should be," said Sari. "Look at Lincoln. According to legend his wife wasn't much help, but it didn't stop him."

Larry's mouth moved into a faint, tight, smile. "I'm not Lincoln," he told her. "I've got to choose my wife carefully. I've got to choose a girl who's practical and cool and ambitious. A girl who's good-looking enough to be a credit to me and who's charming enough to be the hostess in my home no matter how far up I go."

SARI suddenly thought of Beth. Beth, with her grace and beauty, would be a credit to any man.

She said, "You know, when I first met

you in the hospital, I thought you were engaged to Beth Hawley. I should think she'd be everything you needed. And she's terribly in love with you. Anybody can see that."

Larry tossed down his fork with a faint clatter. "That's just the trouble," he said disgustedly. "She's too darn much in love with me. Imagine marrying her! Every time I'd come into the house, she'd be hanging on my neck. And if I couldn't pay her all the sloppy attention she thought I ought to she'd cry about it. I've seen girls like Beth after they were married. They demanded too much love."

Sari said, thoughtfully, "If a man loved them, they'd make lovely wives. Most men want love." She was surprised at herself for saying this. She'd never even thought anything like this before.

Larry said, "Well, I don't want love. It takes too much time. And I've no time for anything but building my own future." He darted another keen glance at her from under his level eyebrows. "You're the only girl I've ever met who agreed with all my ideas. You're the only girl I can imagine who would be wise and cool enough to share my future. Will you marry me, Sari?"

Sari stared at him. Cold as a business proposition. Well, hadn't she always said that love was a form of hysteria?

"Why do you need a wife at all if you feel this way about it?" she asked. She saw no point in it.

He said, "I told you. A wife helps a man both in his home and socially. She's an asset, when she isn't a liability."

"I see," said Sari. "Well, I'm a doctor."

Larry said eagerly, "I've thought of that too. You can keep on with your profession. Perhaps I could build a sanatorium or something for you later. It would be a fine way to appeal to the voters. They'd get all sympathetic and emotional over a man whose wife cured crippled or polio sufferers or something. It ought to be a children's project to move them most. That always gets the votes." He grinned merrily. "That's why we all kiss babies."

"I see," said Sari again. And then

she added coldly, "That's hardly what the medical profession is for, to trick people into voting for you." She felt angry and disgusted. It flashed in her eyes. It curled her lips.

Larry said, "Sari! I didn't mean that. I simply meant—well, I was showing you how well we could work together. Of course we would never do anything you didn't feel was ethical, nothing that would, in any way, violate your Hippocratic Oath."

Sari relaxed. Larry was all right. She really understood him very well. He was just burningly ambitious, that was all. Ambitious to the exclusion of every other emotion or interest. Well, she felt that way about medicine too. She could understand it.

Larry said, "So you'll marry me?"

Sari looked out of the wide window where dusk was darkening to night over the wide expanse of tumbling ocean. She felt very strange and she couldn't understand it. This seemed all wrong. Something was lacking. It was like eating a piece of bread that had no salt in it.

She looked at Larry and tried to imagine living with him. Larry coming home to her at dinner time, when she returned from her office. Larry at one end of a long table and she at the other end with twenty important dinner guests between them. There would be pictures in magazines—she'd seen them—of Larry and her sitting on the broad steps of their summer home. There were always children in those pictures. Children.

As if he had read her mind Larry said, "Of course I shan't expect nor suggest that the burden of children be put upon you. That would never be part of our life together. We would relieve ourselves of that problem too. You'd never have to consider that as hampering your professional life."

Sari stood up, her napkin falling to the floor unnoticed.

"Take me home," she said briefly. "I want to think."

She had to think hard and think alone. Confusions whirled like a hurricane of Catherine wheels around her. If this cold business-like marriage that Larry was suggesting was wrong, and

if love was nothing but an emotion that picked you up and tossed you around and didn't last, then what was the answer? You had to marry, she supposed. There had to be families or there wouldn't be a world. Then what?

WHEN Larry took her home and she went into the house, there were Polly and Steve in the living room. Polly had popped a big bowl of popcorn and, with it between them, they were kneeling on the floor in front of the fireplace toasting marshmallows. They looked very cozy.

Sari said, "Hello," and stood in the doorway looking at them. The firelight burned a second time on Steve's hair and it ran down, a ruddy golden line, along his straight nose and the turn of his chin.

Steve was a good guy. Looking at him made you feel good. It sent a kind of warmth through you. She smiled at him and his eyes kindled.

"Shall we invite her in?" he asked Polly. "After all she's got a good heart."

"She hasn't got any heart at all," said Polly laughing. "What gave you such an odd idea?" Then she turned teasing eyes on Sari. "Come on in, darling—we love you anyhow."

Sari went into the room slowly. Polly looked so happy, so glowing. In the wide mirror above the fireplace Sari caught sight of her own eyes. They looked bewildered, blank. The eyes of a dead haddock, she thought morosely. Well, maybe she was a dead haddock.

She turned and went upstairs leaving Polly and Steve laughing there beside the fire.

She went on duty at the hospital the next evening at seven. Sari liked night duty. She felt that it gave her more experience than day duty. More things seemed to happen at night, emergencies that required quick thought and skill.

This night she went out on the ambulance five times between eight and twelve. A fire meant a lot of emergency treatment, a two-year-old boy had climbed out of his crib and somehow gotten a cork jammed in his throat,

a woman had to be rushed from the clinic to the operating table. Sari dashed here and there loving it all.

It was wonderful to be needed, to feel that your increasing knowledge, your growing skill were making you able to help people, to relieve their suffering. Nothing else mattered.

This was it, she told herself firmly. Forget Larry, don't be disturbed over the way light touched Steve's hair to fire. Don't let yourself be bothered by Steve; he didn't really mean it when he asked you to marry him. He was just kidding the way he was when he told you how pretty you were. Just kidding.

A call came for an accident on the Turnpike at quarter past twelve. It was three miles out beyond the town line but they were the nearest hospital. And hurry.

Sari said to Jinks, who drove the ambulance, "It sounds bad. They said three cars piled up."

Three cars hadn't exactly piled up. One car, a low hung lemon yellow convertible, had charged off the road and wrapped itself around a small but tough hickory tree. Another car trying to get out of the way of the first had slid into a ditch. No one hurt, they dragged the car out okay. The third car had done a dance, maybe dazzled by the headlights of the other two and had ploughed into the wreck of the first. It was a fair mess when Sari got there.

Grabbing her medical bag she hopped out of the ambulance and ran over to the heap of junk that had once been a car.

"I think she's still alive," said a voice. "But we didn't dare touch her till you came." It was a man from another car.

"Thanks," said Sari. "I'll get in there and see about her."

She crawled in past a battered door. Ahead of her a flashlight made a pool of light and she could see the girl huddled awkwardly, her legs sprawled out at an angle, her head down. Sari reached out tentative fingers toward a limp wrist. There was a pulse. Faint, irregular, but a pulse.

It took them twenty minutes to get her out. The man from the other car and Jinks did it while Sari directed and

eased the girl through. At last they got her onto the stretcher, and it was then Sari saw who it was. Beth Hawley. Lovely, long legged slim Beth with the soft brown hair and the velvet eyes.

CHAPTER IV

WORDS OF TRUTH



RACING back through the fresh sweet night to the hospital, Sari sat beside her. She watched the still face and a sense of trouble seemed to rise like a mist and fill the narrow confines of the ambulance.

Later that night, when they'd discovered that Beth had broken a collar bone and fractured a rib and after she'd been strapped up and put to bed, Sari slipped into her room to look at her again.

She was lying quietly with her dark eyes wide open and, when she saw Sari standing in the doorway, she smiled very faintly.

Sari went in slowly her eyes on the girl's face. There were questions she wanted to ask, questions she felt she had to ask, but she didn't know what words to use. Beth saved her the trouble.

She said, "You're the girl Larry's going to marry, aren't you? He said it was the girl who was in his room when I came to see him that first day. And you're the one."

Sari said, "He told you that? That I was going to marry him?" The thing she was afraid of loomed in her mind like a huge dark shadow. Softly she asked, "When did he tell you?" And watched Beth's face.

She said, "This afternoon. I—I hadn't seen him for days. He—he hasn't—" her voice broke, the big dark eyes filled with tears and she turned her head away.

The fear in Sari's mind grew darker. Out of it she whispered, "And you love him that much."

Beth's head turned back. The tears were there, shining on her cheeks, but there were none in her suddenly burning, amazed eyes.

"You think I jammed into the tree on purpose! You think that?" She stopped and, slowly, her horrified eyes softened. "I wonder?" she whispered. "Maybe I did at that!"

She threw her hands out in a tragically hopeless gesture. "Why would I want to live if I couldn't have Larry to love? All this afternoon, since he told me, I've hardly known what I was doing. I was crazy. I felt already dead, as if everything in me that meant anything had died. And then to-night I started driving, thinking I'd feel better with the movement and the wind in my face and the stars above me." She paused a second and then said softly, "Stars help a lot. Have you ever noticed? They're so serene and everlasting. They make you and your troubles seem awfully small and unimportant."

Sari said, "No, I haven't noticed the stars much. And I'm sure I've never taken my troubles to them."

"Well, it helps," said Beth. "Try it some time. I looked at them a long time tonight. And I felt better by the time I started home but I still didn't see how I was going to live without Larry. I don't see how now. I—I don't—see—" The tears welled up again and spilled over. "Day after day!" sobbed Beth. "Day after day—without Larry!"

"Don't," said Sari. "Don't, please." She went over and sat on the edge of the bed. She touched Beth's hands and the soft brown hair that was tumbling over, hiding her face.

Beth said, her voice muffled. "But I didn't run into that tree on purpose! I didn't want to kill myself. There's not a thing left to live for but I'm not a coward."

"Of course you're not," said Sari soothingly, and a tremendous wave of relief chased the dark fear completely out of her mind. Then, gently, she added, "I'm not going to marry Larry Collier. He asked me to but—but he doesn't love me and you can't marry without love!" The last words came out in a tumbling rush and, having

blurted them, Sari sat back listening to them echo on the air. They battered her ears. What had she said? Did she mean it? Was this any kind of admission that she believed in love?

She pulled in a deep breath. Of course it was no admission. She had just said that because it was the kind of thing a girl like Beth Hawley would understand. She was merely speaking Beth's language. Yes, certainly, that was all.

Beth said, "You're not—going to marry him! You have a chance to marry Larry and you're not going to take it?" The idea, to her, was inconceivable.

Sari said, "I wouldn't take Larry Collier as a gift, and if there's anything I can do to help you get him, I'm your girl."

"Oh!" breathed Beth. "O-o-oh!"

QUIETLY Sari went out of the room leaving her to a new flood of dreams and hopes.

At seven o'clock the next morning when Sari went down to the cafeteria for breakfast she was tired to death. Strong coffee was what she needed. Strong coffee by the gallon.

A voice said, "Go sit down, Lovely, and I'll bring you breakfast." And there was Steve. He said, "The Oliphant baby is just fresh born upstairs; that's why I'm here. See you in a minute." He waved her toward a table and took her place in line.

She sat down gratefully, relaxing for the first time in twelve hours. Steve was moving up in line and she watched him. The long almost lanky lines of his figure held an odd grace. She liked looking at him. It did something to her. It made her feel warm and happy. And that line of his cheek that she always wanted to touch. What would it be like to run her finger down it?

She thought, How hard my heart's beating! I must have been working harder than I thought and gotten more tired.

Steve came over with their two trays carefully balanced on the palms of his hands. He slid one off on the table and began to unload the other one.

He said, "You're tired, but you look beautiful when you're tired. You look

soft and sweet."

Sari said nothing. She wanted, suddenly, to cry and she wanted, crazily, to put her head on Steve's shoulder. Which just showed how terribly tired she was. Quickly she bent her head and paid strict attention to her scrambled eggs and bacon. The coffee revived her as she hoped it would. She began to feel like herself. In her usual crisp tone she began to swap hospital gossip with Steve.

Steve said, "Don't bother to talk if you don't want to. I'm just old Stevie, remember? You can relax."

Sari smiled at him and relaxed. A man like Steve was a wonderful thing to have around. She wondered suddenly if Steve would ever want to marry a girl just because she'd make an acceptable hostess for his entertaining. And if Steve would ever say "Of course children are a burden I wouldn't think of asking you to consider." The idea was so absurd that Sari laughed out loud.

"What's the joke?" asked Steve.

Sari said, still laughing, "I was just thinking how ridiculous it would be if you didn't want children when you were married."

"What?" Steve gasped at her and, suddenly realizing what she had said, Sari blushed crimson.

She stammered, "I mean—I wasn't really thinking—I— Well, I've finished my breakfast. Thanks a lot, Steve. I'll run along." And she ran—as fast as she dared—out between the tables and through the door. And when she left the hospital, she went through the big front entrance in case Steve was waiting under the porte cochere in back. Only heaven knew what he might make of her remark.

She slept the sleep of exhaustion till five o'clock but just as she dropped off to sleep and again as she was waking up she dreamed herself through the experience again of maneuvering Beth Hawley out of that wrecked car. When she got fully awake she knew she was going to get hold of Larry Collier and tell him about it. It wasn't that she doubted Beth's word, Beth's horrified, "I'm not a coward!" had been convincing enough, but she wanted to see if something couldn't be done with Larry.

She called him and he was glad to hear her voice. He'd been waiting to phone, not wanting to disturb her daytime sleep.

He said, "Dinner at the Club? I want my friends to meet you."

She said, "Better save that till later; I've got to be at the hospital again at seven." And she thought, He wants me to meet his friends! So he has been telling people. She felt as if a trap were closing. And she felt mad. She wouldn't be trapped. She'd fix it fast!

He said, "We'll go to Bill Bates then and have a steak. But I can't get away till five-thirty."

"I'll meet you there at six," said Sari and hung up.

At five minutes after six she was sitting across a small table from him and Bill Bates was broiling them a pair of his famous steaks. Sari knew perfectly well that no girl with the sense of an ant ever mentioned anything unpleasant to a man till he'd eaten, so though time was short, she waited.

AFTERWARD she was glad she had. That way she could never afterward reproach herself. She knew she'd done all she could do. So the steaks were gone, with their accompanying tossed salad and French fries, and Larry was smiling at her with the complacent air of the well-fed male when Sari first mentioned Beth Hawley's name.

"She's in the hospital. Did you know it?"

"Hospital?" Larry's eyebrows lifted. "How long since?"

"Last night. She had an accident in her car."

"Who was driving it?" His voice was suddenly sharp, his eyes bit into Sari's.

Sari watched him. She saw the fear in his eyes. She said quietly, "She was. She was alone in it. She'd been out driving alone and she was coming home. It was about two o'clock in the morning."

Larry's mouth curled till it looked ugly. "And so she told you a fine sob story. She told you she'd done it on purpose because—" He stopped, his eyes flicked around the room and he tapped his lips with his napkin.

Sari finished what he was going to say for him, "Because she loved you so much she couldn't bear to live without you. That's what you were going to say, wasn't it?"

"Yes!" Larry's voice was suddenly high and shaking with anger. "And she needn't think a stunt like this is going to get her anywhere! She can't drag me into anything. I won't be dragged in."

"She loves you very much," said Sari softly. "A man doesn't often win love like Beth's. She's a wonderful girl."

"Wonderful!" Scorn bit into the words. "She's soft and adoring and—and a pain in the neck. I want a girl who's sensible and who's got her feet on the ground. A girl with no nonsense in her."

"A girl," said Sari in a sudden tight voice, "who doesn't know what love is. A girl who is cold and unfeeling, who cares about nothing but a worthless kind of cool, calculating ambition. That's the kind you want, and that's the only kind who would ever be fool enough to marry you. You—you frozen fish!"

"Sari! Sari, what are you—"

"Don't interrupt me! For the first time in—in years I know the truth of things. It's like coming out of a fog into glorious sunlight. I know what I feel. And I know what I want. And what's more I know I wouldn't marry you if you were the last man on earth. When I marry I want a man to love me. I want to love him. I want—" she stopped, her breath suddenly gone and her heart choking her. Steve. Steve was in her mind, filling it. In her heart, brimming it over. "Steve!" Her lips formed his name and her eyes were wide with wonder.

Larry said, "Sari, something's wrong with you. You're ill."

"I never was better in my life," said Sari. "I feel fine. But there's one thing more I want to tell you, you heartless conceited beast, before I go. Beth didn't try to kill herself. She's too fine for that. So there's nothing you can get drawn into, my fine feathered hero. You can relax. Your fair name will not be sullied—you miserable cold selfish—Oh, let me get out of here! And I

hope to heaven I never see you again!"

She ran out of Bill Bates' place and she hopped a bus that was standing at the corner. It was the wrong bus and she had to transfer but that didn't make any difference, just so she got away from Larry Collier.

CHAPTER V

POLLY'S HEART



BUSILY, with a singing heart, Sari worked that night. So this was love. This warmth, this wonder, this feeling that you were standing tip-toe on the rim of a shining world, and that all this world belonged

to you was certainly swell! She hadn't known it would be like this. She hadn't dreamed anything could be like this, so heady and exhilarating. It made you float instead of walking and it made you feel as if pink clouds were swirling in your hair. And to happen so suddenly.

Did everyone fall in love like this? One minute you were an ordinary stodgy human being and the next you were soaring breathlessly amongst the stars and the angels.

Tapping her way down a corridor she came to Beth Hawley's door—and stopped, a sudden thought halting her. This way, the way she felt about Steve, was the way Beth felt about Larry. And suppose she knew that Steve cared nothing for her? Suppose she held in her heart the cold horror of knowing Steve didn't care how much he hurt her?

Understanding Beth Hawley as she never had before Sari pushed open the door and went in.

Beth's bedside table light was on and she wasn't sleeping. Her dark eyes were wide open and her cheeks shone faintly in the light with the tears that were drying on them. Sari went over and sat down beside the bed. She touched Beth's hand and found it cold.

She said, "He's not worth it. Believe me, he isn't."

"I know it," said Beth. She bit her lips to stop their quivering. "I've been lying here thinking it all out. I've thought of all the things I've—" She stopped and moved her hands in a small helpless gesture. "There's no use going over things, is there? I've thought if I could have the chance over again, the chance of beginning a friendship with Larry, that maybe I'd be wise enough to behave differently so he'd love me. But I've been thinking. I've been trying to see Larry with my mind instead of my heart. And I think perhaps it's not in Larry to love anybody. Not really love anybody—not the way I love him. He's so cool, so practical. And so ambitious. And his ambition would always come first with him. He'd never love anybody more than—"

She stopped her softly murmuring talk and turned her head to look at Sari. Her lips were open in surprise and her eyes held a look of shock.

"I forgot! Oh, forgive me, Dr. Mayfield. I was just sort of thinking out loud and I forgot. I shouldn't talk this way about Larry when you're going to marry him!"

"I'm not going to marry him," said Sari. "You may say anything you like." And she added grimly, "I've said a lot more than you're saying now right to the gentleman's face."

Beth paid no attention to the last remark. She'd heard nothing after the first five words. Her eyes were shining, her face looked as if it reflected a whole new dawn.

"You're not going to marry him?" Unbelief, hope, wonder made her face radiant. All the careful logic and resignation she'd spent the day building up vanished like thistledown before a high wind. She said, "Then maybe I'll have my second chance! Maybe—" she paused, her eyes filled with dreams and plans. "I'll never let him see how much I love him; I'll be as practical as he is; I'll make him feel that his ambitions come first with me the way they do with him. I'll be always bolstering up his ego, making him know how wonderful I think he is."

"He's not worth it," said Sari. "I know he's not and you just said you spent the whole day realizing what he

was. Why don't you wake up for good and leave him alone? Fall in love with somebody else. There are lots of men who are fine. Why waste yourself and your time on a man like Larry?"

Beth looked at her for a long moment, her dark eyes deep and thoughtful. Then she smiled and it was the most beautiful smile Sari had ever seen.

"Because I love him," she said. "I love Larry and nobody else will ever do for me."

SARI stood up and looked down at her. A few hours before she would have scoffed at such words. She would have laughed and jeered. But now she knew. She understood. Larry for Beth and Steve for her. Nobody else would do for either one of them.

She smiled at Beth gently. "Good luck to you," she said. "I hope you get him."

"I will," said Beth with beautiful assurance. "I'll go at it right this time. I'll give him what he wants—I won't try to grab what I want." And she added dreamily. "I guess that's what love is, after all."

Sari went on about her business with the memory of Beth's eyes and her last words deep in her mind.

But at seven o'clock she wasn't thinking of them or of Beth. She was thinking of nothing but Steve. Had he been called to the hospital during the night? Would he be waiting for her down in the cafeteria as he had been yesterday morning?

She went down in the elevator with her heart pounding in her throat and her fingertips cold. She'd never felt this way about anything before. Was love this kind of shaking terror too? Terror over such an apparent trifle as whether or not Steve would be in the cafeteria. Trifle! Sari pulled in a quaking breath. It was the most important thing in the world.

She stepped out of the elevator. She was afraid to look and afraid not to look. If he wasn't there the disappointment would make all thought of breakfast impossible. If he was there—would he know all she was feeling now? Would he guess? Did it show in her eyes or her smile?

The sudden thought shocked her so that waves of crazy emotions flooded through her. She wanted to run away, she wanted to rush forward; she was ashamed, she was proud and then, slowly, she was walking on with her head high and her cheeks burning.

Steve was there. She saw him a long way off and before he saw her. He was talking to another doctor and the sight of his red head bent attentively, his hands moving in slight gesture and that adorable line of his cheek sent such a flood of love through Sari that she caught her breath gasping against it.

Then he looked up and saw her. He waved—and went right on talking.

Sari's heart went right down into her small flat heels. She hadn't thought of this. It had never occurred to her that a day might come when Steve wouldn't leap across the cafeteria to meet her. She'd always treated him as if he were some kind of nuisance. She'd thought she felt that way but, no matter how she'd treated him, Steve had always been there. Now, when she'd changed and wanted him to come to her, he sat there talking to old Doctor Miles and so utterly absorbed that he didn't know she was on earth.

She filled her tray with food that looked like ashes and found a table where she sat alone. So this was what she'd done for herself. Steve had hung around and she'd treated him horribly. He'd proposed to her and she'd practically laughed at him. And now—Tears stung her eyelids, a lump filled her throat. She gulped coffee trying to steady herself. A fool she'd been. And now it was too late. Sudden revolt swept over her. All this wasn't fair! Life shouldn't do things like this to you! Why couldn't she have known she loved Steve when there was still some chance of getting him? But no, nothing so simple as that. She'd had to be a stupid fool and hand him over to Polly.

Polly! That was it, of course. She'd lost him to Polly and that was why he wasn't even bothering to talk to her anymore. She left half her breakfast uneaten and stalked out of the cafeteria. She hated Steve, she hated Polly and more than all she hated this love that

tore through her, ripping her, shredding her till she held nothing but pain.

Love! She wished she'd never heard of it. She wished she'd stayed in that dull, dead never-never land she'd lived in so long where she scoffed at love and declared it was no good. Well, she knew it was no good now, she knew it brought nothing but pain and disillusionment, but she couldn't get away from it now.

She went home dismayed and angry, disgusted and furious, emotions churning her around as if she were in a cement mixer.

UPON reaching home, she was on her way upstairs when she heard the sound of sobbing. She stopped and listened. It came from Polly's room and a new burst of anger exploded in Sari. Polly crying! What right had she to cry when Steve was spending every second of his free time with her and when any fool could see he was falling in love with her? Any girl who cried when she had Steve was pure idiot. Sari whirled up the rest of the stairs and burst into Polly's room.

"What on earth are you crying about?" she demanded. "Doesn't he love you?"

Polly looked up. She was still in bed and her soft hair was tousled around her flushed face, her eyes were big with astonishment and the tears in them glittered.

"No," she said flatly. "He doesn't love me. I thought he did. I've done everything I can to make him and I—I—Oh, what's the matter with men! I hate them!"

Suddenly Sari hated them too. All of them. She thought of Larry and the way he'd strung Beth along just so long as it suited him, not caring a fig whether he broke her heart or not. And now Steve doing the same thing to Polly. What did men think they were? Didn't they have hearts?

She stamped her foot with the fury that swept her. And then, spinning, she dashed out through the door.

"Where are you going?" yelled Polly.

"I'm going to talk to Steve! I'm going to tell him just what I think of him! I'm going—" She slammed the front door so there was no use yelling

any more and she saved her breath to run for the bus.

She reached the hospital an hour after she'd left it and she ran down the wide ground floor corridor to the office that Steve used when he was in the building. He was there and he was alone. Sari bounced in, closing the door sharply behind her.

Steve looked up, saw who it was and grinned broadly, his face lighting up.

"Well! An off-duty call, no less, from the most beautiful intern we have. You don't, by any chance, want me to drive you home, do you? Because that I'd love."

"I don't doubt it," said Sari freezingly. "And I don't doubt either that you'd just love to drag me up by the Stand Pipe again and propose to me—making a fool of me—hoping you could break my heart the way you've broken Polly's! Oh, I—I h-hate you!" She was gasping, she was sobbing, the words coming out in bunches.

Steve got up from his chair and came around the desk. "What you need," he observed professionally, "is a spot of aromatics or a—"

"I don't need a thing." Sari glared at him. "Just the opportunity of giving you a piece of my mind. Any man that makes a sweet girl like Polly fall in love with him and then breaks her heart—"

"Is Polly's heart broken?" asked Steve. "It seemed pretty sound when I saw her last night."

"Sound! How could any girl's heart be sound when you make them love you and then go—go off whistling! Here you've been doing everything in the world to make Polly love you and then when she does, you—you don't love her."

"Love her? Love Polly? Was I supposed to?" He stared at Sari. The idea apparently knocked him flat. "Good gosh!" he said. "You mean that in order to do the gallant thing I've got to marry Polly when I'm in love with you?"

"In love with — me!" All breath seemed to leave Sari. She felt as if she were floundering in a sea of glue. What kind of a mess had she made of things anyhow? Forcing Steve to marry Polly

and, if he married Polly, she'd die because she wanted him to marry her! Steve would be crucified, she'd be crucified—to save Polly's broken heart.

It isn't worth it! she thought rebelliously. Why should we both suffer to keep Polly from suffering? Two against one. And yet a second ago she had berated Steve for breaking a heart that she was now considering breaking herself.

CAREFULLY she pulled in a deep breath. She mustn't do it. She must save Polly now just as she'd meant to save her before Steve spoke.

She said, dully, "If you hadn't meant to carry through with Polly, you shouldn't have started. You've been leading that poor kid along—"

"I have not! I told you when we were up by the Stand Pipe that I was only running around with Polly trying to arouse your interest, and since then I've been going places with her because it—" he hesitated and flushed, "—because it kept me near you so I'd know—so I'd be around—so that maybe—" he floundered and stopped.

"It's too bad," said Sari, "that Polly didn't know just what your motives were."

"She—" The phone cut across Steve's words and he reached for it. "Yeah, this is Steve. Oh, yes. Yes, she's here. . . . Well, look, tell her, will you? . . . Yeah, she's kind of having a fit." He handed the instrument to Sari. "It's Polly," he said.

Sari took the phone and Polly's voice came high and sweet. "Look, darling," she said. "I don't know why you rushed off to Steve with my sorrows and troubles, except that Steve's been helping me all through. Every time Hank and I quarrel Steve comes and holds my hand. He's been darling."

"Hank?" said Sari. "Hank who?"

"You don't know him," said Polly. "You've been away from home so much I guess you haven't kept track of things. But Hank's wonderful. I'm crazy about him. Of course, even if he does fall in love with me it'll be years before we can get married. He's only nineteen now and he's got college to finish and then business of some kind. Steve says I

shouldn't worry my head about marriage for a long time yet because I'm still such a kid but— Oh, Sari, if you only knew Hank!"

"If I only knew Hank!" Sari was suddenly furious at her light-headed, light-hearted sister. "Steve is certainly right. You're not fit for any kind of sober decision. Last week you told me if you could get Steve you'd marry him. And now you say swooningly, If I only knew Hank!"

Polly chuckled. "So you remembered that?" She laughed again. "I put on that act for Steve. He said if you thought somebody else wanted him you might whip up an interest yourself. He'd read in a book somewhere that there was nothing like a little competition to wake up a girl. And I guess he's right—about the competition I mean—because just after you left this morning, Hank called up. He said he hadn't slept all night because he got to thinking how much I'd been with Steve lately and—and he's coming over to play tennis with me this afternoon." She paused a second and then said. "Why don't you marry Steve, Sari? He's an awfully good guy."

"I will marry him," said Sari, "if he ever asks me again."

She never heard what Polly said to that because the phone was lifted out of her hand and she was turned around so that her face was within an inch of Steve's.

"Who'll marry who if he asks you again?" he demanded. And then he shook her a little. "You're not marrying anybody but me and you might as well know it. I'm sick and tired of all this indirect method of going after you. It may seem smart enough to some people but it seems darn stupid to me. And now," he announced firmly, "I'm going to kiss you. And if that doesn't wake you up—"

"It won't," said Sari. "I mean you don't have to—I mean," she tried to explain frantically, "It doesn't need anything more to make me love you because—Oh, kiss me quick, Steve! I can't wait."

So Steve kissed her and Sari knew, with his lips deep on hers, that never again would she be a stranger to love.



A Correspondence Department conducted by MRS. FAITH SIMPSON

WE have inaugurated this new department for the benefit of thousands of readers who wish to make new friends, many of whom have written us asking for our help. If you are interested in having pen pals, please write to Mrs. Faith Simpson, care of **EXCITING LOVE**, 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Introduce yourself by writing an interesting letter that will make others eager to know more about you. Be sure to sign your full name and state your address, age and sex. Please provide at least one reference. We will use only your first name or a nickname when your letter is printed. We will forward all mail received for you.

Women and girls may write only to women and girls, and men only to men. No letter will be forwarded unless a stamped envelope is enclosed. Do not seal any letter which you wish to have forwarded. Mail us your request for letters **NOW**, for early insertion in this department. Mrs. Simpson will be more than happy to hear from you!

WILL ANSWER ALL

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a 20 year old girl who is very anxious for pen pals. My hobbies are writing, bowling, dancing, and especially bicycle riding. I live in a rather large city, and will exchange cards and souvenirs. Promise to answer all who write.

ELIZABETH No. 200

DUTCH LAD

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a Dutch boy who will be 30. I am single and live alone in the beautiful south part of my town. Like swimming, sailing, sunbathing, tennis. I am also fond of photography. Very anxious for correspondence.

JAN No. 201

YOUNG MARRIED WOMAN

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a married woman, 21, living on a government reservation. I enjoy music and sports especially fishing and swimming. I promise to answer all who write to me.

JEAN No. 202

A GIRL FROM FAR AWAY

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl from a far away country across the Pacific. My hobbies are reading and writing, and corresponding with pen pals from abroad. I am hoping to come to the U. S. to study law. Won't someone write?

AURORA No. 203

CALLING YOUNG BRIDES

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young married woman of 17. I am very interested in needlework and reading. I was born and raised on a farm until I was

married. Now I'm living in town. I have plenty of time for corresponding with young married women.

LENA No. 204

COLLECTS MOVIE STAR PICTURES

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl who lives in a small Indiana town. My hobbies are collecting movie star pictures. I like to roller skate, sing, dance, and swim. I would like to hear from girls from all over the world.

SHIRLEY No. 205

FROM A CANADIAN FRIEND

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am 38 years old, a Canadian from Northern Quebec. I would like to have pen pals interested in exclusive sewing and embroidery, also books, music, and fishing.

PATRICIA No. 206

ROLLER SKATING FAN

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a 22 year old girl who would like a pen pal about my age. My hobbies are roller skating, bowling, horseback riding. Will exchange snapshots. I would like to hear from anyone in the U. S. or Canada.

JEAN No. 207

BOOKS AND BASEBALL

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am 40 year old man who enjoys good books, shows, music, traveling, and all sports. Baseball is my favorite sport. Would like to hear from fellows from 30 and up, and will exchange snapshots.

ANDY No. 208

TEXAN GIRL

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young Texan girl who would like to write to girls who do not live in Texas. I promise interesting letters.

PATRICIA No. 209

STAMP COLLECTOR

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a married woman of 27. I am very much interested in stamp collecting. I also do a lot of reading. I love to write and receive letters. I promise to answer all who write to me.

EVERLYN No. 210

MOTHER OF TWO

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a married woman of 22 with two children. I like to read, write, and crochet. Would like to hear from married women my age.

DEAN No. 211

GOOD COMPANION WANTED

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a widow in my middle fifty's and my nationality is Scotch. I am very lonesome and would like to correspond with a good companion. I love all sports and I also love to travel. So will some women write to a lonely widow?

ANN No. 212

LIKES TO GET LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl who likes to get letters from other girls. I like to swim, go horseback riding, play the piano, go to the movies, and dance.

MARY No. 213

SIX-FOOTER

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a six-foot fellow from northeastern part of the U. S., and am very much interested in both sports and collecting snapshots. I am connected in sports by a reporter's job with a newspaper and a radio helper in the same field. Would like to hear from any fellows between 18-25 whose interests coincide with mine.

ED No. 214

BUSINESS GIRL

Dear Mrs. Simpson. I am business girl interested in music, sports, theatre and F. B. I. work. My reason for writing is the desire to correspond with girls 20 and over whose interests are similar to mine. Your kind assistance will be greatly appreciated.

HELEN No. 215

SPORT ENTHUSIAST

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl of 17 who likes sports, especially tennis, hiking, and basketball. In the future I plan to go to a beauty college. My reason for wanting pen pals is that I do not have many friends to write to. Please write soon!

ELLAMAE No. 216

A LOVER OF MUSIC

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young Canadian fellow of 20. My ambition is writing. I am a great lover of classical music, opera in the first place. I like poetry, either English or French. Please write, as I am very anxious for pen pals.

MICHEL No. 217

PROMISES TO ANSWER

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young man of 25. I like to write and receive letters. My favorite pastimes are dancing, movies, and taking pictures. I also love to travel. Please drop me a couple of lines. I promise to answer all letters.

ANDY No. 218

PALS FROM EVERYWHERE

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl of 17 who likes dancing, acting. I would like to have pen pals from all over the world. I am looking forward to answering all letters that come my way.

DOLLY No. 219

FOND OF FISHING

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl and my favorite pastime is deep sea fishing on Lake Superior in the summer. I also like to swim. Would like to hear from girls all over the world and I promise to answer all letters and will exchange snapshots.

CAROLYN No. 220

LIKES ADVENTURE

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl who loves to sing, go on hikes, bicycle riding, roller skating, and I like adventure. I would like to write to girls of my age in the U. S.

PEGGY No. 221

PIANO PLAYER

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a bachelor of 38 who plays the piano in ballad style and who also sings. I am a traveling representative of a large publishing company by vocation. My hobbies (besides music) include writing verse, amateur dramatics, movies, playing bridge, social gatherings, and making new friends. Please write, as I am anxious for more friends.

WENDELL No. 222

LONELY GIRL

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a lonely girl almost 17 years old. I would like to have pen pals around my age. My hobbies are horseback riding, reading, and most of all I like writing letters.

EMMA No. 223

PLAYS THE GUITAR

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a girl of 22. I would like some pen pals. I do not travel much. I enjoy singing and dancing, and playing the guitar. Please someone, drop me a few lines.

LORA No. 224

YOUNG BACHELOR

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a bachelor of 26. My hobbies are writing letters, and travelling. I am very anxious to have some pen pals. Will write to all who respond.

HAL No. 225

WILL EXCHANGE SNAPSHOTS

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a girl of 17. My main interests are dancing and roller skating. I will be glad to exchange snapshots. Would like to hear from girls my own age and a little older.

MARGY No. 226

BASKETBALL FAN

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young girl and am very anxious for pen pals. My favorite sport is basketball. Please, you girls, drop me a few lines!

RUTH No. 227

MANY HOBBIES

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a fellow of 19. I would like to hear from people all over the states. My many hobbies include roller skating, horseback riding, making new friends, writing, and reading letters from different people. Please fellows, fill my mailbox.

FRED No. 228

YOUNG WIDOW

Dear Mrs. Simpson: I am a young war widow with 3 small boys. I am a working woman in order that I may support my children. My favorite pastimes are swimming, picnicking and hiking. I have very little time to go out with other young people, but I have time to write interesting letters.

THERESA No. 229



Not for LOVE *nor* MONEY

by Cylvia S. Elvay

JO ANNE KENNEDY applied her lipstick with the breath-holding concentration which girls employ for such important tasks. Which brought her face to face with herself in the mirror. She frowned, as though not liking what she saw.

"Am I a no-good, fickle wench?" she asked her image. "A shallow, gold-digging, heartless creature?" She sighed.

Her image sighed back, but did not otherwise answer. If Jo Anne were most of the things she said, her appearance was excellently calculated to deceive. Her hair was soft and gold and it waved gently back from a smooth, unlined forehead. Her eyes were blue

and guileless as a child's. Her skin glowed with color, her lips were redder than wine and made for kissing. Her teeth, when she chose to smile, were snowy and perfect.

Yet Timmy had called her all those things—and a few more she'd forgotten—barely an hour ago on the phone.

The doorbell rang, making her jump as it always did. She spun to give the room a quick survey. Everything was as neat as she could make it. The shabbiness? That was something she couldn't do anything about—just yet. No more than she could about this tenement address on the wrong side of the El tracks. But she was going to do

Jo Anne Thought She Knew What She Wanted!

something about it. And the first move she made, Timmy called her a gold-digger. Well, *that* for Timmy. She mentally snapped her fingers at him, drew a deep breath, crossed the room and opened the door.

"Timmy!" she gasped.

"The same." Timmy Hale ducked his dark head to pass under the low doorway and surged into the room.

She made a futile effort to stop him. "Get out of here, you goon! Timmy, what's the idea? You know I've got a date."

"With Harvey MacComber," Timmy said. He scaled his hat onto a chair, folded his length onto the couch and selected an apple from a bowl on the coffee table. "Precisely why I am here!"

"To embarrass me?" Jo Anne Kennedy planted herself before him, hands on hips. Her blue eyes were beginning to cloud up with storm warnings. "Timmy, are you going to be a bum sport about this? A—a—"

"A heel?" he suggested, biting into the apple. "Nope. On the contrary, my lovely maid, I am a knight in shining armor, a rescuer, a friend in need, a port in a storm, a straw for a drowning woman—"

"What are you talking about?"

He looked up at her quizzically, eyebrows quirked, and her heart gave an absurd little lurch. He was so darned good-looking — no, not good-looking really, but so nice-looking, so clean and fresh and honest. He was the kind of boy that old ladies would stop on the street to ask directions from and women would hand their babies to mind while they dashed into a store for a bit of last minute shopping.

There was a time when Jo Anne's heart had done treacherous things to her at Timmy's touch and the sound of his voice. That was before she had made up her mind that she'd had enough of the wrong side of the tracks, that poverty was a habit she could break with the greatest of ease, that she was crashing out of her circle and getting into a better one. And the way out was not by running around with Timmy Hale, who was of her old life,

not the new one she was determined to make.

It was meeting Harvey MacComber that had crystallized that determination for her, Harvey with his easy, confident manner, his casual air of unhurried prosperity, his good clothes, his acceptance of plenty of money as the most natural thing in life. That was for her!

"Let me recapitulate," Timmy said, his sharp eyes taking her in without missing a thing. Her best dress. The new shoes bought with lunch money painfully accumulated by skimping for weeks. "I introduced you to Harvey MacComber, didn't I?"

"I'm sorry," Jo Anne said, flushing. "It sounds disloyal and all that. But it isn't. I'm not bound to you, Timmy Hale! I never promised you a thing. I let you kiss me a few times—I liked you. But that doesn't mean I belong to you. And you've no right—"

"Rights, shmights," Timmy said. "Nobody's demanding any rights. Listen, will you, instead of bursting at the seams? I'm here to do you a good turn."

"You're here to embarrass me."

"Unreasonable, like all women," he said, sighing. "Why I'm here to save you embarrassment. When Harvey doesn't show up—"

"OH, now he won't show up!" The storm warnings were plainer, lightning quivered in the air and the muted growl of thunder began to sound in the distance. "And why won't he show up?"

"Listen," Timmy said again. "Will you listen? Can't I get to what I'm trying to say? I keep starting and you keep interrupting. Will you listen?"

"I'm not interested in what you have to say, or in your opinions of Harvey MacComber. I'm old enough to take care of myself and quite competent to—"

"You're as competent as Goldilocks in the house of the three bears. You need a guardian, a bodyguard—to wit, me."

"I need you like a hole in the head!" Jo Anne snapped. "Now will you please

get out before Harvey comes?"

"Two to one he doesn't show up," Timmy said placidly, looking at the apple core in regret that there was no more.

"Oh, you're impossible!" Jo Anne raged. "Will you go?"

"And leave you abandoned? Nope. Listen. You fell for Harvey's line. Okay, I don't blame you. It was smooth enough. Now perish forbid I should run down a rival. So I won't say a thing. Except that the lad is a four-flusher and a liar and he won't show up. So I'd better stay to give you a shoulder to cry on."

"I'm not a gambling woman," Jo Anne said, "but I think I'll take your bet."

"Done," Timmy agreed.

"Now get out. I'll phone you tomorrow and tell you what time he came."

"Nope. He's not coming, so I better stay right here."

Jo Anne wilted. She couldn't maintain anger very long anyway. And this was hopeless. With her anger at Timmy's inexplicable mischief was that feeling of guilt. After all, if Timmy had been getting ideas she hadn't done much to discourage him, until now. And, she admitted it shamefacedly, it was a little thrilling to see him putting up a fight for her. So she sat down demurely on the other end of the couch and folded her hands.

"You'll see," she said calmly.

Timmy cocked an eye at her. "So it was his money that got you, huh?"

"And what's wrong with that?" she flashed. "Look at this place; look at the street outside! That's what I've known all my life—what you've known! Don't you want something better? Haven't you enough ambition to get out of it?"

"I'll get out," he said. "I'm on my way out now. I sort of had the idea that I'd take you with me, eventually."

"Eventually—"

"And there are other values," Timmy said. "Oh, don't think I'm running down money. It's the most useful stuff in the world to have. Especially when you haven't got any of it. But so are kisses in the moonlight. And I guess

each one alone isn't much good. You've got to have both."

"You can starve on kisses alone," Jo Anne said.

"Correct. And choke on money alone."

"Well you needn't make it sound so—so predatory! Do you think I'd go out with Harvey if I didn't like him?"

"Like this?" Timmy said softly.

Astonishingly he was beside her, an arm across her shoulders, a big hand tipping back her chin. Then his lips came down on hers, gently, but with an increasing warmth that clung and molded her mouth into a tingling circle of flame. It was so good that she pushed him away with frightened strength.

"Typical male psychology," she said, reaching for a mirror to inspect her lipstick. Her voice was elaborately calm to cover the pounding of her heart. "You think all you have to do is kiss a girl and she'll swoon in your arms. Grow up."

"Touché," he murmured. "It was nice, anyway." He got back into his corner of the couch. "What time is wonder boy due?"

"Eight o'clock and you needn't be sarcastic."

"It's eight o'clock now."

"You can give him five minutes grace, can't you?"

Timmy inspected his shoes and was silent. She watched him out of the corner of her eye. He looked particularly nice tonight, she thought. That suit—it was undoubtedly new; she didn't remember ever seeing it before. Yet it seemed somehow familiar, as though it belonged to him and he to it. He was so nice, so big and rugged and kind, even when he was doing his darndest to be nasty.

Timmy, Timmy, said her heart, why can't things be different? Why are our lives such a tangled snarl so that we don't know what we want and can't have what we most desire and never know what is really good for us?

"Eight-twenty," said Timmy.

Jo Anne gave a start. She'd forgotten about Harvey. But brought back to reality she began to burn again.

Twenty minutes late!

"I told you the four-flusher wasn't coming," Timmy remarked calmly.

And just then the phone rang. Jo Anne leaped at it. "Hello!"

It was Harvey's voice. "Kid, I'm terribly sorry. Can you forgive me? A deal that's really big—I just couldn't pass it up. Call you again, soon?"

"Of course . . ." She let the receiver slide slowly into place.

"Not coming, eh?" Timmy said. "Now as I was saying—"

"Timmy Hale . . ." She faced him again with hands on hips. "How did you know—why were you so sure he wasn't coming?"

His eyes were serious, staring up at her.

"You poor, defenseless babe," he said gently. "You really fell for his line, didn't you? Thought he was rolling in dough, and because you hated this life so, you'd grit your teeth and make yourself love him."

Abruptly a little giggle escaped Jo Anne's lips. She plumped herself down on the couch.

"I didn't do a very good job of talking it into myself," she confessed. "Know what I felt just now when he called?"

"What?"

"Nothing at all. Except maybe a slight sense of relief. Not disappointment. Timmy—I'm glad you're here."

"That's my cue," he said and took her in his arms.

Then for a while there were only murmurings and a good deal of kissing.

Presently Jo Anne disengaged herself and began patting her hair into place.

"Oh, I do love you, you nut," she said. "I was just stubborn about it. But I guess I'm licked. My fling didn't last long. Now tell me why you were so certain Harvey wouldn't show up tonight."

"Easy," Timmy said. "See this suit I'm wearing? Don't you recognize it?"

"Recognize it?"

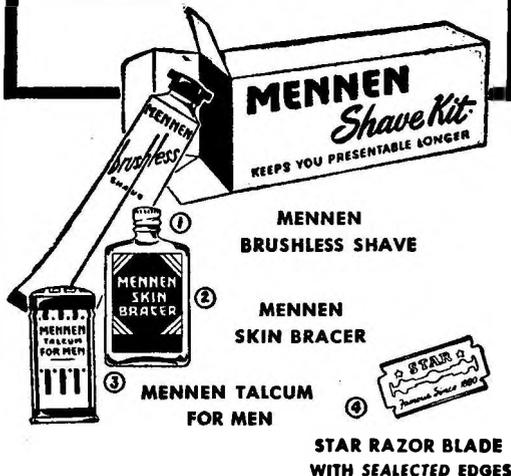
"Sure. It's Harvey's. I went up to his room tonight and while he was taking

(Concluded on page 107)

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Lover, Come Back



by GEORGIA STUART

*Fran was a juke-box jockey with a groovy line of patter,
but when it came to romance she almost went off the beam!*

FRAN switched over on the control board, and gave with the patter. "Hello, hello," she began, in her rich voice. "This is Fran, your Juke-Box Jockey, and your regular full hour show. Night owls—do you have circles under your eyes? Well—'light some place, and listen to the best platters we have to offer, with comments, wise and otherwise, by me.

"I'd like to start tonight's show with something old but good—so here's a Bix platter—I won't insult your intelligence

by telling you the name of it. Here it turns!"

The shiny, black disc revolved, and Fran relaxed a moment at the control board. Directly behind her slim, straight back, a face appeared at the glass partition, and began rapping on the glass.

She caught the tiny sound, and turned around. Seeing whose face it was, she almost frowned—but changed her mind and smiled. She opened the door, and beckoned for him to come in.

"Hello, Ken," she said.

"Can I talk?" that young man asked, somewhat unnecessarily.

"Of course," she said. "The mike's not on when the record is playing—I hope. Sit down, Ken, you might as well."

"Now that is what I call a lavish welcome," he said, grinning broadly and sitting down on one of the high stools.

"Well, I'm sorry," Fran said, contritely, "but I suppose you know you haven't missed barging in on my show a single night for three weeks."

"I'm glad you remembered," Ken pointed out.

"Remembered what, goon man?"

"That tonight is our third weekaversary," he said.

"Oh, great," Fran shrugged. "Now, we're celebrating, yet."

"See here," Ken said. "Every night, you say right over the air that visitors are welcome to drop in on your show—in fact, you make it sound like they're all greeted with open arms."

"Please—no insinuations, sir."

He ignored her. "Another thing—you have no idea what a shock it is for people to see you, after hearing you on the air. With that voice, they get a mental picture of a statuesque, tall girl, on the decidedly solid side. Then, when they get a look at you, they can't believe you're so little, and slim. Besides—you sound like a brunette on the air, and you turn out to have long, soft, golden hair."

"Red," she contradicted.

"Golden."

"Red."

"Golden."

"Red!"

"All right," he compromised. "Golden red."

"You wouldn't have said that when I was a little girl," Fran said, reminiscently. "My hair was copper red, all the way down to my shoulders. And I was as proud as a witch about it. I remember, Pop beat up the barber, the time he cut it too short. And I cried all night."

"My, you must have been a vain little devil."

"Why, you— Whoops!" Fran interrupted herself, and dashed to the control board. She stopped the turn-table.

"How was that, you fiends?" she crooned into the mike. "Are you sent

[Turn page]

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yet? If not, this next one will do it. Incidentally, you know where the telephone is, if you want to call in any requests. Ask for anything you like—if it isn't too corny, I'll play it. Gives you a sort of feeling of power, you know, having life or death authority over all these discs. Shall I break one of them for you? There are two or three I'd like to. All right, not now."

She chatted on for a moment, while Ken grinned at her.

"Incidentally," she informed her fans, "we've a distinguished visitor in the studio tonight—again. It's that distinguished golf pro, Ken Williams. Would you care to say something distinguished into the mike, Ken Williams?"

"Yes," he said, poking his face alongside hers. "I'd like to say that that part about visitors being welcome is strictly hokum. The little lady here tosses anybody out that stays over five minutes."

"That's a lie," Fran said, laughing. She pushed his face away. "And that's enough from the guest artists. More music."

THE turn-table was spinning again—and Fran discovered that, although she had pushed Ken's face away, it had bounced right back again, into her own. Sun darkened, and rather handsome at that, he was grinning straight into her eyes. His hair, black and straight, was tumbling a bit onto his forehead.

She got up from the control board, and stood by the window.

"Watch it," she cautioned. "That's distinctly not approved by the Federal Communications Commission."

Defying that august body, Ken walked over to her, and then put one arm around her.

"Look—go away," she defended.

"Uh-uh. I love you."

"What, again?" she sighed.

"Not again. Yet."

"You can't possibly, you know," she explained, patiently. "We've only just met."

"Makes no difference. Don't you believe in—"

"In love at first sight? Yes, I do. I believe in love at first sight, and then watch it closely for about six months, to be sure it's really love!"

"Practical," he conceded, "but hardly romantic."

"Please stand away from me, Ken," she urged. "Suppose the boss decided to drop in? He believes in strictly business. In a radio station, that's the only way to avoid those horrible little boners, like announcing a cowboy show transcribed, and having it turn out to be a song recital by Madame Hen."

Ken stood back. "All right," he said. "I really had hoped, though, that you might feel a little better disposed towards me. You see—I'm giving up. After tonight. I'm leaving."

"Leaving?"

"Yes. They need a pro in Florida, at a pretty big municipal links. I really had thought of taking the job some time ago, just for a change. But—when I met you—I sort of thought I'd stick around for a while."

"Oh, Ken, I'm really terribly sorry you're going!"

"Want me to stay?" he asked, challengingly.

"Don't ask me," Fran protested. "I like you, really. But you know how things are with me—on account of Rog."

Ken nodded grimly. "This is Roger Ford, your announcer for station WHEW," he mimicked in a deep-pitched, rich voice, full of overtones and poise.

"Yes—I know Rog. Your day-time announcer boy-friend. But—tell me, how do you know you love each other. You never get to see each other, do you?"

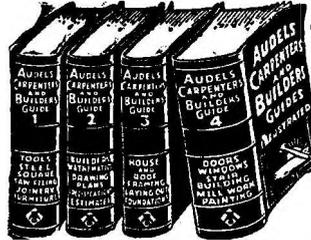
"It's pretty hard," she admitted. "Working different shifts for so long now. But, Ken, I want you to understand about Rog. He happens to be just about the most decent, the sweetest guy I ever met. He was the first man I met when I came to town. He was swell to me. If he hadn't helped me, at the control board, I wouldn't have lasted two days. And, I wouldn't hurt him for anything in the world."

"He's not the kind of man for you," Ken said. "There's something unreal about him. He reminds me of a piece of spaghetti, looking for some grated cheese to lie down in. Besides, does he have to wear that mustache?"

[Turn page]

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"He—he likes it," Fran defended, warmly. "Besides, don't talk about Rog to me. I love him. He—he's just about the sweetest guy in the world."

"All right, so he's sweet. Do you intend to marry for sugar?"

"Skip it," Fran said. "Anyway, Ken, if you're really going, I'd like to say good-bye, and it's been swell knowing you—maybe sweller than I've admitted."

"Hey!" he protested. "Not yet. I'll be around for a few days yet, you know. I expect to see you every night as usual, till I leave."

"Whoops! Excuse me!" Fran dashed frantically back to a turn-table that had been scrunching aimlessly for some little time—at the end of a record.

When she finished her announcement, and turned around again, Ken had let himself out. He was gone.

Roger Ford—affectionately known to all as Rog—was pretty well summed up in Fran's description—one of the most decent and one of the sweetest guys in the world. But, as Ken had intimated, he was much gentler than was exactly Fran's idea of a man to be taken seriously.

This fact she loyally denied to herself as she hurried to meet him at lunch. At his urgent request, and by sacrificing some of her sleep, the rendezvous had been arranged.

Over the menu, he betrayed definite symptoms of nervousness. Fran asked him about it.

"Well," he said, with the same beautifully vibrant voice that thrilled so many thousands of women listeners—and slightly nauseated an equal number of men listeners, "well, there was a little excitement in the office this morning."

He stroked his tiny, black mustache. "Judy raised quite a rumpus—insisted on changing her vacation to the second week in August. She raised so much sand that Mr. Raethel finally agreed to it—and told me I'd have to wait until the first week in September."

Fran's eyes flashed slightly. "And, no doubt, you agreed to it, without any protest?"

"Well," Rog admitted, "I didn't see any reason to kick up a fuss. I don't really mind too much—if you don't."

"No, I don't mind at all! It looks like there's no chance of our ever getting off together at the same time anyway. Nonetheless, it burns me up to see you, Mr. Raethel, and all the rest, letting Judy twist you around her little finger. She gets her way about everything."

"I—I didn't really mind so much, sweet," Rog smiled, making an attempt to hide the fact that he was rapidly growing more ill at ease.

Fran was not deceived. "What do you want to talk to me about, Rog? You said it was something important."

"Well, yes," Rog said, attempting to toss off a light laugh. "There was something pretty important." He swallowed, adjusted his tight collar, and looked a bit blankly at Fran.

"Don't blither, Rog," Fran said calmly. "Start at the beginning."

"All right," Rog managed to swallow. "Well, Fran, you and I haven't really seen anything at all of each other, for the past few months."

She nodded.

"Things change, Fran—things change, in that length of time. Oh," he went on, hastily, "I'm crazy about you, I think you're terrific—but." He stopped. The glib Ford dialogue seemed to desert him, off the air.

"Go on, Rog," Fran prompted. "Do you mean you've got another girl?"

"Well, yes, sort of," he admitted, relieved. "I have been going with somebody else lately, and I thought you should definitely know about it, with us more or less living in two different worlds."

"Sure I should," Fran agreed. She observed, to herself, that the news was neither shocking nor particularly distasteful to her.

Rog had another girl. She felt a little relieved—Rog was somewhat of a moral responsibility. One sort of felt obliged to worry about him.

"I don't mind," she told him. "Things have sort of changed with me, in the past few weeks."

What on earth, she wondered, did she mean by a remark like that?

"What's she like, Rog?" she asked.

"Well"—he grinned, a little redly—"it's Judy."

[Turn page]

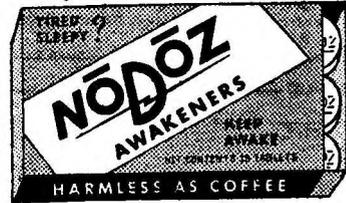
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"Judy? Judy Caldwell?" Fran shrieked, before she could catch herself. "Oh, no, Rog, no!"

"We do sort of make a strange pair," he admitted. "But—there you are. We've discovered we want to get married."

"You just ignore me," Fran soothed. "I couldn't help laughing at the idea, for a moment there, but, when I stop to think of it, it doesn't seem like such a bad idea after all. You need somebody like Judy to look after you, somebody tough and strong."

"That's what she says, too," Rog grinned. He was no strong man, but he knew it, and he didn't particularly care. People liked him that way.

"You'll be happy, Rog," Fran assured him. "You always will be."

LA TE at night, back in the studio, Fran remembered that remark, "you'll be happy, Rog." Sure he would. But, would she?

Now that she had examined the situation with an open mind, she had to admit that, although she adored Rog, she hadn't the least desire to marry him. He was more like a kid brother. She could adore him just as much as Mr. Judy Caldwell.

However, this release from a restraining emotional situation also had the effect of opening her eyes toward another one.

With a panicky flutter, she recalled the fact that Ken had decided to go away. The fact was downright distasteful to her. She was a free woman, now. Rog was happily provided for.

But, she wasn't.

Well, he would drop in tonight, as he had promised—or threatened—to do. And, without actually throwing herself at him, she would certainly give him to understand that things were a little different. And, she wouldn't be so stingy in admitting she liked him.

Her dialogue suffered a little, under the strain of trying to watch the glass partition, directly behind her, and talk over the mike at the same time.

"Your Juke-Box Jockey, Fran Mayhew, is on the job. I've got some platters tonight that'll murder you—mayhem by Mayhew, you might say."

She chatted thusly from time to time until finally, a light tap sounded behind her, on the glass.

She whirled around.

No, it was not Ken. It was a messenger boy with a huge box of flowers, and a note.

She read the note in disjointed fragments. Good-by. . . I've decided to leave tonight, feel a little bleak about the whole affair. . . I love you, Fran. . . Good-by. . . Going to be strange, listening to your program on the air, knowing it's you, knowing what you look like, how sweet you are. . . wanting you. . . As long as I'm in this part of the world, I'll be listening, Fran. . . I love you, good-by. . ."

The darn thing got harder and harder to read, as her eyes clouded up a little. Also, her hair seemed to be falling in her eyes.

She straightened her back, and tossed the hair into place—around her shoulders.

Bad timing, she rued the situation, just a matter of bad timing. Me, a disc jockey, such bad timing.

The night owls got very little chatter after that. Fran moved around more or less dazedly, changing records, and meditating.

What could she do? He didn't even give an address. Of course, he'll write sooner or later—maybe. Suppose he gets that idiotic man-notion of forgetting her. Anyway, even if she does get to write to him, what could she say—come back? Come back—I've decided I love you.

Where was it he had said he was going? Some big golf course, somewhere in Florida. That was all.

The straight back began to droop a little at the control board. It kept hitching itself up again, determined not to slump.

The phone rang.

"Hello, WHEW," Fran said, numbly.

"Is this Fran?" an irate voice demanded.

"Yes—yes, it is," she replied.

"What's the idea of all that slush?" the voice grated. "For the past half hour, slush, slush, slush, let's have something *GROOVY!*"

[Turn page]

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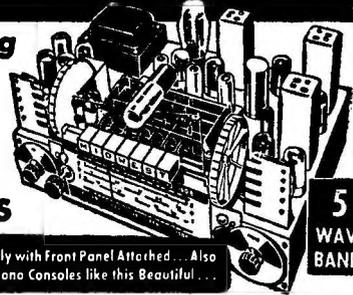
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"Sure—I'm sorry," Fran murmured, and set the receiver back down.

She picked up the needle, and started another record, right in the middle of the preceding one.

The phone rang again.

"Fran, have you gone crazy?" It was Mr. Raethel. "What are you doing? Leave the records alone, until they're finished. You know better than to break into a selection before it's finished!"

"I—I'm sorry, Mr. Raethel," she said, and walked absently over to the turntable and changed the record that was playing, right in the middle of the number.

The phone shrieked again, and she realized what she had done. She took the receiver off the hook, and let it lie there, clicking and barking.

She started the turn table again on some record, heavens knew what, and sat at the control board.

She felt sorry for herself. She had practically chased Ken away, through her own stupidity. She'd probably never see him again.

To heck with the back. Let it slump. And, her hair was in her eyes again—like spun gold—only wetter.

Behind her, at the glass, a tapping sound. She turned around.

A split second later, she had let him in.

"Ken! I thought you had gone!"

"I had," he said. He looked expectantly and hungrily at Fran, for a moment, trying to decide if it was all right.

It was, he concluded, and put both arms around her—and kissed the daylight's out of her.

To Fran, it was a little like kissing a skyscraper, only lots nicer. She postponed all thoughts of questions or arguments and was just grateful for small miracles.

"Why did you come back?" she asked, still in his arms, but recovered sufficiently from the kiss to speak.

"Because you wanted me to," he claimed.

"How did you know—mental telepathy or something?"

Ken laughed, happily. "Mental telepathy, my eye. I was driving out of town, listening to you on the car radio.

Feeling pretty blue. Then, do you realize you played, in rapid succession, 'After You're Gone,' 'I've Changed My Heart,' and 'Lover Come Back to Me?' All of them, the corniest arrangements I've ever heard, but they sounded beautiful to me. I thought I'd better come back. Thought it was worth a try, anyway."

"Yi!" shrieked Fran, slipping away from him. "The record—let me go!"

She dashed to the control board, and cut in on the mike hurriedly.

"Signing off—a little late, folks—" she chattered, rapidly.

Ken crashed in behind her.

"Better late than never, folks," he shouted.

Thousands of indignant letters were received by station WHEW. Fran was no longer employed there, however. She was taking golf lessons in Florida, from her husband.

NOT FOR LOVE NOR MONEY

(Concluded from page 97)

a bath I borrowed it. Fits me pretty well, don't you think?"

"You borrowed it?" She gaped dumbly at him. "You mean—"

"Sure. It's the only suit he's got. Without it he's a prisoner in his room. That's why he couldn't get out tonight. Not because of a big deal. He hasn't any money, Jo Anne. Nothing but a line. He—"

He saw the pillow coming in time and ducked. It knocked over a lamp and the room was suddenly dark except for the light of a street lamp coming in the window. Its rays were feeble, but enough for Timmy to find Jo Anne's lips. And somehow she wasn't angry any more.

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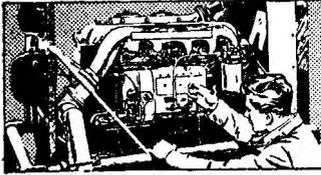
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THE VANITY CASE

(Continued from page 8)

let small brows accentuate the roundness. Curve the brow slightly and lengthen it on the outer side.

Of course, if you have no feature faults, just let your brows take their natural course. In such cases, very little plucking is necessary—except for an occasional stray hair.

Art Note



HANGING SOME pictures? There's more to it than just banging your thumb with a hammer.

The modern trend tells us to get away from pictures hung too high—and we're all for it. It's no fun craning your neck to see what great-grandfather looked like when his "portrait as a young man" was done.

Naturally, pictures of all sizes can't be hung at the same level, but their centers of interest should be alike. And these centers should be as nearly as possible at the eye level of the average person. Some modern homes with low chairs and furnishings bring their pictures down to bear a close relationship with the tops of the furniture.

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Apply a generous amount of cream and give the face and neck a thorough massage for at least 15 minutes. Remove excessive cream but let a slight film remain on overnight. Take care of a good complexion!

Fresh as a Daisy



A GOOD shopping watchword is "washable". Particularly the career girl should stock up on items that are washable. A budding career girl can do a lot with one suit and a handful of accessories. In choosing gloves, dickies, blouses and scarfs remember that if they can be dunked overnight, they can manage to look daisy fresh all the time. Plan a drastic color wardrobe that will go well with most any color and buy different sets of accessories in colors that will team up.

Always try to be well groomed—during office hours as well as after. Did you know that a tape attached to the lower corner at either side of a wide square neckline will keep it from gaping. The tape is attached at the inside, of course, and the ends are hooked in back.

We heartily recommend investment in a large hunk of art gum eraser for emergency cleaning jobs. It will erase surface smudges on glace kid gloves, bags, suede shoes and a raft of other items.

Do It Now!



TAKE CARE of it—it's all part of being a good housewife and maintaining a charming home.

For your china and glassware—liquids, salads or any foods that leave dishes damp will injure china if left standing. Wash immediately after use—not in an aluminum dishpan either, or you'll find your dishes marked. Soaking, too, is bad. It eventually softens the design. Ugly scratches on your china are mostly the result of careless stacking. With highly prized glassware, lay a towel in the dishpan and another on the drainboard to reduce chances of breakage. Smooth out tiny nicks by rubbing carefully with fine emery paper.

About your linens, remember that your bedding's not meant for a laundry bag. After sheets have been washed, go over them carefully. Mend any rips. You'll find that

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A Different Dish



BESIDES BEING a competent actress, Alice Faye is a good cook. One of her favorite meat dishes is called "tallarne" and this is how she makes it.

Ingredients:

- 2 heaping cupfuls uncooked noodles
- 1 lb. round steak, ground once
- can of tomato sauce or soup
- 1 can corn
- 1 can ripe olives
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 heaping tablespoonfuls butter
- 1 cup water

Method:

Mince and fry onion in butter until brown. Add meat. Stir and cook until browned. Add tomato sauce and cup of water. Add noodles; stir and cook until the noodles are tender. More water may be added to keep the mixture moist. Salt to taste. Add corn and olives. Pour into large buttered casserole. Sprinkle with cheese. Cook 45 minutes in 350 degree F. oven.

Really a different and wonderful dish! And something we recommend for dinner party-fare on a budget!

Your Dresser Drawers



HITTING SNAGS from the rough edges of your dresser drawers? A little decorative lining of the drawers will solve that situation and add a touch of glamour to the place where you keep your pretties.

Pad the drawer with a thin layer of cotton or a soft piece of flannel. Even cardboard will do if that's all you can get your hands on.

Now cover the padding with some attractive fabric, a pattern that matches your bedroom ensemble or a soft, solid color that blends well with your decorative scheme. Tack to the edge of the drawer and cover the tacks with a straight, narrow binding.

Special note: sprinkle a little sachet in the padding. It lasts and lasts and lasts!

Fur Facts



COMES THE first Fall day and a woman's fancy turns to thoughts of furs. If your yen is for a luxury coat, you'd best forget it—prices on these are still way up.

However, if you cannot control your desire completely, remember that a fur coat is a long term investment. Go to a reliable furrier or fur department, tell them what you want to spend and have an open mind. Far, far better to own the very best muskrat or skunk than a cheap version of one of the more expensive furs.

Consider, when you are out to buy, the low-priced mouton or coney. These very warm furs are being done beautifully these days. And they wear and wear and wear. And with the splendid blacks and browns they have been getting in dyeing these furs, they can go everywhere over everything.

We like, too, the process for making lapin that looks like leopard. Spotted coney, to you, but it looks so much like the real thing, that a real leopard might get a gleam in his eye if he viewed it at a distance of about ten feet.

The Weigh to Reduce



LOTS OF US not only talk about reducing—we do something about it. And comes the happy day when your weight has reached normal. You're tempted to step onto a weighing machine every time you see one—you glow when your friends tell you how wonderful you look—and it's even more miraculous the way you feel.

Before you can be tempted away from this grand feeling that all's right with the world, promise yourself that you'll keep your splendid figure and your good health.

Use a protective-non-fattening diet. Certain foods are wonderful workers and must be used every day. Here's the list:

A quart to a pint of milk—served as a beverage or used in soups, creamed vegetables, custards or ice-cream.

1 glass of orange or tomato juice (for vitamin C)

- 1 other fruit—raw, canned or stewed
- 1 raw salad (2 salads are even better)
- 1 cooked leafy vegetable
- 2 tablespoons (1 ounce) of butter
- 1 egg, plain or used in made dishes
- Vitamin D from direct sunshine, irradiated foods or sun lamp.

Begin your menu-making with these foods. They'll keep you young and healthy. Watch your weight carefully. If it starts to go up or down, adjust the calorie value of

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Be a Smoothie



TO BE A real smoothie, start off with a smooth makeup job. And the basis of makeup is a good foundation. Sparingly, on the foundation, though.

All you want to do is provide an even, thin film for holding powder and blending rouge more smoothly. Apply the base on your forehead, cheeks, neck, chin and a tiny dab on your nose. Blend it over the entire face with upward strokes. Make sure you go completely to the hairline, ears and neck.

Use a cream rouge when you use a creamy makeup base. Dry rouge should be blended over powder only. Cream rouge is applied directly after the base. Dip your finger into the rouge and make three dots on each cheek. Blend the rouge over your cheekbone, fading it out at the hairline. There should be no line of demarcation where the rouge ends. And never, never, leave round balls of red rouge on your cheeks.

Next press on your powder. Really cover your face with it. Then with a clean piece of cotton do a dusting job, removing the surface powder and leaving a smooth, natural looking finish which will last and last.

Now for the lips. They must be dry. Make the outline of the upper lip with your lipstick and fill in. Press lips together to transfer lipstick on the lower lip. To remove excess lipstick, press cleansing tissue against them.

Follow the contour of your mouth as far as possible. Don't paint on lips that are completely out of proportion to the shape of your face.

Let's Take a Walk



IN CONNECTION with better feet for Americans, lots of research has been done and specialists are convinced that no part of the body is more deserving of good care than the feet. Did you know that the average person walks about 7 7/8 miles a day?

A pedometer survey revealed some surprising figures. A housekeeper—without leaving her house—walks every year a distance equal to that from Boston to San Francisco. A schoolgirl, at school and at play,

averages 11½ miles a day; a boy does 15. One girl in a business office walked 57 miles a week and a stenographer walked 43 miles in a week, though riding to and from work.

The answer to all this is properly fitting shoes and stockings.

New Look Smocks



FROM THE grapevine comes news that smocks are the latest rave in Hollywood—but smocks that are a far cry from the definition given in Webster's. These Hollywood smocks are glamour items of first rank—curve cutting numbers, slits on the sides and belted either in back, front or all around.

Maureen O'Sullivan has been seen in one of sheer eyelet embroidery worn over a slim black dress and belted in front with a narrow black belt. Gail Russell went to a preview and wore one of white taffeta splashed with scarlet poppies over a narrow white skirt. Veronica Lake was seen at a very fancy party in one of filmy black lace worn over a pale pink dress.

A Message from

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EVERY business has its occupational diseases and in radio we have something called mike fright. Since we all manage to get over it with experience, I suppose that mike fright is only a fear of the unknown.

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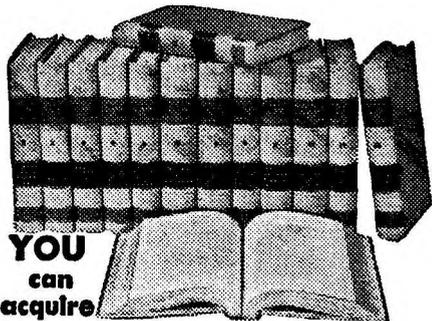
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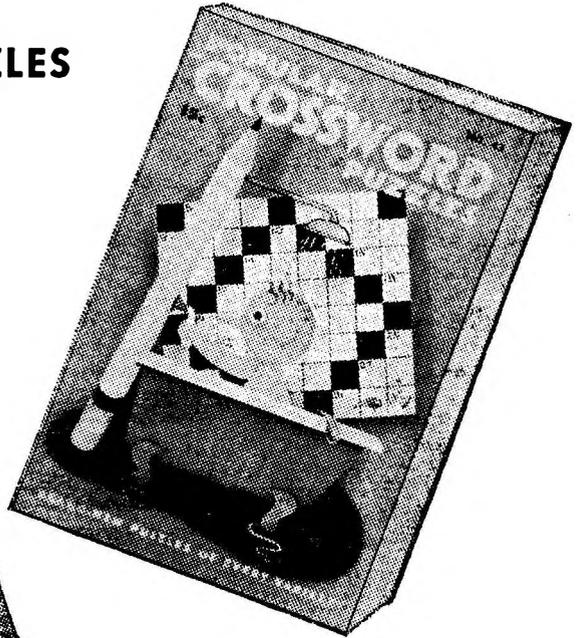
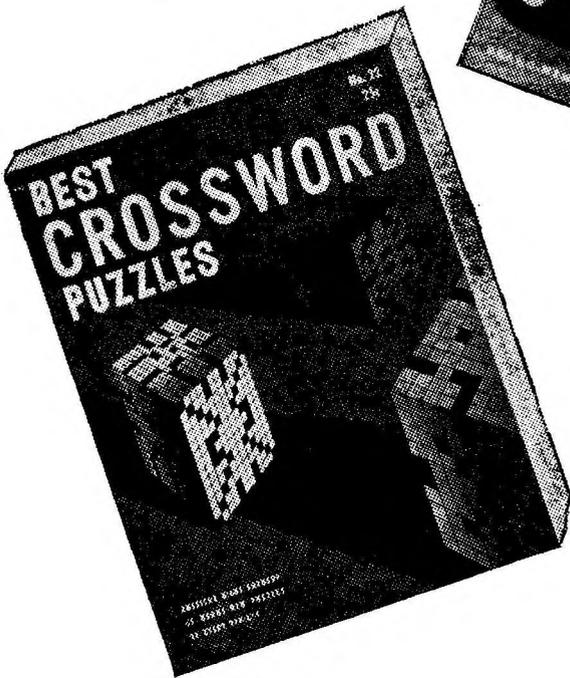
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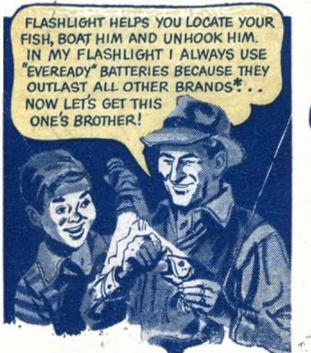
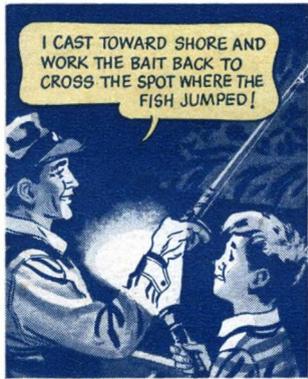
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