

STREET & SMITH'S **LOVE STORY**★

EVERY WEEK **MAGAZINE** JUNE 13, 1931
ILLUSTRATED

15¢
20¢ IN
CANADA



JUNE BRIDE ISSUE

June 13

★

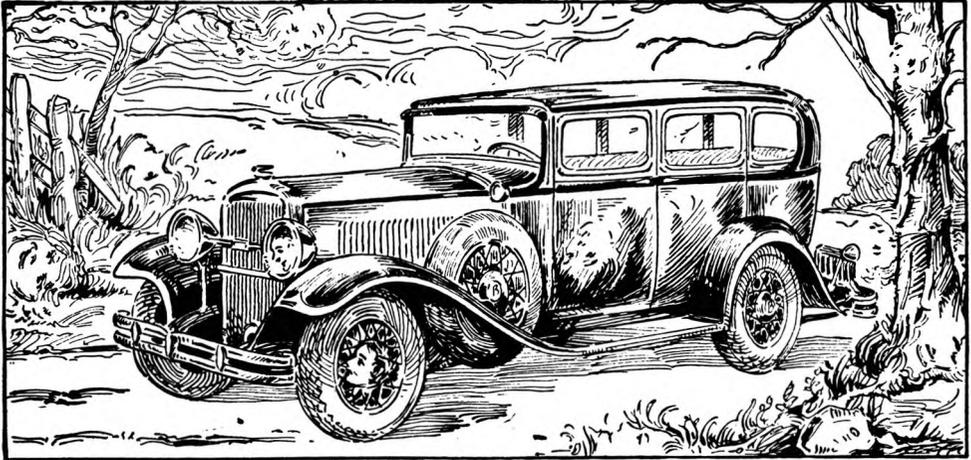
STREET &
SMITH'S

LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

15¢

Win \$3,700⁰⁰

OR BUICK 8 SEDAN AND \$2,500 IN CASH



Can you find 5 faces in the picture?

Sensational money-making opportunity for everybody! You may win \$3,700 if you prefer all cash or handsome latest model Buick 8 Sedan and \$2,500 in cash. This offer is made by a prominent business house for advertising purposes. Someone is going to win \$3,700—why not you?

I want to send you this prize. Act quick! Send your answer today and qualify to win.

All you do to qualify for an opportunity in this

great cash prize advertising plan is to find five faces in picture.

People riding in the auto above got out of the car. Their faces are shown in odd places about the picture. Some faces are upside down, others look sideways, some look straight at you. If you can pick out 5 or more faces, mark them, clip the picture and send to me together with your name and address. Sharp eyes will find them. Can you?

Easy to Win - \$12,960 in 103 Cash Prizes

We will give away \$12,960 in cash. You are sure to profit if you take an active part. In case of ties duplicate prizes will be given. You get \$3,700 if you win grand first prize. In addition there are 102 other wonderful cash prizes. Grand second prize

\$1,000 in cash. Grand third prize \$500 in cash. Also four other prizes of \$500.00 each and many others. All told \$12,960 in cash. Money to pay you is already on deposit in the Mercantile Trust and Savings Bank, a big Chicago bank.

SEND NO MONEY The main thing is—send in your answer today. You can share in this advertising cash distribution. Hurry! and take no chance of losing the extra reward of \$1,000 for promptness if you win grand first prize. Act now! You don't need to send a penny of your money to win! Just find five faces in the picture above and mail with coupon at once for particulars.

\$1,000⁰⁰
for Promptness

Send your answer at once. Make sure to qualify for \$1,000 extra given for promptness if you win the Buick Sedan—a total of \$3,700 if you prefer all cash.

Send Coupon Today

THOMAS LEE, Mgr.
427 W. Randolph St., Dept. 48, Chicago, Ill.
I have found five faces in the \$3,700.00 prize picture and am anxious to win a prize. Please advise me how I stand.

me.....
Address.....
.....State.....

Indiana Farmer Wins \$3,500!



This is a picture of Mr. C. H. Essig, Argos, Ind., taken on his farm. He writes: "Wish to acknowledge receipt of your \$3,500 prize check. Oh, boy! This is the biggest sum of money I ever had in my hands. It is indeed a fortune to me."

Hundreds have been rewarded in our past advertising campaigns. Mrs. Edna D. Ziller, of Kentucky, won \$1,950. Miss Tillie Bohle, of Iowa, \$1,500. Be Prompt! Answer today!



WHAT *will* you be doing ONE YEAR *from* today?

THREE hundred and sixty-five days from now — what?

Will you still be struggling along in the same old job at the same old salary — worried about the future — never quite able to make both ends meet?

One year from today will you still be putting off your start toward success — thrilled with ambition one moment and then cold the next — delaying, waiting, fiddling away the precious hours that will never come again?

Don't do it, man — don't do it.

There is no greater tragedy in the world than that of a man who stays in the rut all his life, when with just a little effort he could advance.

Make up your mind today that you're going to train yourself to do some one thing well. Choose the work you like best in the list below, mark an X beside it, and without cost or obligation, at least get the full story of what the I. C. S. can do for you.

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Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subject *before* which I have marked X.

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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architect | <input type="checkbox"/> Machinist | <input type="checkbox"/> Marine Engineer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architectural Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> Reading Shop Blue-prints | <input type="checkbox"/> Refrigeration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building Estimating | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Locomotives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Millworking | <input type="checkbox"/> Highway Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Brakes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Builder | <input type="checkbox"/> Surveying and Mapping | <input type="checkbox"/> Train Operation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contractor and Builder | <input type="checkbox"/> Gas Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Section Foreman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> Poolmaker | <input type="checkbox"/> R. R. Bridge and Building Foreman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structural Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Diesel Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Chemistry <input type="checkbox"/> Pharmacy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electrical Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Aviation Engines | <input type="checkbox"/> Coal Mining Engineer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Wiring | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric Lighting | <input type="checkbox"/> Automobile Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welding, Electric and Gas | <input type="checkbox"/> Plumbing | <input type="checkbox"/> Textile Overseer or Superintendent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telegraph Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Fitting | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Heating | <input type="checkbox"/> Woolen Manufacturing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Ventilation | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit Growing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Draftsman | <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary Engineer | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patternmaker | <input type="checkbox"/> Sheet Metal Worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Poultry Farming |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Steam Engineer | |

BUSINESS TRAINING COURSES

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Signs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Salesmanship | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil Service |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising | <input type="checkbox"/> Railway Mail Clerk |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Bookkeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Cartooning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial Work | | <input type="checkbox"/> Lumber Dealer |

Name..... Age.....

Street Address.....

City..... State.....

Occupation.....

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada



STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY MAGAZINE



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Vol. LXXXI

EVERY WEEK

Number 6

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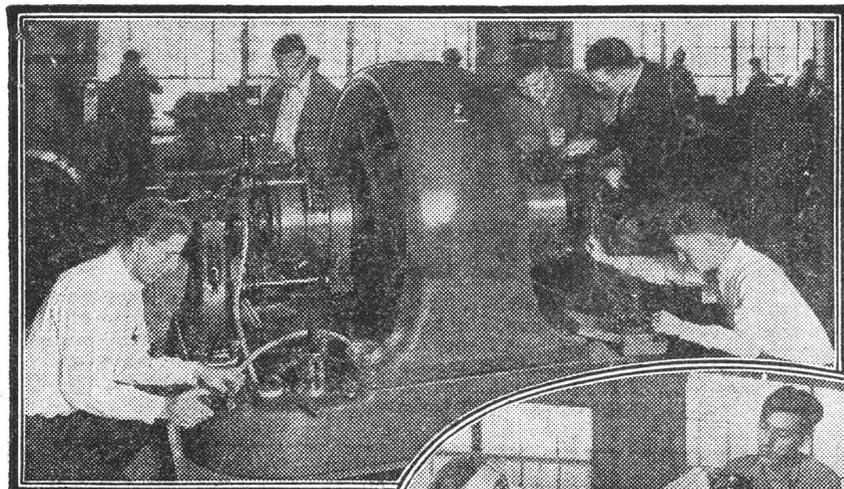
"June Week Love," by W. Carey Wonderly, in next week's issue. A story of youth and love at the Naval Academy in Annapolis.

Publication issued every week by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79-89 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y. Ormond G. Smith, President; George C. Smith, Vice President and Treasurer; George C. Smith, Jr., Vice President; Ormond V. Gould, Secretary. Copyright, 1931, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1931, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., Great Britain. Entered as Second-class Matter, April 21, 1921, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Canadian Subscription, \$7.50. Foreign, \$8.50.

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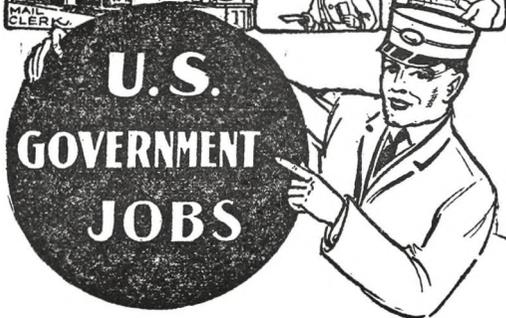
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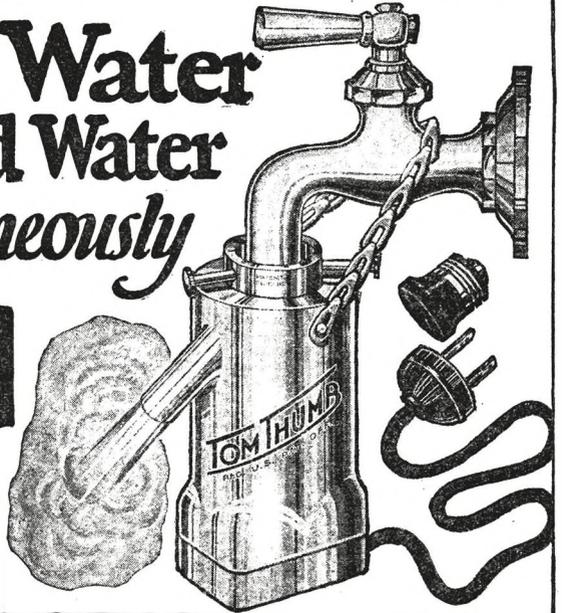
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Only \$3⁷⁵ Complete

Agents! This Marvelous Invention

Will Make Up to \$40⁰⁰ a Day Easy



KITCHEN



SHAVING



BATH



DOCTOR

Just plug in at the nearest electric outlet and presto!—you have instantaneous, continuous running hot water from your cold water faucet. This tells you in a nutshell why the invention of the Tom Thumb automatic electric hot water heater will make it easy for you to make up to \$40.00 a day.

The electric heated steaming hot water comes direct from the faucet instantaneously—yes, as quickly as you can turn on the current and the hot water runs indefinitely until you shut off the electricity. The cost is small—convenience is great. Useful wherever hot water is needed—no fuss or bother—attached to any faucet in a jiffy. Works on either AC or DC current. You and your customers will marvel and be delighted at this new discovery of electrical science. The small cost of \$3.75 for the Tom Thumb, Junior (110 volts) or \$5.75 for Tom Thumb, Senior (220 volts) does the work of any expensive hot water heating equipment costing several hundred dollars—the Tom Thumb absolutely eliminates the plumber or any other additional expense.

No Installation - Stick One On Faucet and Sale Is Made

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Terminal Products Co., Inc.
Dept. 1506, 200 Hudson St.
New York, N. Y.

The Tom Thumb electric hot water heater looks like a big money maker to me. I am sure interested in knowing how to make up to \$40.00 a day with this proposition. I have checked below the proposition I am interested in at this moment.

Enclosed find money order for \$2.75. Please send me one Tom Thumb Junior, order blanks and selling information. It is understood upon receipt of this sample outfit I will be permitted to take orders and collect \$1.00 cash deposit for every Tom Thumb, Jr. I sell, or \$1.50 for every Tom Thumb, Sr. I sell. It is understood I will send the orders to you and you will ship direct to my customers C.O.D. for the balance.

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Name

Street

City State

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29x4.50-20"	2.40	1.16	31x3 1/2	2.70	1.15
30x4.50-21"	2.45	1.20	31x4	2.95	1.15
29x4.75-19"	2.48	1.20	32x4	2.95	1.18
30x4.96-21"	2.90	1.56	33x4	2.95	1.15
30x5.00-20"	2.95	1.56	34x4	3.00	1.18
29x5.25-18"	2.95	1.35	32x4 1/2	3.20	1.46
30x5.25-20"	2.95	1.35	33x4 1/2	3.20	1.46
31x5.25-21"	3.20	1.35	30x5	3.60	1.76
30x5.77-20"	3.20	1.40	30x6	3.60	1.76
31x6.00-19"	3.20	1.40	32x6	4.48	1.76
32x6.00-20"	3.20	1.46	34x6	4.48	1.76
33x6.00-21"	3.20	1.46			
32x6.20-20"	3.65	1.76			

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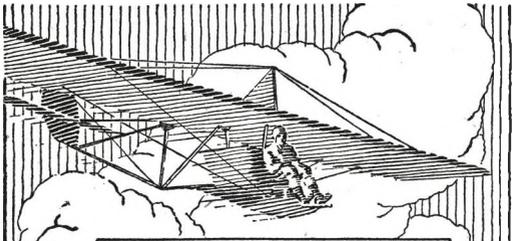
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GLIDER of the HIGHWAY!

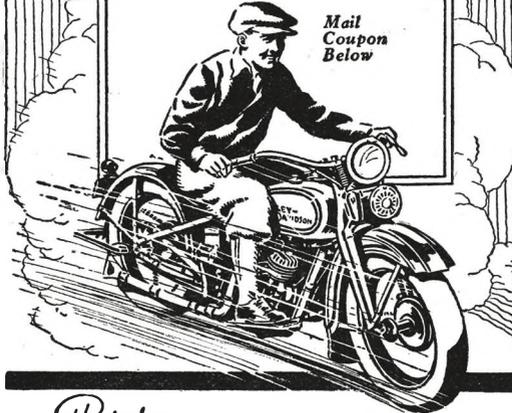
SOARING down the roads — effortless — silent — smooth — the Harley-Davidson is a true Glider of the Highway. It responds instantly to every whim — answers every sway of your body.

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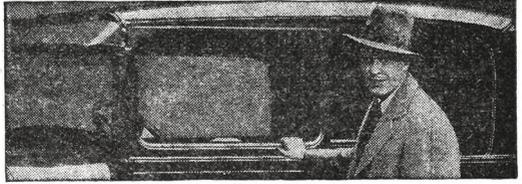
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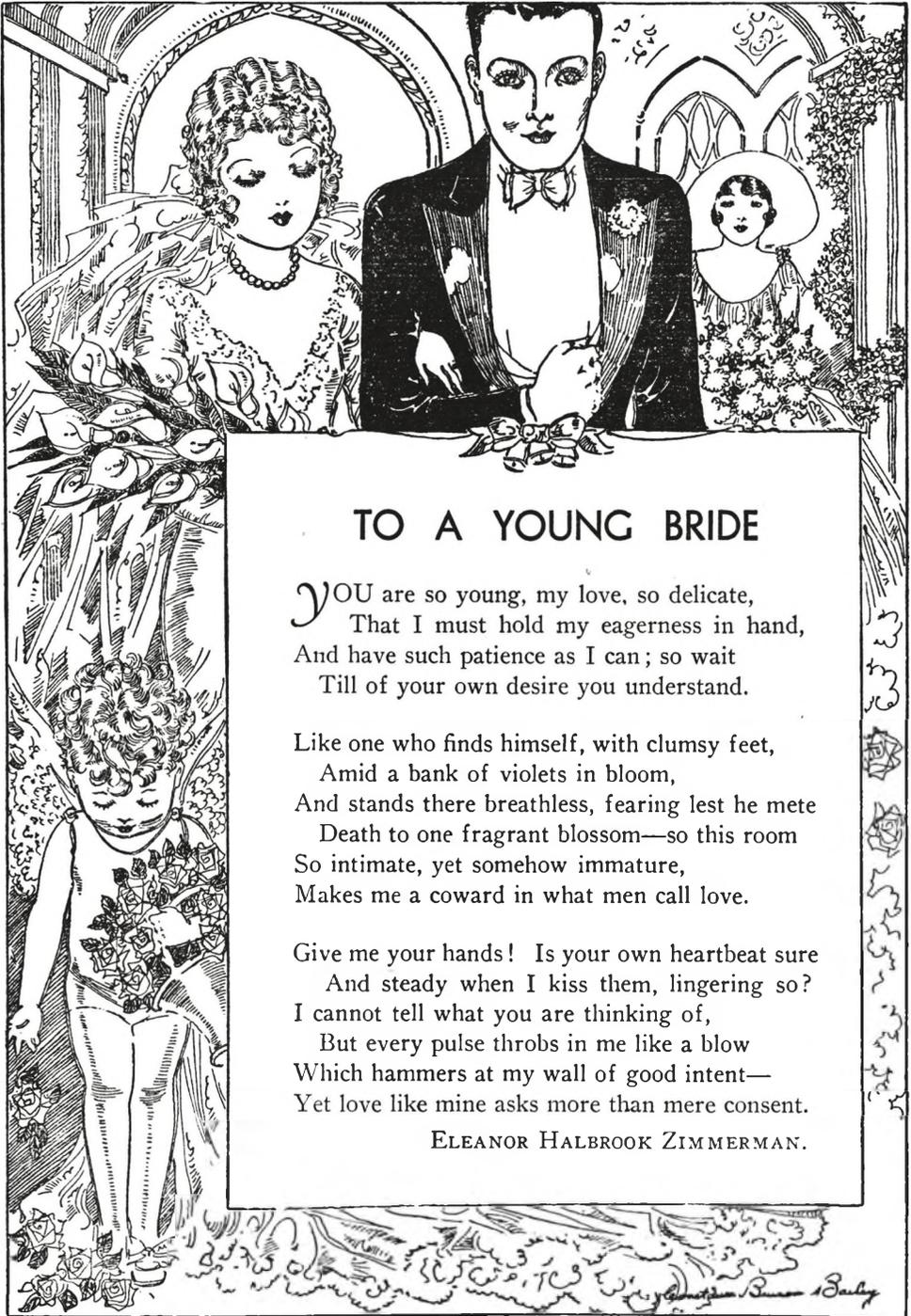
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(Please print or write plainly)



TO A YOUNG BRIDE

YOU are so young, my love, so delicate,
That I must hold my eagerness in hand,
And have such patience as I can; so wait
Till of your own desire you understand.

Like one who finds himself, with clumsy feet,
Amid a bank of violets in bloom,
And stands there breathless, fearing lest he mete
Death to one fragrant blossom—so this room
So intimate, yet somehow immature,
Makes me a coward in what men call love.

Give me your hands! Is your own heartbeat sure
And steady when I kiss them, lingering so?
I cannot tell what you are thinking of,
But every pulse throbs in me like a blow
Which hammers at my wall of good intent—
Yet love like mine asks more than mere consent.

ELEANOR HALBROOK ZIMMERMAN.

BRIDAL

By Barbara



TEARS

Dunmar



TESSA HARDING slowly picked up an envelope from the pile of letters before her.

It contained another invitation which she supposed she would have to refuse. She had been secretary to Alec Cartwright for more than a year, and part of her duties consisted of refusing the many invitations that were showered upon him. For he was young, rich, and unmarried, and in demand at all parties.

She glanced rather wistfully at the important-looking card she drew from the envelope.

A fancy-dress ball!

Tessa paused for a moment to conjure up a gay vision of light and color, of music and dancing, of delightful love-making—all the joyous things of which her own life was so empty.

Could any existence be duller than hers?—she asked herself drearily. It

was the same monotonous round, day after day, It was all work and no play, save for an occasional visit to a theater or movie with a girl friend.

Yet she longed for excitement and pleasure, wanted to warm her youth in the sun of frivolity. Oh, if only she had been born rich and good-looking like her employer!

There was a bowl of roses on the table, and she fingered the velvety petals as a thought flitted through her mind.

Suppose she were going to the ball with Alec; that she would dance with his arms around her!

The mere idea made her heart throb more quickly, brought a flush to her cheeks. He was just the type of man of whom she had sometimes dreamed; a man of whom any girl would be proud; tall, well-set, broad-shouldered. His face was grave and strong, his brown eyes were fascinating, his mouth could be sometimes stern and sometimes amazingly gentle.

She flushed still deeper. It must be the sunshine on the roses that was putting such fantastic thoughts into her head, the call of summer that on days like this was heard even in city streets. "Come out and play," it seemed to call. "You will be young only once, and youth is the time for adventure, for love."

But adventure would never come to her, certainly not through her employer, she thought. He never even saw her, not really. She was to him just a secretary, a machine.

"Of what are you thinking?"

Alec Cartwright's voice made Tessa start guiltily. He had come in quietly and was standing by the window, his dark eyes fixed on her, noticing the wistful expression on her pale face.

Hastily she picked up the invitation card.

"Do you wish me to refuse this invitation?" she asked, avoiding his question. "It is for a masquerade party."

He hesitated for a moment, watching a sunbeam play on her brown hair and find a strand of gold. It struck him as odd that he had never noticed before that there were gold threads among the brown, or that her mouth was red and sweet and had rather a sad droop. He wondered again what thoughts had brought such sorrowful lines to a mouth that was surely made for laughter, and why she avoided looking at him, almost as if she were afraid of him.

It had not occurred to him until then to wonder about her. He had engaged her as his secretary because she seemed so admirably fitted for the post. Just the type of girl for which he was looking—businesslike, demure, and not particularly pretty.

This last had been an added qualification in his eyes, because his previous secretary had been unusually decorative and had obviously wished him to note the fact. As a rich bachelor he had found many girls only too ready to show him attentions that he did not desire, and it was refreshing to meet a girl who regarded him not as a man, but just as an employer.

It struck him suddenly that this girl was not plain at all. Her skin, though pale, was smooth and clear, her figure supple and slender in its dark dress, her hair fine and soft as silk—gold-brown silk, that made him feel as if he would like to touch it and feel it warm and living in his hand.

He said abruptly:

"I intended to refuse, but I have changed my mind. I will go to the party on one condition—that you go with me."

He was amazed at himself as soon as he had said it, and slightly amused.

What had possessed him to make such a suggestion? Was it pity?

But it was not like him to play the rôle of knight errant just because there was a suggestion of tears in eyes that

were mistily blue. Was it some other emotion that had made him yield to that sudden impulse, an emotion that perhaps he would have been wiser to ignore?

But it was too late to think of that now. He found himself waiting for her answer with an eagerness that was amazing and disturbing. So disturbing that he told himself he hoped she would refuse.

He saw the quick, startled color that flew to her cheeks, saw the pen drop unheeded from her fingers. There was breathless wonder in her voice as she exclaimed:

"You—you mean it?"

"Of course." Again he was surprised at himself, at the swift banishing of his doubts, the little feeling of triumph that ran through him. "Please say you'll come," he urged.

"But—but I don't think I can," Tessa protested, her cheeks scarlet now with a new embarrassment. "You see, I haven't anything to wear, nothing fit for a party like that."

Alec laughed suddenly. The change in her was more amazing than ever. Her flaming cheeks made her eyes a deeper, more startling blue; she was all at once vivid, arresting.

"That is easily remedied," he told her, taking out his wallet. "No, please don't refuse." He stopped the protest on her lips. "It is only right that I should be allowed to pay the expenses of the evening, since you are going just to please me. For you will go, won't you? I shall be horribly disappointed if you won't."

Tessa hesitated just a moment longer, though she knew what her answer would be.

The temptation was too great—he was offering her, if only for one evening, all that for which she had secretly longed—pleasure, gayety, a glimpse of a life in which she herself had no part, and which she would never see if she

refused this chance. Just one evening of adventure that would be all the more wonderful because he would be there to share it.

She lifted to him starry eyes.

"I should love to go, she said.

The hall where the masquerade was held was like a scene from the "Arabian Nights."

Tessa stood near the entrance, a slender, entrancing figure in blue and silver, watching with eager, fascinated eyes the glittering pageant before her.

The long tiers of boxes were draped with flowers and hung with colored stars, rose and blue and orange, gold and emerald. Lights were being directed down from somewhere near the roof by unseen operators, great wide beams that changed their hue constantly, so that one minute the dancers whirled in a sunset glow, the next they were caught up in moonbeams, and a minute later they danced in a velvety darkness only pierced by the twinkling stars that nestled among the flowers.

And as if that were not color and glow enough, there were the fantastic costumes of the dancers, some lovely as a dream, some bizarre, grotesque, but all adding a sparkling note of gayety to a wonderful whole.

Shepherdesses in pale, soft hues like Dresden china danced by in the arms of Venetian nobles and Eastern princes. A slim, dark-eyed nymph in green, looking as if she had just risen from some moonlit pool, circled with a *Mephistopheles* in vivid scarlet.

There were Indian dancing girls and Grecian maidens and jazz pierrettes—a glittering sea of color in which the fire of jewels glowed and a hundred soft, sweet scents rose on the air to make it more intoxicating.

Tessa turned to the man at her side and murmured excitedly:

"It's wonderful—more wonderful even than I expected."

Excitement was in her eyes, in the warm rose flush that stained her cheeks, in the eager curve of her lips.

Alec Cartwright was conscious of a sharp surprise that made his heart beat more quickly and his pulses race. He found himself looking at her with a new interest, as if he were not sure if his eyes were deceiving him. Surely this was not the girl whom once he had thought plain, his demure, rather prim secretary?

When he had called for her at the house where she roomed she had been wearing a coat, the same dark, plain coat in which he was accustomed to see her every morning. He had not been prepared for the transformation that had taken place in her, when they had reached the ballroom. It was as if a demure little moth had suddenly changed into a dazzling butterfly.

Was it possible that a new dress could make such a difference in any one? Or was it that he had been blind for all those months and now for the first time his eyes were opened?

His voice was not quite steady as he said:

"Let us dance."

His hand was holding hers now, his dark eyes laughing down into hers with an expression in them that for some reason made her feel a little breathless. But perhaps she only felt like that because it was her first real dance, and the novelty and strangeness of it intoxicated her. It seemed to her suddenly as if all her dreams had come true, all her longings had been translated into joyous reality.

When the music stopped he did not release her, but waited for the encore. Again and again they danced, and then, as the last notes of a fox trot died away, he led her to a sofa beneath a screen of foliage in which twined real roses, breathing their soft perfume on the air.

He did not know why he had brought her there, why he suddenly felt as if he

hated all those laughing people who seemed to him as out of place as a noisy crowd in a lovely garden—a garden that was made for only two people who walked together beneath the moon.

As they had danced he had seemed to be holding moonlight against him, moonlight that throbbed with the warmth of life, with two blue stars that were calling him, drawing him to them against his will. Once his lips had nearly brushed the soft white shoulder that was so near his, and even nearer was the red, tantalizing call of her lips, warm and sweet as a dew-drenched flower—a flower that he longed to gather.

His gaze lingered now on that alluring red curve; the perfume of the roses came to him sweetly, mingling with the scent of her hair.

"Tessa," he said unsteadily. "Do you know that you are beautiful?"

She laughed shyly. He had never called her Tessa before, and it sounded oddly different on his lips.

"Do you say those things to every girl you meet?" she asked.

"Never," he denied swiftly. "I have never met a girl like you, Tessa——" He lingered over her name, as if he loved its sound. "I feel as if I have only met you to-night for the first time. You're changed—changed disturbingly. You're going to my head like wine, bewitching me."

She laughed, because she had a feeling that if she did not she would cry.

"I feel like that, too," she said, "as if I were in a dream. But it is a lovely dream. I shall hate to wake up."

"Why need you?" he countered.

She sighed as she answered:

"It will come to an end. To-morrow I shall have to forget all this. I shall go back like *Cinderella* to my chimney corner when the ball is over."

"But not for long," he said swiftly. "You are forgetting the *Prince*. *Cinderella* lived happily ever after."



He was offering her all that for which she had secretly longed. One evening of adventure that would be all the more wonderful because he would be there to share it.

There was a throb of desire in his voice. Her warm white skin was like the petals of a magnolia blossom, her eyes seemed to have caught the dreams of which she spoke. Once more the red rose of her mouth was tantalizingly, dangerously near. He had only to bend

his head to press his own lips to it, take it and make it his own in a clinging surrender that he instinctively knew would be passionately sweet.

The shrill blare of a saxophone came from the ballroom and recalled him sharply to himself.

What was he doing, thinking? Was the scent of roses stealing his reason? He must remember that Tessa was not like the sophisticated girls of his own world, to whom love-making was just a pleasant pastime, soon forgotten. She was different, and if he were not careful he would make a fool of himself.

He rose abruptly.

"Shall we dance again?" he said.

She rose, too, the rose flush leaving her cheeks, the sparkle of shy joy fading from her eyes.

What was the matter? Why had he changed so suddenly? His voice had become harsh, and he was looking at her now almost as if he disliked her, as if she had said or done something that annoyed him.

She put the thought into words anxiously.

"What is it? Have I said anything wrong? Are you angry with me?"

Suddenly all his resolutions vanished. He forgot his determination to be prudent, forgot everything except that the swift pain in her blue eyes was more than he could endure.

He gathered her to him, drew her into his arms, and pressed on her tempting lips a passionate kiss. He kissed her again and again; kissed her until she lay in his arms in mute, quivering surrender, pale as a white rose—a rose that he had gathered at last.

How long she lay there she never knew. It was as if the very world had ceased to revolve around her. There was no past and no future, no reality except the achingly sweet reality of those kisses. That would never pass away. She would carry it with her all her life—something so wonderful and so rapturous that it almost made her afraid.

She stirred after what might have been a moment or an eternity and spoke his name softly.

"Alec."

"I beg your pardon."

The sound of a strange voice made him release her sharply, so that she stumbled against the sofa and leaned there, staring at the newcomer.

A girl, whose approach they had not noticed, stood before them, an arresting figure in black, loose trousers slashed with the same vivid scarlet as her lips. She had hair that was as smooth and shining as the satin of her costume, and beneath dark, finely penciled brows glittered the startling contrast of gray-green eyes fringed with curling lashes.

Tessa had noticed her several times during the evening. If it had not been too ridiculous, she could have imagined that the other girl was watching her. And once, when she had met the full light of the other's eyes fixed on her, she had almost been certain that they held a malicious gleam.

That gleam was there now, mingled with another emotion that was even more disturbing, a kind of jealous, passionate scorn. She remembered that the other girl must have seen her in Alec Cartwright's arms, seen that throbbing embrace from which she was even now thrilling with ecstatic memory.

She turned to him, to see that he, too, was struggling with an embarrassment that matched her own. But he was fighting it more successfully. After a momentary pause he returned coolly:

"Hello, Laurette! I didn't know that you were here."

The scarlet lips curved in the semblance of a smile, but the girl's eyes were still hard.

"You have been far too absorbed to notice me," she retorted. "Won't you introduce me, or do I know this—lady? Haven't I seen her somewhere before?"

Tessa's cheeks burned. It was obvious that the other girl meant to be insulting, that she knew quite well who she, Tessa, was, and was deliberately emphasizing the difference in their positions. She was insinuating that she had surprised a passing flirtation between

Alec Cartwright and a girl who did not matter because she did not belong to his world.

An angry retort sprang to Tessa's lips, but before she could utter it, Alec Cartwright took her hand and drew her forward.

His voice was cooler than ever now as he remarked with a smile:

"Of course I will introduce you. This is Tessa Harding, the girl to whom I am engaged."

Tessa looked around the big, comfortably furnished drawing-room of a house set amid the northern New Jersey hills.

The house belonged to Alec Cartwright's father, and she had been staying there as a guest over the week-end. That in itself was surprising enough, but still more surprising was the reason for her being there. Old Mr. Cartwright had insisted on his son bringing her out, so that he might get to know the girl to whom he was engaged.

The pink in her cheeks deepened as she repeated the words to herself.

Engaged to Alec Cartwright! Supposing it were true! But it was not true, not really. Their engagement was only a pretense—a sort of business arrangement to which she had consented because she must. It was the result of that evening when Laurette Carey had surprised her in her employer's arms, his lips on hers.

Tessa still felt a thrill when she remembered those glowing moments in which, for the first time, a man's kiss had awakened an answering passion in her. The quivering wonder of it had amazed her, wonder that had deepened into a tremulous joy as he had announced to the other girl that they were engaged.

To her it had seemed that there could be only one explanation of his saying such a thing—that those moments of

passion had shown him that he loved her, that he wanted to marry her.

When, after Laurette had left them, she had been so sure of that, she had turned to him with a shy question, only because she longed to hear him say the words again, tell her that he loved her and wanted her for his wife.

"Why did you say that?" she had asked breathlessly. "What made you tell her that we were engaged?"

She had stood trembling before him, waiting for him to take her in his arms again.

But instead he had not moved except to shrug his shoulders lightly, and his face, like his voice, had suddenly become blank, devoid of all expression.

"What else was I to say?" he had retorted. "Laurette came along at an awkward moment. And she has an unguarded tongue. She will make the most of what she saw."

"I understand."

Tessa had felt as if some one had laid a cold hand on her heart, stifling all the throbbing joy that had stirred there only a moment before.

So he did not love her, did not want to marry her! It was only a desire to explain an awkward situation that had prompted that announcement. The thought aroused in her an angry resentment, so that she had gone on sharply:

"I suppose it was awkward, but surely it was not necessary to say what you did. Now you will have to tell everybody that it is not true."

"I can't do that!" he had exclaimed in sudden impatience.

"Look here," he had continued. "I'm sorry for what has happened—more sorry than I can say. But it's done now, and there's only one way to fix it. We shall have to let everybody think for a while that we are engaged. Say a month! If you will consent to be my official fiancée for that long, I shall be grateful to you. I'll make it up to you in some way. Will you do it?"

There had been only one answer possible, and Tessa had given it, telling herself that she had consented just to prevent any scandal.

She had not acknowledged, even to herself, that the thought of doing what he asked roused in her a tense excitement. To pose as his fiancée, even though there were nothing in it really, would be an adventure such as she had never dreamed. It would mean seeing him often, going out with him, perhaps dancing with him again. They would see each other not as employer and secretary, but as man and girl. A girl for whom, even if he did not love her, he had, for a few moments, felt a throbbing admiration.

It was only afterward that Tessa realized that there might be pain as well as joy in the future. For those moments had evidently been for him just a passing incident, while she herself could not put the memory of them from her.

But he must never know that, never guess that that night he had kindled a fire in her heart that would not be quenched. He must think that she, too, had forgotten.

"All alone?" a low voice asked.

Tessa turned swiftly, to see that the man of whom she was thinking had come into the room.

Her heart began to throb wildly.

It was the first time she had been alone with him during the week-end, for each evening there had been visitors, and during the day his father had usually been with them.

The old man seemed to have taken a great liking to Tessa, and she in return felt a warm affection for him. He was so kind and courteous, treating her as if she were already his daughter.

She said hastily:

"Yes. Mr. Cartwright has gone out in the car to see some one on business. And Miss Carey called, but she wouldn't stay."

She flushed at the thought of the other girl. Laurette Carey had been a frequent visitor at the house in the last few days, and every time she came she managed to make Tessa feel uncomfortable. It was very obvious that she was both annoyed and amused at Alec Cartwright's "engagement."

Tessa went on nervously:

"I—I think I will go and pack my things, as we are to leave early in the morning."

"Don't go yet. There is plenty of time," Alec said. "I have hardly had a minute with you the whole week-end. And, after all, there is no reason why we should not be friends, is there? You will be my friend?"

"Of course," she replied in a low voice.

"Do you know you have made quite a conquest of my father?" He had lighted a cigarette and was smiling down at her. "He told me this morning that he approved of my choice, and that you were the nicest girl he had ever met. I am beginning to be jealous."

Tessa tried to make her tone as light as his as she replied:

"I am glad he likes me. He has been so kind that I hate to remember how we are deceiving him."

"Why should that distress you? The deception is innocent enough, and it makes him happy. It is good to make people happy."

His voice expressed only cool amusement, and for some reason it angered her. She felt at that moment as if she hated him.

"It isn't good at all," she said with sudden passion. "It—it's hateful! I would never have agreed to it if I had realized what it would mean. I would rather have let people think what they liked of me—say what they liked. And what could they have said? I suppose you are not the first man who has kissed his secretary! Men think that the girls who work for them do not matter."

She stopped, breathless, and scarlet with embarrassment. She had not meant to talk like that; she had been carried away by a sudden anger and resentment for which she could not account. She had a strange desire to burst into tears, but the thought of his amazement if she did so made her hang onto her self-control.

To the man her outburst, the passionate resentment in her voice, came like a blow.

In the past ten days he had managed to forget the disturbing emotion of that night at the dance, schooling himself to think of her only as some one to whom he owed a debt of gratitude for getting him out of a difficult situation. He would always think of her like that in future, he had decided.

But now his resolutions fled once more before the swift touch of some emotion he did not dare to analyze. That scarlet flush of shame in her cheeks, the tears that he could see welling up in her eyes, hurt him, and her words hurt him still more.

A wave of self-reproach swept over him. Was it possible that he had thought that? Would he have asked of a girl of his own world what he had asked of this girl? Would any of the girls he knew be as loyal as this one had been? He felt all at once as if he had been behaving like a cad, as if he hated himself.

"Don't," he said sharply. "I can't bear to have you say such things. And they are not true. I think that you are the most wonderful girl I have ever met. I can never tell you how grateful I am to you."

"I don't want your gratitude." Tessa spoke more quietly. "I only want to end this—this impossible situation. Surely it has gone on long enough. Why can't we tell people the truth now? Or if not that, you can say that we have quarreled, that the engagement is broken off. Then I can go away."

"And where will you go?" he asked.

"What does that matter? I shall have to get another job, I suppose, for after this I can't be your secretary any longer," she replied. "You must see that. But it ought to be easy. I have plenty of references."

He stared at her, a dark flush creeping under the tan of his cheek. What she said startled him. He had never thought about what would follow this month of their supposed engagement. But he was thinking of that now, realizing that what she said was only too true. When the "engagement" was broken off, she could not continue to be his secretary; that would make unpleasant gossip.

She would have to go away, out of his life. He was amazed at the pain that the thought stirred in him. Never to see her again—somehow that seemed intolerable, so intolerable that he cried out in swift protest.

"Nonsense! There is no need for that—no need at all. If you wish I will announce that we have decided to break our engagement and to be just friends. Then everything can go on as before."

She shook her head.

"It can't," she said breathlessly. "I—I don't want it to. I shall go away."

He heard the tears that throbbed in her voice, and the sound increased the emotion within him until it became too strong for him.

Bending forward, he took her hands in his, gazed down into her eyes, at the quivering red mouth.

"Tessa, you can't go. I won't let you." He was speaking rapidly, tensely, just as he had spoken on that other night that he had determined to forget, and that now he knew had been with him ever since, a throbbing memory. "You are wonderful."

The emotion that the touch of his hands aroused was almost too much for her; she was thrilling with remembered ecstasy, old pain. She wanted to go into



his arms, lift her lips for him to kiss, but another memory restrained her. He was only playing a part as he had played it all through these last days, pretending to be her fiancé—pretending so well that he could not throw off the pretense even when they were alone.

He had deceived her once, but he should not do so again. She knew now how much that glow in his eyes was worth, the deep note of passion in his voice. And she would let him see that she knew it. She would like to humiliate him as he had humiliated her, fling back at him hurt for hurt.

She snatched her hands free, faced him with eyes that blazed with anger and furious words on her lips.

But they were never uttered. At that moment the door was flung open, and a white-faced maid entered.

The man turned sharply to her. "What is it?" he asked anxiously.

Her whole life's happiness was shattered by the gossip she had overheard.

"It's the car," she answered breathlessly. "There's been an accident—Hanson ran into a tree trying to avoid

a child. The child was not hurt, and Hanson only bruised. But the master is——" The girl stopped.

"You mean——" Alec Cartwright spoke sharply, his voice was shaking. "You mean that he is seriously hurt?"

"Worse than that." The girl was beginning to sob with horror and fright. "Killed—they're bringing him home now."

Killed! The word beat into Tessa's brain as she sat before her typewriter in the private office of the man she had once thought to marry, reiterated it again and again until she thought that she would go mad.

The memory of that day when the news of Mr. Cartwright's death had

come with such terrible suddenness still made her shudder. It seemed to her that she had been half dazed with the horror of it ever since. In the few days that she had known him she had grown very fond of the elder man, and she felt that by his death she had lost a true friend.

There were times now when she wondered if the past had not been a dream. It seemed impossible that she could ever have danced with Alec Cartwright amid all the color and magic of a fancy-dress ball, seen that disquieting glow in his eyes when he looked at her, the tenderness curving his firm lips. It was unbelievable that he could have held her in his arms and claimed her lips.

It all seemed so very long ago now, and his absence made it seem farther away and more unreal still. Immediately after his father's death he had gone away, leaving his manager in charge of the business, and she had not heard from him since.

No doubt he had forgotten all about her. So far as he was concerned there was nothing to remember. Only the swift, brief passion of a few stolen kisses. He would not even give another thought to that mock engagement. That was over and forgotten, and she must forget it, too, close the door of her heart upon a memory that pained, and never let it escape from its secret hiding place.

But it was one thing to tell herself to forget, she had found, and quite another to carry out her intention. Everything around her reminded her daily, hourly, of the man of whom she must not, dared not, think.

Sometimes she told herself that she could not go on, that she must carry out her original intention and look for another position. But something prevented her doing that, a fierce pride that made her ask herself what reason she could have for wanting to cut herself off from him. Why should his memory

have the power to make her heart ache? He was nothing to her.

The door opening made her turn around to see the man of whom she had been thinking standing before her. He looked tired and older, but he was the same man who, in spite of all her determination, insisted on haunting disturbingly her dreams.

"You!" she cried blankly, wondering if she could be still dreaming.

He came forward slowly, his hands outstretched to take her own.

"Are you glad to see me?" he asked, and there was a throb in his voice.

"Very glad." She tried to steady her voice, but it was beyond her control. It was so wonderful to see him again, to feel her hands once more in his strong, close grasp. She went on shakily: "I—it seems so long since you went away. I began to think that you were never coming back."

"I began to think that myself." He retained her hands that she would have drawn away from him, and the odd, disturbing glow in his eyes deepened. "I told myself that I could never bear to come back after what had happened, and then two nights ago something suddenly seemed calling me. Tessa, can you guess what it was?"

"No." Her heart was throbbing so loudly now that surely he must hear it. "How should I guess?"

"Because it was you who called me," he said swiftly. "The memory of you and all we had been to each other, the thought of what we might be in the future. Tessa, do you remember our engagement?"

"Of course. But that is all over now, and I want to forget it——" She broke off at the flame in his eyes.

"And I want to remember," he cried eagerly. "O, my dear, can't you understand what I am trying to say? I want you to make our engagement a real one."

Her eyes were wide and dark now

with amazement. Joy was beginning to sing in her heart, and this time she did not try to stifle it. For she knew at last the answer to her question and her doubts.

"You mean—that you want me to marry you?" she said slowly.

"More than anything. I never guessed how much you meant to me until I was away from you—never knew why I felt so terribly lonely, as if everything in life had been taken from me. But I know now. I know that I love you and that I can't live without you. I want you with me always."

"And I love you." She was in his arms now, the joy in her eyes was a shining radiance. "I am so happy that I can't believe it. And I thought that you had forgotten me."

He kissed her rapturously.

"I could never forget you," he whispered. "My darling, you mean everything to me. All the joy of life itself."

Her wedding day! The happiest day of any woman's life!

Tessa, looking like a fairy queen in her wedding gown of ivory satin, which touched the floor all around, her hair covered by a veil of old lace which had belonged to Alec's grandmother and held in place by a wreath of real orange blossoms, moved up the long red carpet of the aisle as if it were a sunlit pathway leading to happiness. Preceding her were the niece and nephew of a friend of Alec's. The girl had long black curls, and was dressed in blue chiffon. The boy's hair was golden, and he had on a suit consisting of black velvet trousers and a white satin blouse.

As Tessa joined him at the altar, Alec thought that never in all his life had he seen so beautiful a bride. The expression on Tessa's face was that of one who has seen and been admitted into heaven.

The words of the white-robed clergyman were not words at all, but golden

chains binding two hearts together. The very sunshine that streamed through the windows of the church was a radiant symbol of the love that would shine in their hearts forever.

Happy the bride on whom the sun shines! Tessa thought of the old saying as she came down the aisle on her husband's arm. For Alec Cartwright was her husband now, hers to have and to hold until death.

The thought brought a soft curve of joy to her lips. She was no longer Tessa Harding, but Tessa Cartwright, the wife of the man she loved with her whole heart. Life had no greater happiness to offer than that.

Like one in a dream she listened to the congratulations of those who came to the small reception that followed the marriage ceremony. It was all a dream, but this time there would be no awakening. It would go on and on, becoming more radiant and wonderful every day. She was his now, and he was hers. Soon they would go away together, away from all these people who were so kind, but who did not really matter, and he would take her in his arms and hold her there and never let her go.

It was nearly time for them to leave, and she was standing alone near one of the open windows because the room had grown hot. The spray of pink roses that the man she loved had given her, and that was pinned on her gown, was beginning to droop with the heat, and she saw that one of them had snapped off and fallen to the ground.

She stooped to pick it up, and it was then that a woman's voice came to her, low but distinct, from behind a large palm that hid the speaker.

"Then it was not a love match?"

"Oh, no," another voice replied carelessly. "Far from it. In fact, I believe that Alec was in love with somebody else, but they quarreled. The quarrel might have been made up, but his father left a will leaving everything

to his son provided he married this girl, Tessa. I suppose they agreed between them that a large fortune was not to be thrown away lightly."

"But I thought that he was engaged to her before his father met her?" the first speaker exclaimed.

"I believe he was, but probably the old man wanted to make certain that he did not change his mind, as he had done so many times before. His numerous affairs with the wrong sort of girl made Mr. Cartwright afraid for his future, and perhaps he saw in this girl the kind of quiet, domesticated wife who would make him happy."

Tessa had stood rigid behind the screening palm, too overcome with amazement and horror to move. Her whole life's happiness was shattered by the gossip she had overheard. But the last words stung her into activity.

Seething with fury and pain she stumbled from the room and up into the bedroom where she had dressed for her wedding, and flung herself on the bed, great dry sobs shaking her.

The revelation of what she had overheard had been startling, vivid. So Alec had not grown to love her as she had thought, but had asked her to marry him solely because his father had wished it—because if he did not marry her he would lose his father's money!

Oh, the pain of it, and the scorching, searing shame! There had been no love in his heart to answer hers, no longing to which all her being had rushed out in answer. There was no romance in her marriage, no golden pathway to dreams, no sunshine of love, nothing but a sordid arrangement by which he gained a fortune and gave up in return the girl he loved. That was Laurette of the dusky hair and gray-green eyes and the passionate mouth. Laurette, with whom he had quarreled, and with whom he would have made up if it had not been for his father's will.

Tessa was certain that Laurette Carey was the other girl of whom those women had spoken. She could understand now why he had been so embarrassed that night when Laurette had found her, Tessa, in his arms, understand why the other girl had hated her and been jealously surprised at their "engagement." It was Laurette whom he loved, not herself. And she, the girl whom he had kissed in a moment of light passion and then had been glad to forget, was married to him. She was his wife.

Tessa sprang up from the bed in sudden fury born of pain. He had crushed her dreams, and in return she would put out of her heart every shred of her love of him. She would make him pay for what he had done.

Going to the mirror to straighten her hair and gown, she caught sight of the roses pinned at her shoulder. They were his roses, the flowers that he had given her and that she had loved because they were his gift.

With a hard laugh she tore them from her gown and, flinging them to the floor, trampled them beneath her feet.

Tessa stood in the bedroom of the seaside hotel where they had planned to spend their honeymoon.

Honeymoon!

A strangled laugh that was like a sob rose in her throat at the mockery of the word. As mocking as the vows the man she had married had taken that morning to love and to cherish her, mocking and meaningless as the kisses he had laid on her lips.

But his kisses should never mock her again, she had made up her mind to that. Soon now the moment would come for which she had been waiting—the moment of her own triumph when she would tell him that she knew why he had married her and that she despised him for what he had done.

She stood in the center of the room,

her eyes on the door that communicated with the dressing room—the door through which the man she had married would come.

She was wearing a filmy, lace-trimmed nightgown, rose-pink in color, a pink-satin wrap covering it, collared with soft sable fur.

They were garments that she had chosen with breathless happiness in her heart because they were to make her beautiful in the eyes of the man she loved. Now she felt that she hated them because they decked her shame, pointing so vividly the glowing hopes that a few careless words had changed into ashes of despair and humiliation.

The light from the lamp fell softly around her; pain had set dark shadows under her eyes.

To the man who came slowly through the communicating door she seemed so startlingly lovely that he caught his breath at the sight.

He had never seen her look like that before. For more than a year she had been just his secretary, demure, neat, almost prim in her businesslike efficiency that forbade him to think of her as more than a part of the routine of his office.

This girl so sweetly feminine, whom he had married that morning, was now his wife! The thought made his pulses race. He shut the door and came nearer to her.

"Tessa!" he breathed.

There was a note in his voice that made her heart leap with remembered emotion. She had a swift, disturbing wonder if she would be strong enough to resist him if he were to take her in his arms. But that must not happen.

She lifted her brows with an admirable pretense at careless amusement.

"My dear Alec, surely it is not necessary to keep up the farce any longer," she said coolly. "Let us be honest with each other."

She saw the quick shadow of amazement in his eyes, the tensing of his mouth, and rejoiced. The lesson that she had vowed to teach him had begun.

"I don't understand you." He found his voice with an obvious effort. "To what farce do you refer?"

"To our marriage, of course," she replied easily. "It was an amusing play while it lasted—all the promises we had to make in the church, and then the congratulations afterward—so amusing that I had hard work not to laugh."

His face was all at once like a mask, his eyes hard, as he remarked:

"I still fail to understand what you are talking about. Perhaps you will be good enough to make your meaning clear?"

"With the greatest pleasure," she mocked. "It amused me because it was such a ridiculous fuss about nothing. Those people who congratulated us thought that ours was a real marriage, whereas it was nothing of the sort. Just a convenient arrangement by which you could secure the money your father left you in his will."

His eyes blazed darkly, his lips twisted in a queer expression that might have been pain or fury, and again she rejoiced. She realized that his fury was born of the thought that she should know of his father's will, know that she had not been deceived as he believed.

"So that is the meaning of this—this impossible attitude of yours!" he cried. "But I would remind you that whatever the motives for our marriage, you are my wife. Nothing can change that."

"It is a fact that I prefer to forget," she retorted.

"What if I force you to remember it?" He had drawn nearer to her.

Her heart missed a beat. She was suddenly afraid. In imagination she saw herself taken in strong, possessive arms, could feel the impress of kisses on her lips.

"You are becoming quite melodramatic," she sneered, striving for composure.

In his white, set face, his eyes were like dark fires; his fists were clenched at his sides. In his memory danced tantalizing visions of a girl in a white gown standing at the altar by his side, a girl with the pink roses that he had given her pinned against soft satin, and the pink flush of a shy happiness warming her cheeks. Now she had suddenly become this mocking stranger who defied him.

"You have changed so amazingly from the girl I believed you to be that I can hardly realize that you are the same," he told her harshly.

For an instant Tessa's mouth trembled. In that subdued moment she was like an echo of the girl she never meant to be again.

"Money changes many things," she returned. "Why I agreed to marry a man who does not interest me was in order to secure it."

"That is why you married me?" He caught up her words sharply. "Because of the money? Yet you pretended that you loved me?"

"One must pretend sometimes," she replied bitterly. "But I am glad that the need for pretense is at an end. We can each go our own way as we want to and forget that we are supposed to be married."

He stared at her blankly. So this was the kind of girl he had married—mercenary, heartless, a girl who had only assumed simplicity and aped love in order to gain her own ends!

The pain of that knowledge was almost more than he could endure, but fighting pain, rising slowly triumphantly above it, was another emotion that fired his blood.

Mockery though he knew their marriage to have been, it was still a marriage. And she was very lovely—lovely enough to make a man forget pain.

He looked at the rose-pink slenderness of her, the wide blue eyes, the quivering mouth. And she was his wife, and it was their wedding night.

He bent over her suddenly, his eyes blazed deep into hers, his breath fanned her cheek.

"I have no intention of forgetting that I am your husband, and you are my wife."

He heard her quick gasp. Her face was flaming now, her eyes desperate.

"I will never be your wife. I hate you," she breathed.

Her words, the resentment in them, made him forget everything but a desire to punish her. Before she could prevent him he had taken her in his arms, and was raining kisses on her eyes, her throat, her mouth.

"I think I hate you, too." His voice was hoarse as he looked down at her. "But hatred can be as strong as love, and you're mine now." Again he kissed her.

It was the sun that awoke Tessa in the morning, pouring through the window in a golden flood of light.

She stirred restlessly and opened her eyes, conscious of a strange reluctance to face the new day. She had been so happy in her dreams, and so unafraid. She had been walking with the man she loved, and he had looked down to smile at her softly, tenderly. She had known then that he loved her, that his love would always keep her safe, so that there would never be anything more to fear.

Now she was awake, and the dream had vanished before reality and the throbbing pain of memory. The hot blood raced to her cheeks in a surging tide as she remembered the scene in her room the night before.

Suddenly she heard a soft tapping that was followed by the opening of her bedroom door and her husband entered.

Her husband!

Her heart missed a beat as the word came into her mind. It was so strange, that new relationship in which they stood to each other, so amazing that he should be coming into her room as if it were the most natural thing in the world. She wondered if he guessed

how her pulses were leaping, at the swift tide of confusion that ran through her.

It was he who spoke first.

"Good morning," he said quietly. "I met the maid coming up with your breakfast, so I brought it in myself."
"Good morning."



Her husband! Her heart missed a beat as the word came into her mind. She wondered if he guessed how her pulses were leaping, at the swift tide of confusion that ran through her.

She managed the greeting a little breathlessly.

She saw now that he was carrying a tray that he set down by the side of the bed, beginning to pour coffee into two cups. There was something oddly intimate, disturbing in the action, in the very calmness with which he performed it. It reminded her so vividly of the fact that they were married, that it would always be like that now, just he and she alone together.

To the man also the memory was poignant and disturbing, so that he was conscious of not feeling as calm as he appeared. In the long walk that he had taken since his early awakening, he had forced himself to think clearly and to face the situation in which he had found himself.

"You are not drinking your coffee."

Her voice broke in on his thoughts and he heard the quaver in it. She was feeling every moment more conscious of his presence, his nearness.

If only he would go away! Give her a little time to think! But thought had become something of which she was afraid, the past and the future alike a dark dread that she must put out of her mind. Yet what was the use of that?

"I don't want it," he said absently, but as if he did not know what he was doing he took up the cup and drained it.

Tessa hoped that he would leave her now. If he did not, she felt that she would go mad. What was the meaning of that leaping emotion in her, like pain and longing strangely mingled, hope and despair? It was as if all the blood were being drained from her heart, leaving it empty.

"Alec, you must go now," she said at last. "I want to get up."

"Very well."

He stood up, and for one long moment his eyes met and held hers. Then he bent and pressed a swift kiss

on her soft throat, just where a little pulse was throbbing unsteadily, before he turned to the door and closed it behind him.

Three weeks! Tessa repeated the words to herself as she stood at the window in the bedroom of the house among the New Jersey hills that was now her home, hers and Alec's.

For three weeks she had been his wife, living with him in an intimacy that was becoming an increasing torture.

But the end had come. She had reached the limit of her endurance and there was only one course left to her—to run away.

She had money of her own—he had paid into the bank a sum on which she could draw at will, and she had that morning withdrawn the whole amount, on which she would live until she could find work to support herself.

All that remained was to make her escape before he could return from New York, where for the last week he had been attending to his business as usual.

She turned to gaze around the room, feeling as if she were saying good-by to something that had been achingly sweet in spite of its pain.

By her husband's orders the room had been freshly decorated in the colors that she loved best, in readiness for their home-coming. There were golden-yellow curtains and a deep-blue carpet. The chairs and sofa were covered with a soft linen on which rioted blue larkspurs and pale-gold irises. There was a blue-and-gold cover on the bed, and over it was thrown a purple silk dressing gown that she had taken from its peg before lifting down her own to pack.

Alec's dressing gown!

With sudden tears burning her eyes she pressed the folds of it to her lips; then, feeling that if she were to linger

there another moment she would not have the courage to go, she picked up her suitcase and hurried from the room, out of the house.

The sorrow that had her in its grip had made her thoughts turn to the village where she was born. There everything would not be too strange—she would not be an absolute stranger to her surroundings. She had written to an old friend, telling her when to expect her.

The parting from the man who was her husband was painful; so much so that she felt she could not bear to hide herself somewhere that would bring her own loneliness home to her with even greater clearness.

During the journey she looked out of the window of the train that bore her swiftly to her destination with eyes that were dimmed with tears. She could not put out of her mind the memory of the man she loved. His face rose before the moving picture of green fields, of peacefully grazing cattle, of birds winging their joyous ways in the white-clouded heavens.

The house where she had made arrangements to stay was a whitewashed, low-eaved dwelling set in a garden luxuriant with flowers. There was a drowsy quiet about the place that instantly went to her heart, and she promised herself that here, if anywhere, she would find peace.

Mrs. Stebbings, who lived in the house, had known her since her childhood days and was delighted to have Tessa to stay with her.

For the first few weeks Tessa was terrified that her husband would find out where she was living and try to force her to return to him.

But when a month passed and brought no word from him, she began to feel secure. Evidently his efforts to find her had been unsuccessful, or else he had not really tried. Perhaps he was glad that she had left him. He

would now be free to enjoy the inheritance for which he had married her, and her memory would soon fade from his mind. It is only true love that remembers, while passion burns itself out only too quickly into the cold ashes of forgetfulness.

She tried to be glad at the thought that he had forgotten, and to tell herself that she, too, would forget in time. But she knew that that time would never come. There was too deep a wound in her heart for even time to heal. Every knock at the door made her heart leap and throb, and sometimes in her dreams he was still beside her, holding her in his arms.

She intended to look for another position as secretary, but she had not the energy to do that just yet. She had been feeling oddly tired and unlike herself lately. It was probably the heat, she supposed, and the dull misery that lay at her heart. But soon she would have to exert herself to find employment.

She looked up from the hammock where she had been trying to read one afternoon, as Mrs. Stebbings came out of the house with a basket of freshly washed linen which she proceeded to hang out on the line stretched beneath the apple trees. She was a widow who had been left in straitened circumstance, and Tessa was glad to help her whenever she could.

Now, seeing the pile of washing, she slipped from the hammock and started to help hand up the things that smelled of soap and clean country air.

"Don't you bother," protested Mrs. Stebbings. "I can manage quite well. And you look tired."

Tessa smiled rather wearily.

"I am tired," she confessed. "But not too tired to help you. You're always doing things for me."

After they had the clothes hung up, Tessa decided to take a short walk. It might help to dull the pain that was

around her heart. The pain caused by the fact that she wanted Alec, her husband.

She walked on for quite a while, deep in thought, when suddenly she heard some one call her name. She looked up to see Laurette Carey getting out of a smart roadster parked a few yards up the road. Laurette looking more lovely than ever and radiantly happy.

A swift, painful memory made Tessa move as if to turn away, but the other stopped her by laying a hand on her arm.

"Don't go," she said. "I want to talk to you."

A flush crept into Tessa's cheek.

"Why should you want to talk to me?" she asked bluntly. "You never liked me."

"I think I was jealous of you," Laurette returned, with equal frankness. "You see, I was feeling so miserable just when I first met you. I had lost the man I loved, and I couldn't bear to see any one else happy. But now I'm so happy myself that I want all the world to be happy, too."

It seemed to Tessa that every word was like a knife stabbing afresh at her heart. Had the other girl stopped her with the intention of mocking her? For what she said could have only one meaning. She and Alec had made up their quarrel. Perhaps he was putting her, Tessa, out of his life so that he could marry this girl whom he loved.

"I was engaged to Charles a year ago, and the engagement was broken off."

Tessa became aware suddenly that the other was speaking again.

"It was a misunderstanding and I was in the wrong, but I was too proud to say so. I didn't realize then that pride doesn't matter against love. But I know now. I went to Charles and asked him to forgive me, and we are to be married to-morrow. That's why I am so happy. I love him more than any one else in the world."

Was it Tessa's imagination, or had the summer evening suddenly grown more softly sweet, the sun's caress more warmly golden? Yet that leap of joy her heart had given was absurd, for if Alec did not love this girl, as she had supposed, it did not bring him any nearer to herself.

"I—I'm glad you are happy," she said lamely. "I think I must go."

The other stopped her.

"Where are you going?" she asked quietly. "Back to your husband?"

"Why do you ask that?" The question broke from Tessa like a cry. "You know that he doesn't want me."

"I know that he is eating his heart out for you," said Laurette with conviction. "Tessa—you don't mind my calling you that, do you? I've known Alec all my life, and I want to be your friend, too, if you will let me. I saw him last night, and he is utterly miserable—longing for you. I tried to get out of him what had happened between you, but he would only tell me that he loved you and that he had sent you away by his own folly. And now, my dear, can I drive you anywhere—back to the man you should not have left?"

"Not yet—I must have time to think," said Tessa. "But if you will drive me to where I am staying I shall be very grateful. I have walked farther than I realized."

"Of course I will."

They did not speak again until the car stopped outside the small white house, and then, as Laurette took the other girl's hand in farewell she said softly:

"Tessa, don't let the lesson that I have learned come to you too late. Remember that pride doesn't matter with love—nothing matters."

"Pride doesn't matter with love."

Tessa needed all the courage that the words could give her as she stood some

hours later outside the house from which she had fled a month before. It had taken her hours to make up her mind to come back—back to the man she loved and whom she had bitterly wronged. Back to confess to him the terrible mistake she had made, to tell him of her remorse.

Suppose he would not forgive her? Suppose—more agonizing thought still—that Laurette had been mistaken in thinking that he loved her? But she would not think of that, she dared not. She would put her happiness to the test, and if once more she found that it had been founded on a dream, she would go away again, back to loneliness and despair.

The house was in darkness. She had not realized that it was so late until she had heard a clock strike midnight as she stepped out of the taxi. But she could not turn back now, for she had sent the car away again.

Her hand shook as she fitted her key into the door.

Inside all was silence. The man she loved must be asleep, like the rest of the household.

She hurried up the stairs. There was just a moment's hesitation as she stood outside the door of his room, then she turned the handle and went in.

One glance showed her the dark head that the moonlight silhouetted against the white pillow, the grave, strong face that she loved. She bent over him, whispered his name:

"Alec!"

His lids lifted slowly as he gazed at her with an amazement that was mixed with joy.

Then he was beside her, his hands holding hers, looking down at her with the old tenderness.

"Tessa! O, my dear, you don't know how I have longed for you!" he cried.

"And I thought you didn't want me." The tears were beginning to steal down her cheeks. "I thought you loved some one else."

"There has never been any one else for me. I think I must have loved you always, but I didn't realize it until after we announced our engagement. Then, when you told me that you had only married me because of the will, I went mad, mad with disillusion. Tessa, say that you didn't mean it."

"Of course I didn't," she answered in a low voice.

Then she was pouring out in a flood all her remorse, her passionate love of him that for so long she had kept locked up in her heart. It was much easier than she had expected, because in his arms nothing else seemed to matter.

"Alec," she murmured in a soft voice. She was beginning to laugh, to cry a little. Never had life seemed so glorious as it did now that she was back once again with the man she loved.

She realized what a fool she had been and that the talk she listened to had been nothing but idle gossip.

Nestling close in her husband's arms she sighed contentedly.

He looked down at her worriedly. "Why the sigh, honey girl? Tired?"

"A little, Alec, but I'm so glad to get back home."

"And I'm glad to have you, darling mine. I've been nearly crazy wondering where you were and if you would ever come back to me."

"But now all that is over with," Tessa murmured and lifted her face as Alec, the man of her heart, bent to kiss her.





YOU know, Arno," said Thysbie Winslow languidly, "there's something intriguing about being lazy. A person who works is a bore—terribly tiresome to have around. It's so nice to know that the years ahead of us mean play."

She was stretched out on the cool, immaculate sands of Pebble Beach. Her thin, yet enchantingly feminine figure was wrapped snugly in a bathing suit of white wool, strikingly effective. For her skin had been fashionably tanned, and her black brows, black hair, and black eyes gave out the impression as definitely as though it were blazoned in electric lights that here was somebody.

Well, that was true. Thysbie Winslow was reputed to be an heiress. And

Who's Who

By
Florens Artel
Garrett

Thysbie flaunted her code of laziness across the world and back again.

As Arno, who so often accompanied her and her mother, told her once: "You bask in Basque, you lie on the Lido, and you nap in Naples!"

He now gave a slight yawn, a gesture very nearly like hers. "I quite agree with you, my dear. It's like taking a perpetual tonic to be around you." He laughed into her surprised eyes. "Oh, don't be shocked; I mean a soothing, restful tonic. And I can't believe yet that a month from now you'll be my wife." He moved just enough to take her hand in his and press it gently.

"Yes, it does seem as though we ought to be—breathless! I'm happy, of course, Arno, but it takes such a lot of energy

to get—thrilled. I shall be Mrs. Arnold Benedict. Incredible!" She laughed softly.

"Incredible! Why, my dear!" He followed her laughter with an astonished chuckle. "It shouldn't be—you have known me for years. I've just been waiting for you to grow up."

"And I'm a big girl now?" She placed her hands under her head and let the sand trickle through her toes. "You'll like my wedding gown, Arno. It looks like me, darling, interesting, but, oh, so composed! I had it made at Mansfield's. That designer seems to understand me so completely, though I don't believe he's ever seen me."

"He?" Arno questioned, lighting a cigarette. "A man designs those gorgeous things you wear?"

She nodded. "I think he's French—though I'm not sure. He's been with Mansfield's two years. He's very original. Wait until you see my wedding gown!"

"Rather disconcerting, Thysbie, to know that another man has made your wedding gown."

"Arno, you're being silly. I think most of the exclusive dressmakers have men designers. They seem more willing to sacrifice practicality to beauty. Interesting, isn't it?"

"You've seen this designer?"

Thysbie laughed amusedly. "A girl usually doesn't become friendly with her designers, does she? I'm sure I can't say what he looks like—I'm sure I don't care."

"I don't suppose he's in 'Who's Who,'" Arno ruminated.

She scoffed. "Hardly! It would be embarrassing if he were. I'm sure I wouldn't like running into him now and then at a tea. He'd stare at me—through me—making sure I was perfectly dressed!"

Arno shrugged. "I suppose it would be like meeting my tailor at the club—an awful situation, but not quite so

awful as meeting one's dressmaker." He laughed and looked out across the wind-driven sea. "Do you like my suggestion of Venice for our honeymoon, Thysbie?" he asked after a short while. "I'm certain those gondoliers are even lazier than you are. At this time of the year it's really lovely; one never knows whether the water is a reflection of the sky or the sky a reflection of the water."

Thysbie got to her feet, dusted the sand from her suit, slipped on a silk cape, and began walking slowly away from the beach. "Venice," she said to Arno as he walked beside her, "will be perfect."

Mrs. Winslow was sitting on the wide veranda of their summer house as Arno and Thysbie came up. She laid aside her book, and Thysbie's first thought as she looked at her was: "It's the first time I can remember seeing mother so depressed."

"Arnold will excuse you for the rest of the afternoon, I'm sure, dear. Will you have tea with me in my room? I'd like to talk with you." She went into the house, her manner nervous and distressed, and Thysbie vaguely wondered what the matter was. Mother was usually so poised.

"Something's worrying her, Arno. I hope it isn't bad news. Mother's always been so—frail. And I—I wouldn't know what to do in an earthquake! I'm sure I wouldn't know how to run. But drop in around seven—I'll tune in on mother's half hour and let you know the worst."

He kissed her as she always insisted upon being kissed: a mere touch of his lips upon her cheek. It annoyed her, she said, to be endearing.

Mrs. Winslow ordered tea and then looked gravely at her daughter. "Sit down, Thysbie."

Thysbie made herself even more comfortable by stretching full length upon the couch and pulling the silk comforter

across her feet. She smiled a little at her mother's evident puzzle as to the best way to begin. "What's up, mother? Did James, the trusted chauffeur, leave without notice?"

Mrs. Winslow poured out a cup of tea, and the maid took it across to Thysbie. She poured herself a cup and then dismissed the servant. "I'll ring when I want you, Pauline." She sat and watched her daughter sip the tea, watched her stretch out her toes and sigh contentedly. "Thysbie, I—I've bad news for you—for us." She gripped her cup with tense fingers.

"Bad news?" Thysbie was amused. "Why, mother, I've never known you to use those two words together before. It was either: 'You've been a bad girl,' or 'Good news, darling; we're sailing next week!' Is it horrid?" Nothing could be horrid, Thysbie thought; whatever her mother had to say, it couldn't be horrid. Thysbie had everything she could possibly want.

"We're—penniless." Mrs. Winslow dropped the words softly as though a great pain within her made it impossible to utter them aloud. "I thought I could make our money last a little longer," she went on hurriedly, lest the peculiar expression on Thysbie's face should turn into disgust too soon. "I—I speculated and—lost—everything." Tears came to her eyes, and her hands trembled. She tried desperately to control herself. "That's all, Thysbie, except that by the time we've sold our furniture and your jewels and most of your other things—there'll be about a thousand dollars left to us."

"Our furniture—my jewels—one thousand dollars? Why, that's ridiculous!" Thysbie scoffed. She threw back the coverlet, walked over to her mother, and set her cup down on the little table. "I never heard of such a thing!"

"I owe the broker"—her mother lowered her head and could not control the

sobs which welled within her—"forty thousand dollars—he felt things couldn't possibly go any lower, that now was the time to buy." She reached frantically for her handkerchief, and Thysbie tossed her hers. "I never realized what preposterous chances I was taking. And now—this!"

Thysbie felt terribly sorry for her mother just then. She couldn't remember having seen her mother cry for years. Everything had been going so splendidly. All of a sudden a slight but confident little smile crept across her face. She went close to her mother and patted her consolingly on the back. "Never mind, we won't have to sell a thing. We'll forget all about this. All we need to do, mother, is to set the date of my wedding to Arnold for next week instead of next month. The world needn't know we're broke. It's perfectly ridiculous, anyway. Thysbie Winslow and her mother broke!"

She laughed amusedly. "Arno'll fix us up. I'll tell him. I'll be fair, mother—after all why shouldn't he know? He'd probably wonder why I wanted a check for forty thousand dollars right off anyway!"

She strolled toward the door, turned back, and looked wonderingly upon her mother's abject features. "There's nothing to worry about now, is there, mother? You should have told me sooner. You shouldn't be carrying a load like that on your mind. You're much too frail." She ran back and impulsively kissed her mother on the cheek. "I love you that way, mother—it makes me feel so important! Besides, you're much too pretty to wrinkle up your face like that, and tears make ugly splotches. Why, I've never shed a tear for anything or anybody! Good-by, dear. I'll meet Arno at seven and bring the check back with me."

"But do you think, Thysbie—"

"Nonsense, of course he will! Arno will do anything for me, mother. He

adores me! Now smile, for Heaven's sake, before you ring for Pauline."

The sun was just setting as Arnold and Thysbie strolled down to their little resting place upon the beach. They seldom went into the water. It was much more pleasant just to lie upon the sand reading, smoking, or talking. It seemed such a waste of precious restful time to prance around in the water like large, overgrown puppies.

Thysbie was fully dressed that time, in a lovely gossamer thing of corn-yellow chiffon. Her small yellow crêpe slippers made an imprint upon the sand that might have been the footprint of a child of ten, so tiny were her feet. Arnold was impeccable in his white flannels and blue coat. He took her hand and placed it upon his arm. "Is your wedding gown yellow, Thysbie? The color is ravishing on you."

She looked up with a quiet little smile on her lips. "No, it's like heavy cream poured into an amber bowl. I'm afraid you'll see it sooner than you expected to, Arno."

"Sooner, my dear—that's marvelous! You mean——" He laid a white woolen blanket Thysbie had brought along upon the sand, and the two of them stretched languidly.

"Next week—if it pleases you." She watched the sun sinking gradually down until the sea became brilliant orange.

He caught her hands and pressed them to his lips, gently, considerately, for Thysbie didn't wish any show of emotion or violent love. But he looked deeply into her eyes. He sighed; the beginning of everything was so nearly within his reach. "I am more than pleased, Thysbie. I am honored."

"I'm glad, Arno—because it's very necessary that you marry me. You see, what mother told me this afternoon will be averted by our marriage. Everything will be straightened out. All that we need is forty thousand dollars—but we need it immediately."

He looked at her, a little amazed. "Why, my dear, that's simple enough. Just sign your name to a check."

"Not so simple—signing my name to a check would mean nothing now. It's your name that must be signed."

He straightened his shoulders. "I don't quite understand you, Thysbie."

"Just between ourselves, Arno, we're broke." She caught her breath and looked at him hopefully, and then rushed on with it. "Mother and I—well, bad speculation has wiped us clean. Don't you understand?"

"You?" He asked it with an expression of utter unbelief upon his face. "Why, I thought you were worth millions!"

She laughed uneasily. "I thought so too, but mother's half hour changed all that. I told you, Arno, because—well, it's only fair to let you know that I'm marrying you for your money now." She laughed again and held out her hands. "I'm not really a gold digger, you know. It's just these queer circumstances."

He avoided taking her hands, and looked for a long while upon the restless sea. Then he laughed, quietly at first, but after a moment, uncontrollably. "It's funny, Thysbie. You're a better sport than I am. I was actually marrying you for your money, because—well, because I've been riding my creditors until we could be married. You can imagine how grateful I was just now when you spoke of an earlier date for the wedding."

A bullet couldn't have stilled Thysbie's heart as suddenly as his words did at that moment. She looked at him, utterly unconvinced. "Arno, it's really bad taste to joke just now," she rebuked.

"My dear girl, I'm not joking. I'm just as flat broke as you are—possibly flatter. You see, I counted so serenely upon your money. I hardly expected just paper profits."

"Arnold, you're insufferable! I wasn't aware that you didn't love me."

"My dear, I did love you—as far as your indifferent manner would permit." A grim smile swept across his mouth. "But have you ever wanted me to take you into my arms—press your lips to mine? No?"—he laughed abruptly—"you didn't want to be bothered. I gladly tramped across the continent with you. It was an investment then, because you promised security, ease, play for the rest of my life. I'm not entirely to blame. I understood you, Thysbie, perhaps better than any other man could. I've been your faithful follower for years. I've gotten along with you and kept you happy. Why shouldn't I look for something in return?"

He turned then to gaze steadfastly into her startled eyes. "I've wanted to love you deeply. To me Naples, Spain, Brittany weren't always just places in which to relax. No! It could have meant romance, dazzling, exciting. It could have meant dancing under the stars, donkey rides into little out-of-the-way places. Action!" he said a little sadly. "Don't you see?—action!"

She got to her feet, stripped her finger clean of the ring he had given her underneath one of those star-ridden skies. She was trembling, but she controlled herself superbly. "Here is your ring, Arnold. I hope I never see you again!"

He closed his hand tightly upon it. "Thanks, Thysbie, it wasn't quite paid for—waiting for the final installment and our marriage. You think I'm brutal? Well, when the tables are turned so suddenly, my dear, it isn't an easy thing to smile. I've been such a lazy old dog since I've met up with you that it's going to be hard going to work again. But that's just what this means for me—work!"

They parted, Arnold going one way, Thysbie the other. Arnold picked up white gleaming pebbles and flung them

into the waves; Thysbie dug her nails deep into her palms and shut her eyes against the tears. One thousand dollars would be all that was left her. One thousand dollars and work! A beaten little sob escaped her lips.

She reached her mother's room just as the moon came up through the pines; the night was breathlessly still and clear but Thysbie managed to rival it. She knocked once upon the door and then entered.

Her mother glanced up. "Well?" she asked eagerly.

"Sell everything you possibly can, mother. One thousand dollars won't be so bad after all. We're leaving in the morning. Bad news? Well, make out of it what you will—Arnold was marrying me for my money. Amusing, isn't it? No money—no marriage!" She laughed because she had to. It was far better to laugh than to let her mother see her cry.

Mrs. Winslow gasped and came to take Thysbie into her arms, but the girl drew away. "There's no use crying over spilled milk—it isn't very nourishing," she said ruefully.

"What in the world are we going to do, Thysbie?"

"Do?" Thysbie asked a little wildly. "It's San Francisco and the employment bureau for me!"

"But your friends—"

"Will probably not recognize us. No money—no social attributes. No social attributes—well, we're just out of luck, mother, that's all—out of luck and out of 'Who's Who'! See you later!"

But the light, amused laughter remained until her room was reached. Then for the first time in her life, Thysbie threw herself upon her bed, and her whole body shook in hysterical sobbing.

It was very difficult at first for Thysbie to get used to rising at seven thirty, cooking her own breakfast over

a small electric stove, and carrying a breakfast tray into her mother's room. They had found a small apartment high up on one of San Francisco's hills, and Thysbie had given her mother the only bedroom. For herself, every night after a simple little meal and an hour or two of sitting before the great window that looked out upon a bay glittering now

and then with the lights from the endless ferries, she brought down the wall bed with a struggle, switched off the glare of light from the cheap little chandelier, and lay stretched out, completely weary, completely sick at heart.

It was impossible not to keep thinking of their summer house at Pebble Beach, where each room was twice the



She had secured a position as manikin in Mansfield's, displaying the gowns her one-time exclusive designer had created for her.

size of one of these. There the household cares had moved like clockwork; some one other than herself lighted the fire, cooked the meals, laid out her clothes, and kept things snow-white.

Thysbie now had the personal experience of sore muscles, a tired back, and rough, lined hands. One vow she had kept valiantly ever since they had come to San Francisco two months before, and that was to keep her mother entirely free from any of the housework and cooking.

It was very hard. But it was pleasant, too, to come home from work and find that her mother had not changed at all. There was that sweet, untroubled smile about her lips, that gleam of pink through her white skin that made one think of the fragility and delicacy of rare china. Thysbie found in an incredibly short time that her mother was the only sincere person she knew; the others—for she had secured a position as manikin in Mansfield's, displaying the gowns her one-time exclusive designer had created for her—were just stuffed people, overpolished, unreal in their glamorous setting.

She had never realized that the years behind her had been totally empty of genuine living until now when she had the actual facts to face. The hours from nine to five were remarkably similar to her old ways—slipping into rich, luxurious silks and satins, tossing her head in that confident way those years of grace had given her, parading her clothes with the knowledge that they absolutely became her, that she was beautiful in a peacock sort of way.

The hours from five thirty until eleven were entirely new, intriguing, even enticing.

She went home on the street car, stopping on rare red-letter days at a florist to get a bunch of violets or marigolds—anything cheap but colorful. Then she tramped the two blocks from the street car to their flat. Yes, that

was the word—flat!—not apartment or hotel or cottage! She turned in at the corner grocer for the evening's dinner. At first it had been canned food—peas, tuna fish, and asparagus—but recently she had bought fresh tomatoes, crisp lettuce, string beans, and chops.

And Mrs. Winslow would be waiting with that intensely bright smile of hers; the radio would be on, and there was usually a pudding cooling in the window sill above the sink. Thysbie always put in a word against those puddings, but Mrs. Winslow noted with a deep satisfaction that she never refused to eat them. And thus, the two of them began to live, a little awkwardly at first for they had been so used to independence as to what the other might be doing.

They found it rather easy to laugh now, any time Thysbie burned the squash or ruined the mayonnaise with too much vinegar.

"I never dreamed I'd ever be found reading a cookbook, mother! Imagine me—two teaspoons of this, a pinch of that; put the ingredients together and there you have it!"

But Thysbie knew it couldn't last forever. She knew that they had both been brave about it at first, putting up a bluff that this sort of precarious living was decidedly worth while. She knew the novelty of the thing would wear away in a little time, that she would long for the right to lie stretched out under a fashionable sky—Florida, Hawaii, even Biarritz. She knew, too, that her mother was just marking time until Thysbie managed a marriage of wealth. Automobiles, yachts, theaters had been too much of a habit in their lives to be tossed away now as luxuries they couldn't afford.

And so Thysbie began her campaign. She gave up her hours to those men who might prove an investment later on. Investment! She laughed, a little breathless, a little surprised. She had taken that idea from Arnold. She won-

dered vaguely if he were using the technique he had learned with her on some one else. She wondered if he got his leads from the Social Register. But—she laughed—Arnold's name had been in it and he had nothing. A book of business standings would be a better guide.

Thysbie was really surprised when one of the manikins told her that Richard Hillier, the designer in the shop, was worth a great deal of money. She confided that he had a studio of his own on the outside where he did his drawings of fashion plates for the magazines. He had showed her the place once, the girl said, and confided that some of the plates brought as much as three hundred dollars. He even had men working for him now.

Thysbie thought of those words with a peculiar quickening in her heart. Ricky Hillier worth millions! She hadn't dreamed he made very much. Of course she wasn't certain of his exact income, but Ricky would be easy, and she knew him. So the man she had once thought would be humiliating to meet in society was the one she decided would enable her to maintain a summer house at Pebble Beach again and travel abroad.

It was dreadfully easy to fall back into her old lazy ways. The customers were all old friends, and they thought it amusing of Thysbie to have a "hobby." And Ricky delighted in the languorous, bored, ultrasophisticated way in which she displayed his creations. "You're simply marvelous, my dear," he told her, and pressed her hand to his lips. "An enviable background for any man!"

It was indeed a little insulting to be thought of as a background, but Thysbie didn't mind. In fact, she strove to become just that thing—a background which undeniably made prominent, to Thysbie's friends who came in, Ricky's blond, handsome features, his smart

manners, his charming, audacious little quips.

It began by Ricky's taking her home one evening. His smart blue roadster was always parked near the front of the store. And Ricky, although employed by Mansfield's, always came out of the front door, setting his derby smartly to one side, slipping his cane across his arm, putting on his gloves.

Ricky never forgot for one moment his ultimate dream of being dictator to the upper class. He relished the idea of driving to the side door and picking up Thysbie. He could learn a lot from her, the thousand and one little manners, the delicate, imperceptible gestures that marked him as first-rate.

And Thysbie found herself replenishing her old wardrobe with a dress now and then from Mansfield's, buying on time. It seemed incredible. But going with the old crowd and with Ricky to supper dances, first-night performances, and the country clubs required it.

One night while they were driving back from the club they had a flat. Ricky hailed a passing motorist and asked him to stop in at the garage and send a man out to fix it.

"Can't you fix it yourself, Ricky?" Thysbie called to him over the side of the car.

He got back beside the wheel, took her hand, and patted it gently, for he found that Thysbie didn't care for ardor—the mark of a thoroughbred, he told himself. "Ricky fix it? My dear, don't be absurd! It's quite a job—dirty and"—he shrugged his shoulders lazily—"intolerably bothersome."

She laughed softly. "Of course, Ricky! Light me a cigarette, will you? It's delightful sitting here under such a sky I shan't be annoyed if the man from the garage was delayed getting here." She settled down into the car, rested her head against the back of the seat, and closed her eyes.

Ricky took a long slow pull upon his cigarette, then tossed it away. "My dear," he sighed, "you're like a tonic! I feel as though I've been having a rest cure."

Thysbie opened her eyes and stared up at the sky. Like a tonic! So she affected him the same way! Well, this time she was safe; she knew how much Ricky was worth!

At last the man from the garage drove up beside them. He jumped out vigorously, and came up to the car. "Trouble?" he asked with a grin upon his face, a sort of undefined cheeriness in the tone of his voice.

Thysbie sat up, acutely disturbed. She had heard that voice before. "Arno!" She spoke his name aloud before she realized it.

He made a low bow. "Miss Winslow!" Then he looked at the car. "A fiat—is that all? Hm-m-m. I'll fix that up in a jiffy." He spoke hurriedly, with a bustling confidence which completely awed her.

Ricky glowered. "It's hardly conceivable you should know one another so—so intimately." He reached for a cigarette, and tapped it slowly upon the steering wheel.

"Oh," Thysbie laughed, "Arno and I were quite well acquainted at one time." Evidently, she mused, he hadn't found it so very hard to get work—but such work!

Arnold began jacking up the car. With each vigorous down swing of the jack the car gave a little twist—

"I say," drawled Ricky from the side of the car, "do you have to put so much energy into that work of yours?"

"Sorry," came a muffled reply. "I'm not used to doing this sort of thing any other way."

After a few moments, silent except for the banging of a hammer against the rim of the tire and the twist the car took each time a tire lug was screwed securely into place, Arnold pronounced

the job ended and the cost seven dollars.

"Seven dollars!" Ricky echoed. "For that?"

"Well, I had to drive out twelve miles—and besides"—Arnold looked unwaveringly into Thysbie's cool face—"it's the way I make my living."

Ricky paid him, and Arnold threw his tool kit into his car and came around to the side where Thysbie was sitting. Ricky, very much annoyed and surprised, pressed the starter.

But Arnold managed to get in just a word. "How is your mother, Miss Winslow? I was always rather fond of her."

Thysbie scoffed. "So glad to hear that, Arno—I hardly thought you could be fond of any one. She's very well, thank you."

The car took a lurch forward, and Arnold was left to wipe the dust from his eyes.

But the next morning when Thysbie took breakfast into her mother, she said: "Whom do you suppose I met last evening, mother?"

Her mother looked up questioningly. "Some of the old crowd?"

Thysbie nodded. "Used to be—but not now!" She laughed amusedly and sat down on the edge of the bed. "Arnold Benedict no less!"

"Really! I didn't know he was in San Francisco."

"Nor did I—nor would I if Ricky hadn't gotten a flat tire."

"But what has a flat tire to do with Arnold?" her mother wondered.

"A great deal, mother. He was the one who fixed it. He's evidently a night man at some garage in town."

"Not Arnold Benedict?"

Thysbie nodded vigorously. "Yes, as dirty and as strong as they make 'em. And he was happy." She lowered her voice, a queer heavy feeling choking her heart, but the next minute she tossed it off lightly. "Evidently hard



"There's nothing to do in Venice but be lazy. I couldn't stand that now. You and I are workers!"

work agrees with him. Ricky was terribly put out—scandalized."

"You spoke to Arnold then?" her mother asked with interest.

"The words were out of my mouth like a skyrocket. Naturally I was stunned. I yelled 'Arno!' And poor dear Ricky couldn't imagine how I ever came to know a garage man!"

"And Arnold——"

"Was most polite—deferential. He wanted to be remembered to you." She got up and looked at herself in the mirror, patting her hair in place, dabbing her nose with a powder puff. "Well, it won't be long, mother, before we'll be out of this."

"I wish," her mother said slowly, but with great deliberation, "you wouldn't fall into your old ways, Thysbie. Forget this Ricky. Don't bring home such elaborate clothes—they're so out of place here. Let's keep going this way."

Thysbie looked at the image of her mother in the glass. So she wanted her to give up Ricky because she thought it was just a pretense, an easy way out. Well, it was! But Thysbie could not see herself cooking forever, could not see herself mending stockings, bringing home maringolds everlastingly for an inexpressive

bit of cheer. Her mother was being wonderful about it, but of course she didn't mean it. She wanted, she needed the best things, too.

Thysbie kissed her mother lightly upon the cheek. "Don't worry, dear. Ricky and I are going to be married soon; then we'll have all the things we've been doing without. We'll all be frightfully happy."

"But you and Ricky so soon—are you sure you're in love?" Her mother's forehead wrinkled in a puzzled frown.

"Love?" Thysbie laughed. "Mother, you are real, aren't you? But of course Ricky loves me—he adores me. He'd do anything for me."

He had been very attentive, very considerate in the few months that Thysbie had gone out with him. But one day he failed to take her home. He hurried off, mumbling an apology, saying he would explain later.

Thysbie didn't think anything of it, at least not until she had donned her close-fitting black felt hat, slipped into a snug gown of black crêpe, and walked out of the shop in those outlandish high-heeled suède pumps of hers. It was raining! Not just that—it was coming down in torrents. Ricky might have come back for her, she thought unhappily, or at least have ordered a cab.

She scanned the street up and down for a taxi, but seeing none just then, she ran from awning to awning until she was at the corner. There she waited impatiently for the street car to come along.

Then, held up by the red signal, she saw Arnold in his towing car, a big garish yellow thing. He had always liked yellow, Thysbie thought irrelevantly. And then a white streak which outlined the advertising upon it, drew her attention:

BENEDICT'S GARAGE—FOR LAZY CARS. WE'LL
MAKE 'EM WORK.

She laughed. It was funny—to her, at least. Then Arnold saw her. He pulled in to the curb. "I'll be glad to take you home, Thysbie."

She scorned him completely. But her street car was not in sight, and the rain kept on relentlessly.

He spoke again. "I'll promise not to drive too fast for you." He was insolent, she told herself, reminding her of her code of laziness like that. She

turned her back, and he threw the car into second and drove away.

A quiver came to her lips. The next instant she realized that at least she needn't have been so nasty about it! It was nice of him to offer her a ride. They had both been rather insolent to each other. Oh, well, it was nothing to fuss about now.

Still her street car remained out of sight. But the towing car loomed before her eyes again. He had driven around the block and now drew up to the curb beside her. "You'll get tired standing in the rain like that, Thysbie. You'd better let me take you home."

She drew her coat around her in a gesture of disdain, but when she heard him scrape the gears into second, she called out: "Wait—I'll come along."

They waited a second for the lights to flash green, and Arnold looked down at her. He smiled, and Thysbie noticed how strong and firm his hands looked upon the wheel. They weren't fashionably tanned now; instead a queer blackish color had been ground into the once smooth, immaculate texture of his skin. "You're a good sport, Thysbie. This isn't quite the sort of car you're accustomed to, but it'll get you there."

"I don't mind, really," she surprised him by saying. "Tell me about your job."

"There's nothing to tell but what you see, Thysbie. I managed to hook my friends for a good solid loan, bought out this place, and you see me as I am."

"But you like the work?" she questioned, still unconvinced.

"Like it?" He laughed heartily. She couldn't remember ever having heard him laugh like that before. It advertised his attitude openly. "I love it! I always did like to fool with cars, but I couldn't before—you get all mussed up. But now since there is no one to——" He stopped awkwardly.

"Then you've not kept up your line

of matrimonial investments?" she scored triumphantly.

He cut the speed of the truck down to fifteen miles an hour. "There's nothing in paper profits, Thysbie. I've learned that. My line of investment now is money in the bank, a savings account."

"You? I can't believe it!"

"No, I don't suppose you could—nor could you believe other things." He lowered his voice. "I've never forgotten you, Thysbie. I never realized how I loved you until——"

Her amused laughter cut short his words. "Don't be ridiculous, Arnold! And don't waste your life dreaming of an ideal that never existed. I'm going to marry Richard Hillier."

"'Who's Who?'" He laughed back at her.

"No—not yet! He's the designer at Mansfield's, where I work."

"Hm-m-m, the man who designed your wedding outfit?"

"Yes." She thrust her words into his heart like so many little poisoned arrows. "And I'm thrilled, Arnold, thrilled for the first time in my life!"

"Funny your getting thrilled! Where do you live, Thysbie?"

She sat up with a little jerk. "Oh, I completely forgot to tell you! We're miles out of the way, Arno." And she gave him her address.

They went back in silence. At the house, he jumped from his side of the car and helped her out. He took her arm and walked up to the door. With his oily cap in his hand, he said good-by.

"I know you'll be well off again, Thysbie. And that's what matters to you. Only I'm sorry you didn't have a taste of real honest work—it might have made things different for both of us."

She raised proud eyes to his. "Oh, don't be sorry. I've worked, Arno, as I never dreamed of working. I've

come home and cooked dinner. I've scrubbed the kitchen floor. I've done a Monday's washing and a Tuesday's ironing—all after my work at Mansfield's. I've had a taste of work!"

He grinned. "Did you like it?"

"Like it?" She hesitated for just a second, the memory of those first peculiarly joyous days coming to her. Then she tossed her head stubbornly. "I hate it."

But Arnold caught her in his arms, and pressed her face close to his; took her chin in his rough hand and placed a firm mad kiss upon her lips. "Hillier can't have you, Thysbie!" he cried.

She struggled away, the shock sending a flood of color into her face. "How dare you, Arnold!" She fumbled for her key. It caught in the lock for an instant, long enough for him to say:

"I dare—because I love you!"

She fled up the stairs, hesitated a moment before her door to compose herself, and then went in.

But the next day found her more determined than ever to marry Hillier. She wouldn't admit to herself that Arnold had touched a long-stilled corner of her heart, like the Prince who climbed the walls of a palace to place a kiss upon Sleeping Beauty!

Arnold could offer her nothing. He could give her love—yes, but nothing that she wanted, needed, couldn't live without.

Yet, all the way down to the shop she couldn't help thinking over and over again that when the tables were turned so suddenly it wasn't an easy thing to smile!

"It's got to be Hillier!" She fought down thoughts of Arno. "It's got to be—luxury!"

Ricky hadn't come in when she arrived at Mansfield's, and she suddenly found herself smiling—glad that he wasn't there! It couldn't be Ricky now; why, he was just paper profits—nothing to be sure of at all! She

hummed a little song, and instantly, incredibly, found herself in tears.

"It's got to be Arnold!" She put her fingers to her lips and remembered his kiss.

And when she came back from lunch, Hillier hadn't come in at all. She slipped quietly into his office and laid a note upon his desk, a note she had written at lunch with food ignored, a note which told him good-by.

The afternoon mail brought her a letter from him. It was long, exuberant in his praise for her, and told of his marriage.

Those neat little indifferent gestures of yours, Thysbie, taught me how to win Helena Peyton, the great heiress, you know.

The blood rushed into her face as she slowly realized that Ricky Hillier had been using her and her friends to pave every bit of the way to his social success!

What would her mother think of her now? One man had treated her as an investment, another, as an instructor! It was true, nevertheless—she had been shallow, insincere. She looked up at herself in the three-paneled mirror, and saw a perfect image of sophistication. Well, she laughed bitterly, what had this suave, utterly bored manner of hers brought her? There was nothing difficult about it. No lively blood coursed through her veins. It did not require even a hard day's work!

She changed with a rapidity she hadn't realized was possible, went to the desk, and turned in her resignation. It meant a cut of two weeks' salary, but she didn't care. She'd find something else to do, something that didn't require such adroitness!

Once outside, the air felt good to her. She breathed it in hard, with quick little swallows. She walked by a florist and stopped to get a bunch of violets for her mother, startlingly fragrant. And she walked home with a little song in

her heart. She didn't admit to herself that it was because Arnold loved her, but there was a peculiar lightness to her step; a flush of warm exhilaration on her face.

She stopped in the corner grocery and got fresh vegetables and rib steaks. There had been a time when only a filet mignon would please her, but she laughed. "A steak's a steak when you're hungry!" She hoped there'd be a pudding on the window sill. She hoped her mother wouldn't mind living on in the little flat. Thysbie knew she'd find work, even if it was only a job washing dishes somewhere.

There was no pride in her now and no indolence. She felt equal to wheeling a cart of vegetables up and down the street or selling newspapers on a corner.

She was tired when she finally got home, tired and a little sleepy. But there was dinner to get and the dishes to wash, before she could go to bed.

When she opened the door, her mother met her with that intensely bright smile upon her face; the radio was on, and sure enough, there was a pudding cooling upon the window sill above the sink. But there was, too, the fragrance of pipe smoke, the presence of Arnold.

She nodded a greeting to Arnold, dashed past her mother before a word had been spoken, and closed the door of her room behind her. She rushed breathlessly to the mirror, tossing her hat and coat recklessly upon the chair. She felt deliciously fevered and chilly. Her hand trembled as she dabbed powder across her nose and softened the daub of rouge upon her lips. Her cheeks did not need rouge. Love made them crimson.

She tried to compose herself before going out into the other room, tried to appear indifferent. But instead she swung wide the door and rushed breathlessly into Arnold's opened arms.

Mrs. Winslow smiled, and then confided: "Arnold and I have been comparing check books, Thysbie."

"Check books!" she exclaimed, completely surprised. "How on earth have you got one to compare?"

"My dear," her mother went on very softly, "I couldn't sit home all day doing nothing. It was killing me. I've had a job for six months, and I've saved every penny of it!"

"A job—you, mother!" Thysbie cried out, her eyes shining with sudden tenderness. "You with a job!" She escaped from Arnold's arms for the moment, and embraced her mother.

"I've been working at the desk in a hospital from nine until five," Mrs. Winslow explained, "and, darling, I certainly had to rush around in the mornings after you left. See my savings!" She brought the little brown book over proudly. "Four hundred dollars! That's mine. Here's yours." She dug into her apron pocket.

"Mine? I haven't saved a cent!"

"You've given me something to pay the rent with, Thysbie, and for little personal things I might need. Look—one hundred dollars!"

"But, mother, how in the world——"

"I didn't need a thing myself, Thysbie, and I took a lease of two years on the flat and they cut the rent ten dollars."

"Mother!" Tears came now, but they were tears of happiness.

"Here's ours, Thysbie!"

Arnold opened the book before her eyes.

"Eight hundred dollars—how could you possibly make that in six months,

Arnold?" She looked at him, demanding that he tell the truth.

"I couldn't possibly. I managed to pay the final installment on your ring and then resold it—paid off enough of my debts to satisfy every one, and did this." He turned the book over and pointed out:

Arnold and Thysbie Benedict, joint account.

"You were terribly sure of yourself, weren't you, Arno?" Thysbie said teasingly.

"When a man's in love it means action!" He caught her in his arms again and held her breathlessly close.

But suddenly she pushed him gently away. She ran in for her bag, took out some silver, and thrust it into his hand. "Here—run down to the grocer before he closes. Get another steak and some potato chips and a head of lettuce. We're celebrating!"

He went to the door, then one backward look at her flushed lovely face, and he was again beside her. His arms caught her close. "It can't be Venice this time, sweetheart," he whispered as he kissed her.

"Silly, I wouldn't have it Venice on a bet!" There was a glorious light in Thysbie's eyes. "There's nothing to do in Venice but be lazy. I couldn't stand that now. You and I are workers!"

"Then it's——" His voice held a deep ardor as he spoke.

She kissed him lightly, then responded to the rapturous kisses he pressed upon her lips. "Oh," she cried softly, filled with a singing joy at his nearness, "little out-of-the-way places in the towing car!"





The Best Man Wins

By Katherine Greer

LINDA TREMAINE was innocently unaware of the fact that the spectators in the flower-festooned pews were calling her the prettiest bridesmaid. Indeed, she was barely cognizant that there were festooned pews, much less that they were filled with wedding guests.

She was conscious only of two things—the slow, accented rhythm of the wedding March from “Lohengrin.” “Slide—raise-heel—step-slide—” Her feet kept time with the thrilling, familiar strains. Her eyes remained fastened on the blurred and distant faces of the two erect masculine figures, standing side by side at the foot of the chancel.

One was her brother, Carter Tremaine, who was waiting to be joined in holy wedlock to Marjorie West, whom Linda had just left in the vestibule.

And the other was Bruce Castleman, the best man, and the rejected and broken-hearted suitor.

Linda had been in the islands only thirty-six hours, but it had taken her less than a third of that time to discover the general gossip that the best man was the discarded sweetheart of the bride. The remainder of the thirty-six hours she had spent wondering why.

Of course, she had done a lot of other things besides. Met the hundreds of relatives and friends of the bride; listened to jokes and praises of Cart from all the doctors at the clinic. Stood in the receiving line at three teas, and the rehearsal dinner. Walked up and down the church aisle, until the stupidest usher was letter-perfect. Then danced and danced, until her feet ached, and her

head whirled, and she yearned for nothing more than to sleep through the wedding. But a few hours sleep between four and nine had changed all that. She had enjoyed a swimming party before the informal luncheon for the bridal party at the home of the maid of honor. And now, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the actual event, for which she and her father and mother had come five thousand miles.

As the newspapers back home would probably put it, "Doctor Carter Tremaine, rising young surgeon, a native of Lexington, but now of Honolulu," was marrying "Marjorie West, popular society girl, and member of an aristocratic and wealthy island family."

Linda Tremaine stood with easy grace on the exact spot which had been designated to her, and, as one not at all a part of it, calmly witnessed the scene.

The late afternoon sun was streaming through the long, wide-open windows of the cathedral, with a pure, golden brilliance. The soft breath of the trade winds, which rustled ever so gently the leaves of the flowering jacaranda trees in the churchyard, wafted elusive odors from the outdoors, and mingled them with the stronger fragrance of the cut flowers within the church. The masses of native ferns, the myriads of trailing white orchids, transformed the stately church with its tall white pillars into a bower of tropic beauty. Linda marveled at the profusion, yet the simplicity of it all.

She admired the other bridesmaids in their soft, trailing gowns of the most delicate, shimmering shades. Sunshine shades, they were, made to catch and reflect the sunbeams.

And how beautiful, how graceful, was the bride, in the deep-ivory satin and old lace which had belonged to her grandmother! How pale and tense she looked, as she took the last few steps to meet the groom! The sheaf of calla lillies on her arm trembled, as Linda

watched anxiously. Marjorie was scared! And no wonder! Linda's knees shook, too, as she pictured herself in Marjorie's place. It was ordeal enough to approach with measured tread one man who loved you, but *two* of them, standing side by side! Suppose at the last minute, Marjorie would decide that she had made a mistake, that it was Bruce she wanted to marry instead of Cart! Poor Cart!

How ridiculous! Linda was becoming theatrical, as usual. Of course, Marjorie wanted to marry Cart. She probably didn't even know that the best man was there. Cart was really a remarkably attractive person, every one said so. Naturally, one did not visualize one's brother as a matrimonial possibility, but that was no reason why he might not be a very desirable one to some other girl. It was probable that it was because she had known him at the insufferable, gangling, teasing age, that he didn't seem as handsome and fascinating to Linda now, as his friend, Doctor Bruce Castleman, whom she had met only the day before.

Met, under favorable, even romantic circumstances. He had come with Carter to the pier to greet them when the ship landed—just as that apricot ball of tropic sun was rising above the blue and purple painted-scenery mountains. He had put one of those deliciously fragrant leis of waxlike gardenias around her neck. As he stooped down to her in his immaculate white linen suit, Linda had thought him quite the handsomest and the most attractive man she had seen anywhere. She had smiled back at him with unfeigned pleasure, when he announced to her that she was to be his especial responsibility during the festivities before and after the wedding.

It was not until the last tea of that busy afternoon, that a sudden dark cloud had appeared in Linda's blissful, sunshiny world. She had sat before a mirror in a club dressing room, and me-

chanically freshened her make-up, and loosened her finger wave, and listened while three girls whom she had just met, poured out sickeningly sweet sympathy for Bruce Castleman.

"I think he shows marvelous sportsmanship to be best man," sighed Susan Clegg, "when his heart is breaking. Even if he is Carter's best friend, he could have managed an emergency operation on a patient on one of the other islands, and escaped for a few days. He must know that everybody will be whispering about him, pitying him, wondering how he is taking it."

"It does seem a shame," agreed the little blonde, whose name Linda hadn't remembered. "When he was devoted to Marjorie for years, and then Carter Tremaine came along, and cut him out in a month or so with a whirlwind courtship, and a southern drawl. Poor Bruce was the one who introduced them, they say. Not but what Cart is a dear." The little blonde was conscious of Linda sitting so silently.

"Oh, I don't blame her for falling for Cart," the third in the group was saying for Linda's benefit.

They would have been amazed to hear Cart's sister disagree with them. She didn't orally. She just sat and carefully brushed a few grains of powder on her smooth cheek. But she kept marveling in her mind how any girl could possibly prefer anybody to Bruce Castleman! He had gotten just that far with her by five o'clock that first afternoon!

"Yes, I feel sorry for poor Bruce."

More and more of the same, throughout the rest of the afternoon and evening, until, bit by bit, Linda had the whole story. Until, for her, all the joy had gone out of her brother's wedding, all the joy out of the anticipated visit in Hawaii. The three weeks which she was to spend on the islands after the ceremony with her mother and father, would be just so much educational sight-

seeing, not the round of festivities she had anticipated. What an idiot she had been to allow herself to fall so hard and so fast!

As Carter took his place beside Marjorie, Linda knew that the eyes of at least three of the pitying bridesmaids were turned upon the best man, as he stepped back and stood alone. With a sudden lump in her throat, Linda watched him, too. She didn't know whether the lump was more for herself, or for the tall, straight figure, whose deep-set dark-blue eyes seemed to be gazing at something—or nothing—out in the churchyard. His head was held high, his chin was square and set. He was taking the blow standing.

"Well, I suppose the best man wins," Linda remembered having heard somebody remark. Was Carter the "best man," thought Linda. She doubted it. Even yet, might not the best man win. Might not—oh, she was twisting things all around.

"If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace."

The silence following this solemn utterance was portentous. The guests in the pews seemed to be waiting breathlessly.

Nothing happened.

"I require and charge you both——" resumed the deep, resonant voice of the dean.

Somebody sighed audibly. Linda thought it was the blond bridesmaid. And the service went on.

On—— And over. So quickly. So irretrievably worried Linda.

She slipped her hand lightly on the carefully crooked arm of the usher who was her partner in the recessional. She smiled up at him brightly. The members of the wedding party were supposed to be gay as they went out, in contrast to the solemnity before and during the ceremony.

"My turn next," mumbled the young man in her ear. And she remembered that he was the one who was engaged to the maid of honor. That was why she had been put in charge of the best man.

They were whisked off as quickly as possible to the country club where the reception was to be held.

"Remember, as soon as we can slip away from the line, you are dancing the first dance with me." Bruce Castleman was at her elbow. "And more than the first," he added softly. "Plenty."

They went together to greet the bride and groom.

"Cart, you were swell!" Linda beamed up at her brother, and hugged him hard.

"Didn't see you tripping over your train, yourself, youngster!" He kissed her with affectionate pride.

"You wouldn't have known it if I had fallen over backward, or done a fox trot up the aisle," she laughed. "But I didn't, I assure you. We both were a credit to the Tremaines and Kentucky," she was saying. But her mind wasn't on it.

She couldn't help being aware that Bruce had kissed Marjorie twice, instead of the once, which is a gentleman's customary privilege with the bride. She was so close that she heard, of necessity, Marjorie's, "For old times' sake, Bruce." And, "You are going to be happier than you have ever been, my dear," in Bruce's deep voice, a trifle husky. "Cart is the man for you, no doubt. A prince of a fellow, the very best."

He turned to Carter, with a mighty wallop on his broad shoulder.

"Bear up, old man, the worst is yet to come," he resorted to the usual joke for the bridegroom.

The tears were actually close to Linda's eyes, so genuine and keen was her sympathy. How utterly heartbreaking it must be to see the one you loved married to some one else! How mar-

velously, how nobly Bruce Castleman was bearing the ordeal! She must forget herself, and be as sweet and kind to him as possible. Under the circumstances, and as Carter's sister, she could show more interest and affection than she ordinarily would with a strange man. They had gotten along splendidly the day before, had laughed and joked and found a lot in common. If she hadn't been told that he was broken-hearted, she never would have suspected it. But now that she knew that he was in love with Marjorie, she could read the signs of it in his eyes.

Yes, she would dance with him as much as he wished. Cheer him with her gayety. Be a good "little sister" to him, too.

"All the old ladies and especially all the old gentlemen, are saying that the little lady from Kentucky is the most beautiful bridesmaid." The sad blue eyes of the best man smiled down at Linda, as they danced the first dance together.

"And what are the young gentlemen saying?" She laughed mockingly. "Which is more to the point."

"They are saying that she is a complete knock-out," he answered fervently.

"I always enjoy most the compliments I have to work for," she said pointedly.

He laughed shortly. "You are so used to compliments," he retorted, "that you don't even listen! A girl like you—brought up with glib, silver-tongued men like Cart—"

"But they are sincere," she interrupted. "Cart is sincere."

"Let's not talk about Cart. We were speaking of you." A certain emphasis which Bruce put on the "you" thrilled Linda. "You haven't yet heard what the best man thinks of the prettiest bridesmaid! And isn't the best man the most important person at a wedding, next to the bride?"

"Do tell me! I can't wait!" she teased.

"In the first place, he had had preconceived ideas. Cart had talked about his kid sister, as if she wore short dresses, and raced in the streets on roller skates."

She smiled and nodded. How adorable he was! If only she could let herself like him unrestrainedly. Let herself! She couldn't help it. She was doomed for a broken heart, so she might as well face it. Take a few lessons from Bruce in concealing it.



She listened while three girls poured out sympathy for Bruce Castleman. "I think he shows marvelous sportsmanship to be best man," sighed Susan Clegg, "when his heart is breaking."

"Cart has been away from home most of the time for the last eight years."

"Instead, who appears at the ship's railing," continued Bruce, ignoring her remark, "but the most bewitching, most enchanting, most——"

"May I cut in?" Ernie Blake, the man in the wedding party, whom Linda liked least was inopportunistly there beside them with his hand firmly on Bruce's shoulder.

"If it's compulsory," Bruce submitted reluctantly. "To be continued," he added significantly, to Linda.

"Poor old Bruce," Ernie was saying. "I'd drink myself groggy, to-night, if I were in his shoes."

"And even if you aren't in his shoes," Linda was thinking, but she said nothing.

Ernie held her closer—too close. She felt suddenly stifled. She must have sighed and drawn away.

"Hot as blazes in this mob, isn't it?" he complained. "How about riding up to the Pali in my car?"

"Sounds tempting," Linda evaded. "But there are others I've promised to

dance with. You see I have responsibilities as Cart's sister."

"And some sister, I'll say." His flushed cheek was rubbing unpleasantly against hers. "You're my type girl, much more than Marjorie. Never could understand why she was such a charmer."

Funny world this, Linda mused. Things seemed to go around in an endless chain! Bruce liked girls like Marjorie; Ernie liked girls like her; she liked Bruce; and probably some girl he didn't even notice admired Ernie tremendously. Of course, occasionally, there seemed to be a loop in the chain, like Marjorie and Cart—a knot tied. She giggled softly at her unintentional pun.

And Ernie thought she was entertained by his remarks, and drew her close again.

It was a relief to dance with the bride's father, even though he did step on her toes, and hop a little. Then there were two or three other partners, who were barely distinguishable, one from the other, because Bruce was dancing with Marjorie.

Then Bruce again, to take her in to supper. After which, the bride and groom made their escape to the other side of the island, amid showers of rice and confetti and rose leaves.

A long time later, Bruce led Linda down to the first tee on the golf course. From this vantage point, one could see the distant lights of the city, sparkling like myriads of brilliant stars. And beyond, the broad Pacific stretching on out toward China.

Linda's eyes were gazing dreamily at the far horizon, thrilled by the strange, mysterious beauty.

And Bruce's eyes were on Linda. She felt them, yet refused to turn. She stood, still and silent, until she was turned by force. Strong arms were around her. Ardent kisses on her lips. Kisses which seemed a part of the thrill-

ing beauty of the night, the atmosphere of romance and glamour, and mystery. She felt herself responding to them—actively, eagerly. Actually relaxing in Bruce's arms, glorying in his nearness. Feeling a fresh exuberance, a strange isolation from everything past. Conscientious of nothing but the exaltation of the moment. She was in his arms for a long time, neither of them speaking. There was no need for words. Suddenly his voice broke the spell:

"Little, adorable Linda," he murmured huskily. "Sweetest."

With a start, Linda remembered. She drew away violently, and faced him with a laugh, which wasn't intended to be as cracked and as hollow as it sounded.

"Well, I think I've contributed about enough, in the cause of sympathy for a broken heart, don't you?" she commented.

Bruce stared down at her questioningly. "My sainted aunt, have you heard it, too? I must be the laughing-stock of the community," he added harshly. "Just sympathy, eh?" he demanded.

"Isn't that all you wanted?" she parried, bewildered by his tone.

"Of course," he answered gruffly. "Thanks a lot. You've been most generous. Shall we return to the clubhouse? There must be others who are clamoring for sympathy."

"You are being horrid—perfectly horrid," murmured Linda unhappily.

"I frequently am," Bruce agreed. "Titles are misleading. I never should have been best man. Worst would have suited me better. I beg your pardon."

Linda felt a sob in her throat at his cruel, cynical tone. If only she could cry on his shoulder and beg for forgiveness for whatever she had done. If only— But she couldn't. They were already on the steps of the clubhouse. She had bumped into Ernie Blake.

"This must be our dance, isn't it, Ernie?" Anything to escape. "Perhaps

we could take that ride to the Pali, if you still feel inclined."

"Sure! You bet!" Ernie was volubly enthusiastic.

It was not until they were on the road, that Linda realized fully that Ernie had been drinking too much. The careless, jerky motions with which he swung the heavy car around the treacherous curves made her tense and nervous.

He talked wildly and incessantly, mostly about Linda's charms, and his mad infatuation for her, occasionally emphasizing a remark with a squeeze of her shoulder, or an affectionate pat on her cheek. These demonstrations were particularly annoying to Linda because she felt that he needed both hands on the steering wheel.

"Ernie, let's go back!" she pleaded. "I'm tired and cold."

"No place to turn around now," he blustered. "Wait till we get to the top. Swell view from the Pali by moonlight! You haven't seen the view from the Pali by moonlight, have you? Have to show it to you by moonlight," he repeated thickly. "Just wait."

And Linda waited. There was no alternative. They must be nearly there now. Nearly to the narrow, walled-in pass between the mountains, which commanded a magnificent view of the ridges and valleys below, and the expanse of blue ocean, so far away that it lay still as an oil painting. Linda had been held spell-bound by its beauty by daylight.

But when they reached the top, there was no moonlight, no view. Only a thick, clinging mist, which enveloped everything.

Ernie's car crashed with terrifying force into the stone wall, with a shattering of glass. Fortunately, the bumper was strong and so was the wall. Nothing happened.

Linda was breathless and trembling violently.

Ernie was jarred out of his stupor. "What a night! Who would have ex-

pected to land in a cloud, when it was so clear farther down in the valley?"

"A wonder we didn't land in the ocean the way you were driving!" Linda inserted sarcastically. She was angry with herself for coming, even more than with her escort. "Unless you let me drive the car back I am going to walk," she insisted sternly.

"Walk back!" he laughed harshly. "That's old stuff, Linda. Don't be a little fool. I am perfectly capable of driving back. Much more able than you, because I know the road."

This was true, Linda admitted, as she stood hesitating beside the car, which Ernie was endeavoring to put into gear and back around.

"The jar must have broken an axle or something," muttered Ernie, after repeated, unsuccessful efforts, and considerable swearing. "The darned thing won't even shift! Maybe we'll both have to walk."

From out of nowhere, another car drew up beside them.

Linda stood in the diffused glare of its headlights.

"What's happened, Linda? Are you all right?" a hoarse voice called beside her. Then Bruce Castleman was clutching her shoulders, with anxious strength.

Linda's heart leaped thankfully. Bruce's presence brought an unexplainable sense of security. She wanted to throw her arms around his neck, and bury her head in his shoulder, to feel his kisses on her lips, as she had done so short—and yet so long—a time ago. She knew that if she made the slightest move in that direction, Bruce would respond.

Instead, she slipped away from him, and said calmly, "Ernie's car refuses to go. So I guess you'll have to give us both a lift, Bruce. Lucky you happened along."

Bruce glared at her through the mist. "I didn't happen, I came."

"Oh," commented Linda lamely. And

waited in Bruce's roadster, while the two men convinced themselves that the other car would not move.

It was a long and silent ride back to town. Ernie was either subdued or sleepy. And the other two were silent.

"I'll drop you at your house, Ernie," said Bruce, suiting the action to the words. "You can get another car, and do as you like—or go to bed."

Ernie mumbled something, which which have been thanks or might not.

"I suppose you don't care to go back to the club?" inquired Bruce. "I have an idea the party is about breaking up."

"I've had enough," said Linda. "Take me to the hotel, please."

Then, more silence, louder than any words.

"Thanks a lot, Bruce, for looking after me so well," said Linda, as they stood together on the deserted porch. "You've been a commendable best man and I've been an ungrateful little sister."

"I was not looking for gratitude or——" Bruce hesitated. Then held out his hand. "Good night or morning, rather. Hope you sleep well, and feel better."

Linda didn't sleep well. And the next day she felt—well, certainly not better.

"I feel exactly as though I had been run through a meat grinder head first."

"Change of climate, my dear," her mother laughed. "Along with the usual day-after feeling."

A "day-after" feeling, no doubt, Linda agreed. But certainly not the usual one.

"I am rather weary, myself," Mrs. Tremaine continued. "But so satisfied. Everything went off perfectly, didn't it? Not a slip anywhere." No, not one, thought Linda! "The Wests are charming people. And I am so pleased with Marjorie. Just the girl for Carter. Such a beautiful bride, too. And, you,

my dear, did the Tremaines credit. You were the loveliest bridesmaid, darling. Every one was saying so. Every one is quite mad about you."

"Oh, I guess not quite every one," denied Linda modestly. "You're just prejudiced! But I'm glad I looked all right. My gown is as wilted and bedraggled now as I feel—— Mother, why do weddings start out on such an exalted peak, such pure air, and all that," she demanded suddenly, "and then flop later with such a deadly thud?"

"Why, what do you mean, Linda? I didn't notice a flop. I thought every one seemed to be having a good time at the reception and behaved well." Mrs. Tremaine was puzzled. "Didn't you enjoy it? All the young men gave you a grand rush, as far as I could see. And that nice Doctor Castleman certainly was attentive."

"Oh, they were all lovely," Linda assured her. "I had a marvelous time, simply gorgeous! I must be just tired and the change of climate, as you say." The phone rang and Linda answered it.

"Doctor Castleman is waiting in the lounge for you," the hotel telephone operator informed her over the wire.

"All right Thank you." She turned away from the phone. "You go down, mother. It's Bruce Castleman. I don't want to see him. I don't want to see any one," she groaned.

"Don't be silly, Linda. He probably wants to take you for a ride. It will do you good," her mother urged.

Linda hadn't expected him to come or call. She had thought that last night had been the beginning and the end of everything. She had been wishing that she could sail away on the next ship, and never see him again.

Did she still wish it?—she wondered as she got into the elevator. She could step off at another floor, and send word down that she was "not in." Very simple, if she were determined not to see him.



She was in his arms for a long time, neither of them speaking. There was no need for words.

But it was too late now. The bronze doors were sliding apart—and there he was! As sleek and fresh and shining in his perfectly tailored white linen suit as he had been the first time she saw him! As cool and poised as though this were just another day, instead of the day after!

“Linda, I’ve come to apologize for being such a bear last night, for being so insufferably rude.” He was holding her hand tight, and looking down into her eyes. “I want to take you out on a road by the sea, where we can

watch the sunset, and where I can explain it all to you. Won’t you come—please?”

Suddenly, Linda felt sorry for him again, as she had in the church during the service. His voice had that pathetic depth, which was so appealing, so irresistible. After all, shouldn’t there be a bond between them; just because each one loved some one, hopelessly?

“I’d like to go,” she answered, at last. “I was to blame for last night more than you. Please, I’d rather not discuss it,” she begged, thinking that it would be in-

tolerable to hear him admit that he was broken-hearted about Marjorie, and that was why he had acted as he had at her wedding. "We'll just forget everything that happened and make a fresh start. And be friends, shall we?"

"You are awfully sweet," he said gratefully. "I'll do anything you say, if you'll only let me see a lot of you while you're here and show you all the sights. You'd be surprised how many different places there are to go on one small island."

So Linda discovered during the three weeks which followed. Bruce devoted every moment he could spare from his medical duties to her pleasure and entertainment. Riding, dancing, swimming. Long, lazy hours on the beach. Exploring trips in the Oriental sections. Funny little hole-in-the-wall shops. Tea in a fascinating Japanese garden. Linda admired his dexterity with chopsticks and discovered that he was remarkably dexterous at a number of things. She liked him more and more as the days slipped by, so fast that she didn't dare think of the day of departure.

Bruce didn't mention it either. In fact, there were a number of things which he failed to mention. Things like "writing," and "remembering." Apparently, there was only the present as far as he was concerned. She must make the most of it, while it lasted.

They were just "good friends," as she had suggested. He scarcely ever touched her, except when they danced, and then in a very mechanical, perfunctory way. Except once or twice, when the orchestra played, ever so softly, her favorite, "Song of the Islands," she imagined that she felt an extra pressure. If only he would kiss her again! She wouldn't question why—or care. But even with the moon as an ally, she couldn't lure him.

The day before the Tremaines's steamship was scheduled to sail for the

mainland, Marjorie and Carter returned from their honeymoon.

The radiant bride found her young sister-in-law in the midst of packing, when she ran in to see her.

"I am just sick because you are going," Marjorie said. "I wish I could have seen more of you. You are an adorable child," she admired, as though from a great age. "But you'll have to come back to visit us when there isn't the necessity of a honeymoon," she giggled happily.

"You and Cart have a nice time?" Linda inquired unnecessarily.

"Heavenly," sighed Carter's wife. "Cart is the most satisfactory person to have around the house."

"Is he?" remarked Carter's sister. "I used to find him terribly wearing. Especially when he made me fetch and carry and then treated me like a worm! But he doesn't treat you like that, I suppose?" she laughed.

"No—not exactly." Marjorie laughed, too, and her eyes shone with a secret happiness. "And how about you?" she remembered to ask. "Have a good time?"

"Oh, yes! Swell! Busy every minute. Your friends have been awfully kind to me."

"Naturally, they'd want to," said Marjorie. She hesitated a moment before continuing. "I hear that Bruce Castleman has rushed you off your feet?"

"I'm still using them," said Linda warily. "But he's been very thoughtful."

"Thoughtful? I wish I'd been here to warn you. I suppose it's too late now."

"Too late? What do you mean?" Linda was frankly puzzled. "If you mean that he was in love with you, I heard all that the day before the wedding."

Marjorie laughed mirthlessly. "No, I don't mean that silly gossip. I mean,

that I should have warned you, before you fell in love with him—and you have fallen in love with him, I can see that—that Bruce Castleman is cold as ice, hard as steel, loving only his profession, and not caring the snap of his clever fingers how many hearts he breaks.”

“I don’t understand,” Linda mumbled.

“No, but I am going to tell you. Tell you something I have never told a living soul, not even Cart. But because you are Cart’s sister, and young and sweet, I am going to tell you before you wait and yearn for letters which won’t come——”

“I am not expecting any,” Linda broke in.

“The general impression is,” continued Marjorie, ignoring the interruption, “that Bruce Castleman is bearing up bravely with a broken heart because I turned him down. The truth is just the opposite. He turned me down and I was the one who had the broken organ, smashed into little bits, until Cart came along, and miraculously put it together again. I was a perfect fool about Bruce, and did everything in my power to make him fall in love with me. I actually begged him to marry me. Oh, it wasn’t as brazen as it sounds,” she hurried on. “You see I was the first girl he met when he came to the islands three years ago, and he was lonesome, and we asked him to the house a lot. So, naturally, our names were linked together. And he liked me, but not as much, or in the way I wanted. I took too much for granted, I suppose. Anyway, he was honest about it, and didn’t pretend, and didn’t marry me for my money as some men would have done. And, afterward, was very clever and generous in giving out the impression that he was the one who had been turned down. Which saved my pride tremendously. And, of course, the minute I met Cart I was thankful it all happened as it did,” she ended.

Linda had been standing motionless beside her wardrobe trunk, a neat pile of lingerie in her arms, while Marjorie made this long speech. Now, the dainty fabrics slipped to the floor in a disorderly heap, and Linda clutched her new sister-in-law’s arm eagerly.

“Do you mean, then, that Bruce wasn’t seeking consolation for a broken heart the night of your wedding?” she demanded.

“Naturally not,” Marjorie laughed.

“But that is what the bridesmaids were saying,” Linda insisted.

“But, my dear, don’t you know that a wedding isn’t really a success, artistically, or romantically, unless there is a sadly disappointed lover in the background or foreground, rather?” Marjorie explained. “And I imagine Bruce played up beautifully!” Then, she gave Linda a sudden, keen, quizzical look. “Did you by any chance offer consolation?” she asked.

Linda blushed. “Yes, I did.”

“I beg your pardon, Linda. I shouldn’t have asked that. I shouldn’t have said anything at all,” she hesitated doubtfully. Then looked at her watch. “My dear, I must fly? I am meeting Cart at the hospital at five, and I must not be late the very first day! I’ll see you on the pier to-morrow, and forget all I’ve told you.”

“Oh, all right,” promised Linda mechanically, but she knew perfectly well that she would never forget. That she didn’t want to forget.

If Bruce Castleman had not been blue and lonely, and in need of comfort on the night of the West-Tremaine wedding, then what—what had his kisses meant? Linda was alternately hopeful, then, despondent, as she recalled those brief, vivid moments on the golf tee. Had he really fallen in love with her so quickly? And had she spoiled it all with a few mocking words? No, he couldn’t have fallen in love, she argued. Marjorie had said he was cold as ice, with

his heart in his profession, and girls just a side issue. No doubt that had just been his way of showing "little sister" a good time. He had talked about his duties and responsibilities as "best man."

Linda reviewed and puzzled about the events of the last three weeks, as she packed, with results decidedly unfavorable to the packing.

"I'll finish it tonight after the dance," she decided, at last. "I can always do better under pressure."

In spite of her most pessimistic arguments, that feeling of elation persisted. She could hardly wait for Bruce to come to take her to the dance which was being given as a farewell courtesy for her.

Somehow, she expected to find him suddenly changed. She was disappointed when he wasn't. Just gay and friendly, as usual. Devoted, yet remote. Yes, gayer—more remote, she decided, as the evening progressed.

The party was being held at a club close beside the ocean. The dancers thronged the broad open lanai, and wandered down to the beach in between times.

The distant tinkling of steel guitars mingled harmoniously with the gentle lapping of the waves close at hand, as Linda strolled with Bruce along the sand, washed hard by the tide.



"My last night in this paradise," mourned Linda. It was she who had suggested this walk.

"Oh, you'll come back again," Bruce assured her.

"Maybe not," she sighed.

"Determined to be gloomy about it, are you?" he laughed.

"Yes," she admitted. "Aren't you sorry?" Better be careful, her common sense warned her. No doubt these had been Marjorie's methods. Perhaps Bruce recognized them.

"Naturally," he answered. She didn't hear any tears in his voice!

"Write to me once in a while?" she



"I should have warned you, before you fell in love with him, that Bruce Castleman is cold as ice, not caring a snap of his fingers how many hearts he breaks."

suggested. She intended it to sound carelessly inconsequential.

"Afraid I can't promise." He was frank about it, anyway. "I'm a rotten correspondent. It's all I can do to drop my mother a line once a week."

"I wouldn't have you overexert yourself," she murmured. She might well have heeded Marjorie's warnings. "Shall we go back to the clubhouse? I have the next dance with Ernie Blake."

"I should think you would have had enough of him the night of the wed-

ding," Bruce commented.

"Oh, Ernie's not so bad when he's sober. One of my most ardent admirers."

"And you like that sort of thing?"

"Eat it up," she answered flippantly.

"Sorry I haven't played up."

Oh, she hated to have it end like this! Her last night! Last nights were always hectic. One tried to make them so important, so thrilling. For her it was momentous. But for all these others, it was just another farewell party. These people out here were always having them. Ships were sailing—friends were leaving. There was nothing to be dramatic about.

The floor was perfect. The music was perfect. Linda was popular. But—would the party ever end?—she wondered.

"Let's say good night, and go, Bruce," Linda suggested wearily. "I have piles and piles of packing I should have done earlier."

"I'm ready any time," he assented. He seemed more than willing to be off.

But when he passed the gates of the club grounds, he turned the car in the opposite direction from the hotel.

"Just one last look at the bay and the black rocks from the top of Koko Head," he stated in a matter-of-fact tone. "There should be a new moon to send a little flicker on the waves."

Linda made no response. Evidently, he took it for granted that she wanted to go. Was probably doing it as a last special favor. She had been so extravagant in her admiration of Hawaiian nights.

Other cars were parked at considerate intervals along the edge of the rocky cliff at the end of the road. Linda's eyes followed a tiny pair of Orientals.

"They used to look askance at petting and spooning in parked cars," commented Bruce. "And now it is done in the very best circles."

"A favorite pastime, one might infer from the crowd gathered here to-night," murmured Linda, in a voice that sounded very cool and remote.

"That little Japanese and his lady-love are blissfully in accord," Bruce mused. "They don't even need words. I am horribly envious."

"Envious?" The question slipped out.

"Yes. Envious of any one who is not continually at cross-purposes with the girl he loves," he explained. Then, abruptly, he leaned toward her, and continued earnestly, "After the rebuff which I received to my impulsive advances the night of the wedding, I decided that I would be very careful to conceal and control my feelings in the future," he said. "But, oh, Linda, I can't let you go without telling you again that I love you—want you more than anything in the world."

"Again?" she repeated, just audibly. "When did you tell me that?"

"Why, out there at the first tee, of course. When I held you in my arms and kissed you and you kissed me. I didn't say it in so many words. You didn't give me a chance. But you must have known what I meant, that those weren't just ordinary kisses. Why, I fell in love with you at first sight when I put that lei around your neck, the morning you stepped off the boat. I wanted to kiss you then and there, and

say you belonged to me. And all that day and the next, I became more and more sure of it. And I was more and more hopeful, because you seemed to like me a little. Then, all during the ceremony, I imagined, rapturously, that you and I were the ones who were being married! Why, I didn't dare look at you, for fear I would forget all my duties as best man, and spoil the show."

"And I thought you were gazing stonically out of the window, with such desperate courage," sighed Linda softly.

"Of course, I was a fool to take so much for granted," he finished ruefully.

"I actually thought that you felt as I did. That we belonged to each other. That there wasn't any need for words. But I discovered my mistake in short order. It was all just a game to you. A consolation prize for the discarded suitor——"

"Now, it is my turn to do a little explaining," Linda interrupted firmly. "Before you call me anything less flattering than a consolation prize, though, of course, I know I'm not one. In fact, I know all about it now. But I didn't that night on the golf course. You were right about the way I felt. I had fallen in love with you the very first moment, and I was just letting myself go and be blissfully happy until suddenly I remembered, miserably, that you were heartbroken about another girl."

"Linda, sweetheart, you love me! Say it again." But he didn't give her a chance. He held her close, and their lips met in a long delayed kiss.

Minutes—or hours later—he whispered tenderly, his lips brushing her hair, "You aren't feeling sorry for me now, are you, darling?"

"No," she murmured happily. "I shall never waste my sympathy again. I should have known that the best man wins."

"Yes," Bruce reinterpreted. "The best man wins the only girl in the world he ever wanted!"



A Serial—Part Ii.

Jazz Fran By Vivian Grey

CHAPTER III.

FRAN knew a wild impulse to scream and then found that her voice had deserted her or that her vocal chords were too paralyzed with fear to allow her to make a sound.

She sat on the back seat staring at the figure in front of her as the car sped through the graying dawn. They were going like mad. This was no leisurely hunt for a parking place.

She wondered a little vaguely if some

THE STORY SO FAR:

FRAN GATESON, "the peppiest girl in the crowd," does an exhibition dance, and Fred Manners, her fiancé, scolds her for being the showgirl of the group. He demands that she go home with him, but Fran refuses and gives him back his ring. She goes out to park with Dave and gets into the wrong car. Worn out, she dozes, and wakes to find herself riding swiftly through the night with a strange man.

one were abducting her. One heard of those things. And then she laughed at the idea. It occurred to her to touch the shoulder of the driver of the car and attract his attention.

And yet, going at the rate they were, startling him might cause an accident.

And so Fran sat tensely on the back seat, staring at the head and shoulders of the figure in front of her and wondering where she was going.

She tried to peer out through the shadows and find a familiar landmark, but it was still too dark to see.

She waited a few minutes more, hoping for some turn in events that would give an inkling of what was happening and then, when nothing came, and she could endure the swift silent motion no longer, she leaned over and touched the shoulder of the driver.

She felt his body flinch, tense, but he kept his face straight ahead with a sort of grimness that Fran felt even through the dusk that shrouded them.

She waited only a moment and then, suddenly reckless, for she felt that she had to know what was happening one way or another, she spoke. If some one was playing what they misguidedly thought was a good practical joke—all right, if she was being kidnaped, that, of course, was a horse of another color. But she must know. And so she spoke:

"Say, big boy, I know we're on our way, but I'd like to know where we're going!"

The big car lurched, just escaped sliding over the deep embankment at the side of the road, swung sharply back and then came to a sudden stop.

"You fool! Don't you know you might have killed us both!" It was the man's voice. He had turned suddenly and was trying to stare at her through the darkness. There was swift anger in his tone but something more that made Fran start.

"Now is that the way to talk to a lady?" she asked lightly. She felt that she must hold on to herself, keep her voice from showing the nervousness that trembled through her.

She clung to the seat and was sure that her teeth were chattering as the driver of the car instead of answering her bent farther over the back seat to stare at her and then, as if the idea had only just come to him, reached up and turned on the light.

They sat then, staring at each other

in blank amazement until finally Fran's light, thistledown laugh trickled through the graying atmosphere.

"You!" she said foolishly. "You!"

"Yeah, but what's the big joke?" the youth on the front seat demanded. "Do I look that funny?"

"I know! But——" and she went off into little silvery peals of laughter at the pure relief of finding that she wasn't riding madly away with a kidnaper.

"Stop laughing—will you?" The sound seemed to irritate him. "And give me some faint idea of what your game is. How'd you get in my car anyway?"

Fran stopped laughing. There was a note in his voice that took all of the laughter out of her. It was something ugly, something not too pleased.

She stared at him as if trying to get the situation.

"How'd I get into your car?" she repeated his question. "I was just going to ask you that!"

"Well, you've come to the wrong place for information, and it makes it pretty bad because I'm on my way home."

"Well, I haven't said I wouldn't go with you," Fran said, laughing again.

"No, but the thing you don't seem to get is that I haven't asked you to go with me."

"Haven't you ever met a girl who didn't wait to be asked, little boy?"

"Well, it's a lot more comfortable for a fellow when they do."

"When they do what?"

"When they wait to be asked, if you get what I mean!" he murmured in a slightly impatient voice.

"Are you trying to tell me you'd rather I wasn't in your car?"

"Well—it amounts to that."

Fran didn't say anything. She stared at the youth on the seat in front of her, trying to take in the meaning of what he had said.

He went on to explain:

"You see, I'm going home. Any other time it'd be great finding a swell-looking girl in the back of the car. But I'm going home now and there's a girl there I'm engaged to and it'd look kinda funny to see me driving into town at the crack of dawn with a strange beauty sitting on the seat beside me."

"And where is home?" Fran asked, feeling as if the very heart of her was freezing.

"Poughkeepsie. I'm just getting home from school. Told the girl friend I was staying over to finish up some last-minute affairs—the dance you know." And he grinned sheepishly. "Though she didn't exactly know it was a dance."

"Where are we now?" Fran was cleaving straight to the bone. She had no desire for meaningless details.

"Nearly to Wappingers Falls."

She sat silently for a moment. There were some people she knew just a little way out of Wappingers Falls. She considered the thing in a chill silence.

"Funny you didn't think about this girl of yours there on the club porch." And she looked straight into Johnny's young eyes. She knew the thrust wasn't quite fair. He was young, very young, but she was hurt more than she wanted to admit.

"I could get a train back from Poughkeepsie," she said, when Johnny failed to reply.

"I know, but I'd be all out of luck if it ever got to my girl that I came rolling into town at four a. m. with a beautiful vamp sitting beside me. I never could live that down with her."

"Why didn't you keep all of this in mind on the club porch?" Fran demanded, her voice breaking a little. "Why didn't you? Oh don't flatter yourself that I came along with you purposely! I didn't! But is it nice of you to have taken what you did and then let me down this way!"

"Why, I only did what any other fellow would have done—music and a moon and a beautiful girl. I didn't mean anything by it and I thought you were taking it just like I did. I didn't think it meant anything to you. You were such a gay little thing!"

"You didn't think it meant anything to me!" The words came bitterly from Fran, perhaps all the more so because those moments in the shadow of the wistaria came back to her so vividly. Not that she really cared about Johnny, but she had wasted so much sympathy on him, she had thought he was so terribly in earnest and then to find that she had been fooled!

It hurt her vanity.

"Gee, no! Why, you're not that kind of a girl! You're such a little playgirl I didn't dream that any of it could mean anything to you. I couldn't imagine you taking things like that seriously. You seemed meant for moonlight and kisses and dancing and love-making, not for serious things—marriage and jealousy and caring, really, and all that. Why"—he looked at her so earnestly that for a moment Fran wanted to laugh—"I couldn't imagine you really in love and married!"

But the laugh that came to her lips was a queer stifled thing, and it hurt her. There was no fun in it.

"No, I see, your imagination has its limits," she laughed bitterly. "Well then——"

But whatever she would have said was interrupted by a voice that spoke from the side of their car.

"Anything wrong here?" Fran looked out to see a motor-cycle policeman looking into the car.

"No, officer," Johnny said easily, "just having a little friendly discussion."

"Save it until you get home," advised the officer, "and get a move on!"

Johnny started the car. "There's no reason why you shouldn't come up front here," he said.

And Fran slipped over the back of the seat. There was nothing to be gained by sitting in back, though somehow she hated the idea of moving closer to Johnny.

"I suppose," Fran began finally with the feeling that she must break the rather grim silence that held them, "that my cue is to ask you to stop the car and let me get out and walk home!" She laughed mirthlessly. "I haven't even got my mad money with me!"

Johnny stared at her.

"It keeps getting worse and worse. I'm stony. It took my last nickel to get enough gas to get home on. I blew the last allowance check like ashes in a wind. Gee, this looks bad!"

"Check, boy and checko-slovak!"

"Well, how'd we get into this mud-dle, anyhow?" Johnny asked. "Did I, in a moment of overillumination, suggest your getting into my car?"

"No, being an honest girl, I'll tell you the truth. You're not to blame at all. I thought I was getting into Dave's car. Know him? I must have picked yours by mistake, and then I went to sleep, I guess."

"And I got in and didn't see you and started along with you in the back, a sleeping beauty!"

"Bright boy! You get the point exactly," with a sort of grim amusement at his childish delight in having seen through the situation. "Marvelous mind you've got."

Johnny glanced at her.

"Well, you needn't get sarcastic about it. It's not my fault."

Fran's lip curled scornfully.

"No, but you might have remembered this girl of yours a little sooner."

And then silence held them, the sort of silence during which two people sit staring stonily at the road in front of them.

Finally Fran saw the faint outlines of a town looming ahead of them. Wappingers Falls, she supposed.

"When we get there, you can let me out," she said in a chill little voice that she hardly recognized as her own.

Johnny didn't answer.

When they reached the corner where a dirt road that Fran recognized branched off of the main street she said: "Stop here."

Johnny stopped the car.

"Gee," he said boyishly, "I hate to see you get out here."

"Oh, don't bother about me. I've got friends here! Anyhow I would not ride another mile with you for anything in the world. I'd rather walk all the way back to Croton!"

"Oh, gee, I don't want you to feel like that! Honest I don't!"

"You ought to have thought of that before!"

"I'd take you in—as a matter of fact I'd take you back home if it wasn't that I'd never be able to explain it to Lucy. I told her I'd be there this morning and Lucy takes things so seriously that I just couldn't disappoint her."

Fran looked at him intently for a moment from where she stood at the side of the car. Johnny, too, was out and on his feet.

"You're terribly in love with Lucy, aren't you?" she asked finally.

Johnny didn't answer immediately. Then, hesitantly:

"Well, yes, I guess I am. She's the kind of a girl you just have to be serious with. You couldn't play around with her and then forget her."

Fran turned away and started walking swiftly along the dirt road. She heard Johnny's voice coming after her, protestingly but she paid no attention. She didn't want him to see her tears.

Tears of anger, she tried to tell herself they were, but she knew that she was only playing a cruel game of make-believe with herself.

She was jealous and hurt—hurt that Johnny's loyalty was held so securely by that unknown Lucy and that Fred



Fran looked at him intently for a moment. "You're terribly in love with Lucy, aren't you?" she asked finally.

had driven away and left her to go home from the dance as she could.

She heard the whir of Johnny's car as it started away in low. She stood listening to it a moment and then sat down on a rock and started to cry.

It was foolish to cry, she knew. She had all of the things that most girls longed for and never had. And aside

from a little temporary inconvenience her present situation amounted to nothing. She could do almost anything she pleased—call a taxi to take her all the way back home if she wanted to.

And yet, knowing all of that, she was woefully miserable.

And Fran knew quite well why. She knew quite well that it was because

Fred had acted plainly as if he didn't love her, and yet she would not admit it to herself.

She dried her eyes. She realized that she might not have been crying if she hadn't been so terribly tired along with all of the rest. She drew her light wrap around her and started to walk on. She'd get to the Marbrys' and spend the rest of the night there. In the morning the family chauffeur could come up from Croton and get her and take her back home.

The moonlight shining through the tall trees that shadowed the road made queer figures on the light dirt. And the night around Fran, in which nothing seemed to be stirring, was yet full of half-suggested sounds.

She had never been afraid. She had wandered all over their big place on the Croton River at all hours of the daylight and dark and had never had a thought of fear.

But quite suddenly and unaccountably she knew what it meant to be afraid of things that she could not see.

She wished for a moment that she had made Johnny take her on into Poughkeepsie! He had deserved that!

And then, out of all of the sounds of the night one came to her more clearly than the rest. She stood held to the spot her heart beating so fast that it almost stifled her.

It was a strange sound, a high faint whine.

Fran listened again and then recognized it. She bent down and made a little calling sound and then waited.

Less than a moment had passed when the hand that she had down on the ground, back out, was touched by something cold and damp and the whining noise stopped.

"Why you poor little waif!" And regardless of the dust through which the little pup must have been traveling she nestled his small body under the soft

velvet of her wrap and against the bright red of her gown.

He stopped whimpering and cuddled there, content at having found friendly hands.

Fran moved on and then when she reached a spot where the moon streamed through brightly and made the road a ribbon of white ahead of her, she lifted the puppy out of his refuge.

"Let's see what you look like," she said.

As she held him up for inspection he opened his sleepy eyes and looked at her for a long moment and then, as if satisfied with what he saw, closed them again.

Fran laughed.

"You cute mutt! You might be almost anybody's cousin. But never mind, family trees aren't of any use anyhow to wayfarers like you and me."

And she put the little fellow, who looked as if his mother had not been a lady of very discriminating taste, back under her smart, short wrap, carrying him tenderly, while his stubby, plump little black-and-white body relaxed utterly and with absolute faith in its rescuer.

It was only a short walk on to Hide-away, the Marbrys' place.

Fran saw that there were still lights when she reached the long drive that wound in to the house. Some one was still up then. She would not have to awaken them.

It came to her then for the first time that it might seem strange to them that she should come walking in in evening dress at that hour of the morning. And they might object to her companion. The Marbrys always had dogs, but only dogs whose family trees bore no blemish.

"Never mind, pupsey," Fran said, taking the dog out to look at it again, "they'll have to like you."

And the pup opened his eyes, deep dark pools of confidence, and then closed

them again and flopped his little head down on her arm with a funny little dog sigh that seemed to say that little puppies could get very tired when they were deserted on country roads and had to shift for themselves.

Fran heard a piano playing as she neared the house. Strange—that. Because the Marbrys were quiet people.

She touched the electric bell with her free hand. And while she stood and waited thought she detected sounds of merriment within the house.

"Oh—why, I thought—is Mrs. Marbry at home?" Fran finally framed the confused question while she stood gazing at the rather good-looking young man who had opened the door for her.

"Mrs. Marbry? No, I think you'd find her at the casino at Monte Carlo just now"—looking at his watch as if to verify it. "Or perhaps on the beach at Lido, or—but forgive me for letting you stand there! Do come in! And what is the gadget you're concealing under your wrap?"

"But—I'm not sure——" Fran started to say.

"My dear, neither am I," interrupted the man in the door. "Neither are any of us sure of anything except death and taxes, if you'll excuse my being trite!"

"O Howie, don't be trite!" came from in back of the man and then Fran saw that a young woman had come out into the hall to stand and stare at her. "That's the one unpardonable sin! Be anything else, old dear, but don't be trite!"

"Oh, yes, this is Julia, Miss—Miss——"

"You can call me Fran." And Fran went in then and sat down wearily on a chair and the puppy in her lap came into view.

"Look! Look, Howie. Look what she's got!"

Howie, with a great show of dignity bent down as if to make a minute examination of the puppy, stared into its

fuzzy little face and then barked with considerable skill of imitation.

Puppsey sat up on Fran's lap and looked at the huge thing in front of him and then, with his funny little nose pointed in the air, barked back.

"See, he knows me!" came from Howie delightedly.

"But look how he's snubbing you! He's got his nose in the air to you, Howie!"

And Fran looked up at the sound of another voice to find a little group surrounding her and staring at her. She realized as she took in their silly grins and their attempts at stiff-backed dignity that they were all in various stages of illumination.

A blonde with exceedingly fluffy hair bent down to puppsey.

"Oozy-woodjums!" she said in a high silly voice.

The crowd laughed and then all stooped down for a better look at the sleeping puppy and began to chatter in pidgin English, all but the man who had let Fran in. He stood staring at her young dark-eyed, dark-haired loveliness as if he were making a discovery.

Fran smiled faintly.

And something about Fran's smile inspired Howard Barns with a desire to be useful to a lady in distress. He looked around rather vaguely. His gaze fell on a cocktail shaker.

"Have a drink?" he asked with a self-satisfied brightness that somehow made Fran want to laugh at him.

She shook her head.

"No, but might I use the telephone?"

"Surely! Oh, surely! Make way, fellow elbow benders. Make way!" And he cleared the crowd away so that Fran could follow him into a small room where there was a telephone.

It was early. Only the help would be up at home, she knew. She would simply tell the houseman to have the chauffeur come for her. There was no use disturbing her mother.

When she turned from the telephone she found Howard Barns staring at her intently.

"What are you going to do with it?" he asked, pointing to the little dog.

Fran laughed.

"Adopt it, I guess. That's the only thing I can do. It was starving around alone and it's just too sweet to turn down!"

"Kind-hearted," Howard murmured. "I've always liked kind-hearted women." He moved closer to her. He had reached a stage of maudlin sentimentality.

Fran's face was a little wistful as she replied.

"Then if you do like kind-hearted women, do you like me enough to find me some place that I could get away from this?" With a gesture toward the other room where the crowd had grown suddenly quiet. "Somewhere that I could rest for a while until they come for me?"

"Who's—who's coming for you?" Barns asked.

"My family. I've just telephoned them."

"And you're going to leave me now, after just coming? That's what I call a tough break."

"But you've got oodles of other girls here. You won't miss one!"

"Yeah, but they're not like you."

"Bird seed! Women are pretty much women if you're asking me."

"But I'm not, you see," Barns protested. "I don't like to be told about women. I like to discover things for myself. I've got one of those naturally inquiring minds!"

"All right," Fran said. "Then you go discover a quiet nook where I can rest a while. Use your talent, boy! Don't hide your light under a bushel basket!"

"Come on." Barnes's words were whispered and he held out a hand to Fran. She took it and with the dog

held securely in the other arm she moved along with him.

In the outer room, she saw that the party had gone to sleep, draping itself in chairs and on couches.

Fran knew a sense of shuddering away from the scene. There was something frightful about it, terrible to see women who ordinarily were good-looking, having made frightful caricatures of themselves.

Rather incongruously, it seemed to her, the thought of Fred came to her then. Fred hated that sort of thing. She wondered what he was doing. He was probably already in New York, tubbed, dressed, and on his way to breakfast, clear-eyed and alert.

And she was here in this atmosphere of smoke and disorder.

She followed her host up the stairway to a room where fresh air came in at an open window and stirred bright chintz curtains; where the light of a new day shone softly through the pane on hooked rugs and a bed that was soft and inviting.

Fran sighed.

"This looks like heaven to me," she said and then held out her hand.

Barns took it, but he held it instead of releasing it. The fresh air of the room was blowing away the effects of the liquor. His eyes bent on her with a too intense gaze and Fran began to feel uncomfortable.

"You don't look as if you ought to be saying a thing like that," he said with a peculiar intonation. "You look as if you'd always been used to the best the world can give you and it shouldn't be very hard for you to keep on that way."

Fran laughed.

"Well, I'll see you later," she said. "And thanks lots for bringing me to this nice quiet place." She moved as if to draw her hand from his and close the door. But Barns did not release her hand. He continued to hold it and Fran suddenly felt frightened.

"Aren't you going to let me rest now?" she asked.

Barns stepped closer to her.

"My arms were made for that, Fran. For some one like you to rest in!"

"But you mustn't talk to me that way!" Fran was still trying to speak lightly but she sensed a certain earnestness about the man that frightened her.

"Why not? You were made for that sort of thing. Don't tell me that a girl like you—with eyes like yours, all smoldering fire and warmth, and a mouth that would lure a man to destruction, doesn't want love."

"But—but love isn't born in a moment!" protested Fran, still trying to laugh the thing off. "It doesn't come like a streak of lightning at the crack of dawn!"

"But that's just the way it does come! And I thought, downstairs when I saw you carrying that little mutt that you were kind. Be kind to me. Kiss me, Fran!" There was something appealing about the way he said it and Fran had the feeling that he was just repeating old lines. That it was all old stuff for him.

Not old in the way that light love-making was old for Dave, or boys like Johnny or the others that had been at the club dance; but old in a shabby way.

At least with boys like Dave and Johnny, they meant it terribly while they were saying it. But she had the feeling that all the while Howard Barns was making reservations, wondering how she'd stack up with the other women he had known.

She put the puppy down on a cushioned chair and fussed over it to gain time and when she looked up she found Barns standing still closer to her.

"Kiss me, Fran," he said. "We're alone up here. The others were so fried that they won't even remember your coming. They won't know anything about this, if that's what you're afraid of."

Something about the way he said it aroused a thousand sleeping devils in Fran. Her dark eyes blazed as she spoke:

"I'm not going to do anything that I mind their knowing!"

"Good! I like fearlessness in my women."

"I'm not interested in what you like."

"But you're going to be! Fran, you're lovely in that mood. A rebellious woman always arouses me. And you're the most beautiful little rebel I've ever seen! Fran! Fran, kiss me!" And his arms claimed her, suddenly, strongly.

Fran felt dizzy for a moment and then a wild rebellion swept her and gave her unsuspected strength.

"Don't touch me!" she cried, freeing herself and standing at bay, her dark eyes pools of fire.

Howard Barns stood away for a moment staring at her, surprise evident on his rather handsome face and Fran wondered if there was anger, too.

"Don't touch you!" He repeated her words. And then with a sudden gust of feeling that seemed to come against Fran with the shock of an actual physical thing, he went on: "You can't get away with that stuff with me!" There was something so ugly about his suddenly changed mood, so hideously insinuating that Fran shrank back against the wall, covering her face with her hands.

"You can't get away with that stuff with me!" Barns repeated. "You come walking in here at this hour, from heaven knows where and ask for the Marbrys. As if you didn't know that they've been in Europe for weeks! You can't pretend with me! You can't put that sort of thing over! You came to see them! Ha!" The sound was a hideous imitation of a laugh.

And Fran knew that he had intended it to be just as awful as it sounded in her ears.



"I did come to see them!" The words came from her tensely and she felt as if the blood in her body was freezing. She wanted to fly at Barns, scratch the sneer from his face and from his eyes and hush it in his voice. There was something so frightfully soiling about it. She felt bemirched.

"You did? You're still trying to keep up the bluff! Don't be foolish You

Fran moved noiselessly through the room with the feeling of a ghost passing through some oddly familiar haunt. There was a strange sense of unreality about everything.

can't get away with that with me. I know women too well. What are you, some little country girl? Though I should say not. I should say that you're



in the neighborhood for the summer or perhaps you came here especially to see me. I've known women to do that before—come halfway across the continent to see me and then pretend that the meeting was accidental! Well, you're going to pay for your—shall we call it curiosity?"

"What do you mean?" Fran asked, in a low, shocked voice.

"I've been talking plain English, but I can make my meaning more clear if you require it. I'm really the most obliging man you know."

"I—I don't understand you. I think I'd better go."

Barns stood between Fran and the door.

"Oh, no! You've come here and I don't want your visit to be in vain."

"I came here, as I told you, to see the Marbrys."

"Don't try to stick to that silly story. People generally have some faint idea of what their friends are doing. The Marbrys didn't make any secret of their going to Europe and renting me their place for the summer. You came here purposely to see me, because you think you're in love with me!" The words seemed to strike Fran with the force of actually concrete objects.

She shuddered away from them.

"And now I want you. Usually I'm annoyed by the women who run after me. I have my little group of friends and strangers I don't care that about!" His fingers snapped sharply. "But you—well, you're different. You're young for one thing. Unfortunately women do not know what courageous creatures they are until they have almost passed the stage of desirability." He smiled suavely.

Fran knew a feeling of gasping with amazement at the man. She tried to speak but found that there was nothing she could say. The situation startled her. She felt for the moment that she might be dealing with a man out of his senses, but a glance at his keen face with his intelligent, clear eyes put that thought to flight.

"And you're beautiful, in a spoiled way. You've been the darling of your family all your life, your slightest wish has been law. I can see all of that. Well, I'd get a great big kick out of conquering your sort. You've never known what it is to be loved by a strong man. And now that you started the game of playing with fire by coming to me, you're going to pay for it!"

"You must be mad!" Fran heard herself saying.

"I am—with desire for you."

He moved toward her with such an intent and frightening purpose that Fran, stepping back, was scarcely able to suppress a scream that rose to her lips.

Suddenly it seemed to her that the tables of life were turned. Men had always been her playthings before. The boys she had known had always been a little bit afraid of her because of the position of her family.

And then finally, in one day, two men had torn away the curtain and forced her to look at life in the raw—Fred and now this stranger.

She wondered why it should all come to her so suddenly. She felt older and, oddly, without knowing quite why she should, panicky.

"Why do you shrink from me?" Barns demanded furiously. "Am I as bad as that? Then why did you come here? Why did you come seeking adventure that you're afraid of now that it is within your grasp! Fool! Vain little fool! Coming to me with your fears! Well, I'll kill them. I'll kill them and then you'll never again be afraid of any man!"

"Don't!" Fran screamed and the sound of her own voice so filled with terror startled her as it sounded on the silent early summer morning. "Don't touch me! Don't come any nearer to me! Don't dare!"

"Don't! Women don't say that to me! I'm not used to having them shrink away from me and say don't!"

His hands were so near her that Fran felt that in a moment they would touch her. His face was close to hers, hideously close. She could feel his breath on her cheek.

She drew back against the wall, beside a dressing table and then realized that she could go no farther, that she was at his mercy, that in another moment she would feel the defiling touch of his hands, of his lips.

She went mad at the thought. She

couldn't endure it—not his kissing her. There was something too hideous about it, about any man's kissing her except Fred. She knew with terrible clarity in that tense moment that Fred Manners was the only man in the world that she had ever really wanted to kiss her, would ever really want to kiss her.

Barns moved one step nearer, his hand touched her arm.

With a quick movement and a strength that she did not know she had, Fran grasped in her free hand a heavily framed picture that stood on the dressing table and brought it down with terrible force.

And then she stood horrified as she saw Barns's body slump to the floor. No sound came from the man. He lay there motionless, terrifyingly still.

Fran stared at him. She seemed held to the spot by the very horror of the thing.

And then, after what seemed like hours, but could only have been a few minutes, she realized the need for action. She must get away. She couldn't be found there with that still motionless form. It would avail her nothing to tell the truth. There was too much to explain and it would all sound too far-fetched and unreal to any one else.

She stood staring at Barns as he lay there. Flight, anything to get away from the sight of him, was the only thought which her mind seemed capable of. Fear rioted her. But natural instincts stronger than even her fear held her there, made her bend shrinkingly down toward the prostrate figure and discover that Barns was still breathing.

He wasn't dead then, she thought. Perhaps only stunned.

And that made it all the more necessary that she get away. He must not come to and find her there.

She stepped over the body of Barns and started toward the door. Something stopped her and she found herself looking at the little dog, who had

suddenly awakened and sat bolt upright looking at her, appeal in his soft brown eyes, and an eager line in his tense little black-and-white body.

"Come on, pup," she said, her voice shaken with nervousness. "I can't leave you here with—with that!" She shuddered. Then gathering the warm little body up in her arms she started out of the room.

Downstairs the air was still heavy with the odor of stale cigarettes and liquor and the members of what had been a gay party were still draped with unashamed abandon on the furniture of the living room.

Fran stood in the door staring a moment and then, as if drawn by a magnet some impulse within her that was stronger even than her frenzy to get away from the place, she turned back toward the little room in which she knew there was a telephone.

Her hands felt numb as she picked up the instrument and dialed the operator.

"This is the Marbry place," she heard herself saying to the girl who answered. "Please connect me with the nearest doctor."

It seemed an interminable time before she heard a male voice speak over the wire.

"Doctor Kane," the voice said.

Fran's voice was nervous. "There's been an accident at the Marbry place, toward the river. Can you come right away?"

"What happened?" asked the physician sharply.

"Oh, don't ask me. Come! Come right away? You will, won't you?" There was a desperate note in her voice.

There was only the fraction of a moment's hesitation. Then:

"Yes."

And Fran replaced the instrument.

She felt as if she scarcely dared turn from the telephone, as if accusing fingers would be pointing at her. There

was something haunted about the stillness of the place. She imagined she could hear Barns's labored breathing all of the way downstairs.

It was only with an effort that she shook off the feeling, rose and tiptoed back toward the living room. It took almost more courage than she possessed to face the figures draped there, sleeping though they were.

Fran moved noiselessly through the room with the feeling of a ghost passing through some oddly familiar haunt. There was a strange sense of unreality about everything.

She moved out, into the clear, fresh air through which the sun filtered with pleasant warmth.

CHAPTER IV.

Fran, hurrying along the winding drive of Hide-away, toward the main road, knew that sense of sheer weariness that makes even life itself seem an unreality. The perfume of flowers just opened to the glory of a new day came to her with a strange faintness. The morning calls of birds in the trees that overhung the road came to her as if from a great distance.

She looked at a little stone wall that skirted the field and longed to sit there for a while, letting the sun with its fresh warmth penetrate to the very soul of her and dispel the terrible chill that was there.

But she couldn't. That still, motionless form that she knew lay back there in that upstairs room drove her on. She must get away from it.

She shuddered slightly. A pall seemed to hang over her. She wondered why the chauffeur didn't appear with the car. If he had started as soon as she had called—and then she broke the thought impatiently. It was a good hour's ride up from her father's and mother's summer place at Croton, and something might have detained him.

She must not, she assured herself, lose her head and become unreasonable and panicky.

What had happened back there in that lovely little cottage with its overhanging trees had taken only a few moments, she knew, although at the time that she was going through it it seemed like an eternity.

Tired as she was, Fran had walked fast. The horror of the thing that she had come away from, that still motionless form there on the floor, the touch of hands that seemed to defile, had been a driving force.

She was out of the drive on the dirt road and almost to the main highway.

There, she decided, she would wait. She could hail the chauffeur as he passed and there was no chance of missing him since there was only the one road that led to the Marbry place.

There was time while she sat there on a rock, the sun shining down on her, to remember the hideous insinuation that had lain in Howard Barns's eyes as he had looked at her and scoffed at her for saying she had not come to see him.

He had put a sinister meaning into her being out alone at that hour of the night and into her coming to Hide-away. Fran flushed with humiliation at the memory. And the flush became a thing more deeply dyed as her thoughts went back still further to Johnny. Johnny who had kissed her so gayly in the shadow of the wistaria on the club porch; Johnny who had told her with such young sincerity that she was wonderful.

And then had deserted her on a lonely road at night because of a girl he called Lucy. It was a pretty wet ending for the peppiest girl in the crowd.

Everybody had misunderstood her, thought things of her that were not true.

Suddenly, through the haze of rebel-

lions, frightened thought came the knowledged that of all of the people she knew Fred was probably the only one who really understood her. He was the only one who knew that down under the frivolity of the peppiest girl in the crowd there lived a wistful, little girl,

whose sincerity needed the sincerity of others.

She thought back over the boys she had known and played around with and was a little bit shocked to find that out of all of them, not one had stayed to spend a quiet hour with her.



Then Fred saw that it was time for his arms. He gathered Fran up, puppy and all, and held her as if she were thistledown, while he kissed her very gently.

They had rushed away, when that time came, to other girls—probably.

Fran was sitting, her elbows on her knees, her face resting in her palms and staring disconsolately out along the road, the little mongrel waif at her feet, when a car swung around the corner from the main road.

It wasn't a big, swanky car such as the Gateson garage housed. It was small and scratched and rattled merrily as it bumped over the road and sighed as it came to a stop in front of the girl and the dog.

Fran stared, wondering if she could believe her eyes or if the strain of the past few hours was making her have hallucinations.

And then a figure jumped out of the car and stood in front of her. Something stern, too stern in the face that looked down at her.

Fran looked up, her own young face as wistful and piteous as the little pup's was merry and impudent as he gazed up into the countenance of the huge man who towered above him.

"Oh, don't! Don't say anything you're going to!" Fran pleaded in a nervous, broken voice, a voice trembling with unshed tears. "Don't say anything to me at all. I can't stand it! I can't!"

And the little dog looked up at Fran's face in surprise, as if he wanted to tell her that, young as he was, he knew men immediately through some seventh dog sense that a wise Providence had granted him along with all other little tailwaggers, and that she had nothing at all to fear of that stern-looking individual because there was a lot of kindness down under that stern mask.

And then Fred, still not having spoken looked down at the dog whose tail was jerking a merry greeting while his small, black inquisitive nose made a friendly investigation of Fred's trouser cuffs.

"What's this?" Fred asked, his hand indicating the small, black-and-white

body that wriggled uproariously at the sound of his voice.

Fran stared at him for one indignant moment and then reached down and picked up the dog, nestling it under her wrap as if protecting it from an ogre. But the pup, perhaps not entirely from curiosity, perhaps more due to his better understanding of humans, poked his pert little face out from in under the soft velvet and with one ear cocked rakishly, and the other flopping down over his eye, yipped cheerfully up at Fred.

And then Fred Manners started to smile.

"Well, you needn't laugh at me!" Fran said, her voice not so indignant as it was tremulous.

"Fran darling, I'm not laughing at you," Fred said finally and there was a warmth in his voice that suddenly melted all of the ice that had seemed to surround Fran's heart. "I'm laughing because I'm so happy at finding you, baby thing that I've got to do something! All the way out here I've been imagining all kinds of things. I've been driving like a maniac and my hands ache from hanging onto the wheel with the nervous grip of a madman. And now that I see you here before me, all right, I'm just laughing for joy."

"Did you—you mean you came here for me?" Fran asked.

"What else, sweet?"

"But—but I thought you hated me. You went away and left me last night—and—and——"

And then Fred saw that it was time for his arms. He gathered Fran up, puppy and all, and held her as if she were thistledown, while he kissed her very gently, as one might kiss a very little girl, grief-stricken over her first broken doll.

"I—I thought you hated me," came faintly from Fran.

And Fred laughed, a tender, chuckling little ripple of sound.

"Fran, precious, who could hate a little girl who goes about the country picking up stray puppies and hugging them against her very best dress? Who could? I'm asking you, darling!"

He had put Fran down on the seat of the car and settled beside her, while the pup found a scrap of leather seat between them just large enough to wedge his small body into, though he had quite a problem finding room for all of the wiggle-wagging his little tail wanted to do.

He seemed to think it was an excellent place from which a small dog might view the world; that little scrap of seat between two people whose lips met over one's head.

"But you scolded me so at the dance," Fran said, her voice muffled against Fred's lips.

Fred was suddenly serious.

"I know I scolded you, baby, but I had to. I was fairly maddened at seeing you being a Fran so different from the one I know you really are. You see, dear, I've always known that you were like this; that you would be, if you ever let yourself be. I knew when I used to see you looking out of the window as a little girl that you were just the kind who'd pick up poor stray little puppies and carry them home; only you've tried so hard all of your life to hide that part of yourself. You've tried so hard to make everybody think you were just a little dancing doll without a brain in your head or a heart in your body, and you've got so much of both, dear. I think, Fran, I'd rather this happened. I mean my finding you with this little adopted mutt in your arms than anything else in the world. There's something sweet about it; something that I like."

"I know," whispered Fran from the haven of his arms.

And it seemed to her then that she did know, that she really did understand what Fred had been driving at all

along. She knew with a sudden blinding clarity that she must have seemed to him like a bunch of artificial flowers, colorful, perfumed, lovely to look at but lacking in all of the charm and beauty of flowers that have really known a garden.

She had been like that. Just a husk. A sham.

Her eyes were starry as she looked at Fred, leaning away a little, her small, dark head thrown back.

"Wouldn't it have been terrible," she whispered, "if you'd never seen through me?"

"It would," agreed Fred, solemnly.

And then he kissed her again, gently sweetly, passionlessly.

"And now," he said, "tell me what happened? About last night, I mean. I left the club you know, when I couldn't stand it any longer. I left and thought I'd never come back, that I'd never show up in the crowd again, that I'd never see you again. But I couldn't hold out. A few miles along the road toward New York and I stopped and found that I had to come back. That it was you, playgirl or not. No matter what you were I had to have you, Fran. And when I got there I couldn't find you. You were gone.

"Dave told me he'd seen you go out toward the parking place and then you'd disappeared. I went to your home and you weren't there. And then I guess I went a little mad. I told your mother everything that I'd been telling you and she didn't seem to appreciate it." A wry smile crinkled the skin about his eyes.

"As a matter of fact, Fran, she sort of eased me out of the house and gave me a cordial invitation to stay out."

"Fred!" Fran sat up straight, her dark eyes wide with surprised indignation. "But every word of it's true! She ought to—why she ought to thank you for it."

Fred's fine young face lighted.

"Do you really mean that, Fran?" he asked.

"Terribly," she said.

"Then that's all that matters!"

"And then how did you know where to come for me?" Fran asked.

"I suspected some bozo would be bringing you home sometime around seven a. m., and I parked my car across your drive so that even if I went to sleep while I waited they'd have to wake me up to get by. But the attack came from the other side. Your chauffeur came zooming out the drive finally and managed to stop just before his bumpers lifted me into the moon or something. I had quite a time persuading him that he'd better tell me where he was going and if it had anything to do with you. He's a pretty husky guy himself.

"But he finally told me and he's waiting down the road for us to come back so that he can take you into the house."

And Fran smiled, a very enigmatic little smile, while her small, soft-skinned hand clung a little more tightly to Fred's.

"Oh, it's so nice to be here with you again." She sighed contentedly.

She rested against the youth's shoulder, the sun shining down on her dark hair and picking out the blue lights in it, the soft breeze bringing them the faint scent of flowers still blooming courageously through a tangle of weeds in a deserted garden.

Fred held her tenderly, his lips, every now and then, brushing the soft skin of her forehead and closing her eyes with swift, gentle caresses.

When he spoke his voice was vibrant with emotion.

"Fran sweet," he said, his arms tightening around her, "it's wonderful to have you this way, the tender, gentle, sincere little Fran that I've always known you were. You seem so much more mine, dear, so much more the girl that I can worship all the rest of my life. You're everything that I've always wanted."

"O Fred, I'm not!" And her voice was trembling with the weight of unshed tears.

With his hands and lips caressing her so tenderly, with that low, husky, reverential note in his voice, as he talked to her, the memory of that hour in the upstairs room of Hide-away came back to her with a terrific and soiling force.

Fran had the feeling that in exchange for all of the fine young cleanliness and uprightness of Fred's life, in return for his tender, almost awed adoration of her, in return for all of the treasures that he was offering her with such finely prodigal hands; she could only give him something that was at best a little bit shoddy.

She knew an impulse to tell him everything that had happened there at Hide-away, to tell him how she hated herself for being silly enough to be caught in such a situation, but just as the words were about to rush in a trembling torrent from her scarlet lips, she stayed them.

He'd never understand. And besides she couldn't endure seeing that light of almost a saint at worship at a shrine, fade from his eyes. She still wanted to be, to him, the saint that he had thought he found in her.

It wasn't that she wanted to deceive him, because in all of her life she had never done anything really bad. It was just that she hadn't the courage to face the pain that would darken Fred's eyes at knowing that once more she had been the victim of the silly little playgirl impulse.

"I'm not worthy of love—the kind you're giving me," she heard herself saying in a small wretched voice.

Fred drew her to him a little more closely, and hushed her words with his lips.

"Hush!" And he smiled down at her. "Not another word of that sort, young lady! I won't have my sweetheart slandered!"

And Fran found herself looking up at him through a mist of tears.

"You're lovely like that Fran. I mean with your eyes looking like velvet pansies with the dew still on them. Beautiful! I wonder why I should draw such a lucky hand from life!"

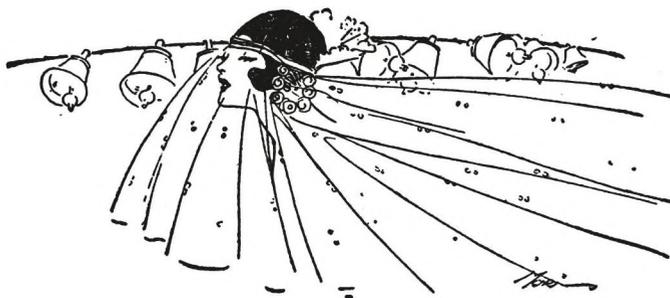
"You mean I'm the one that's lucky!" Fran contradicted. "No one in the world but you would have dared wake me up, Fred. No one would have dared tell me what a little fool I was!"

"I had to, Fran." There was something very earnest about the words. "I loved you so much that I had to."

"Oh, I'm glad! Glad!" she said with a tremulously ecstatic note in her voice.

And then they clung together in one of those blissful, pregnant silences, their lips meeting and their hearts singing to the high heavens of the joy that was theirs. The moment was too sweet for words; they needed no audible sound to interpret their mood.

TO BE CONTINUED.



JUNE NIGHT

HOW sweet it was, your first tender kiss
 That June night when the moon hung low,
 The kiss you gave me, or did I take it?
 Tell me, dear—I really don't know.

My arms folded you with a loving touch
 In an embrace of rapturous bliss,
 And my breast was the center of lava fires
 As your lips met mine in that kiss.

Love filled our hearts and we forgot all else,
 Forgot the world and its marts of men,
 For love's fair kingdom and love's sweet laws
 Were all the world and life to us then.

'Twas a moment of exquisite happiness,
 As we lingered where red roses twine,
 And now, come what will, you belong to me,
 Mine to cherish and love—always mine.

H. H. FARISS.



Ivory Satin

By Phyllis Lee

SALLY unfolded the shining lengths of white satin and spread them flat on the wide table. Then, after a careful glance at the sketch beside her, she slashed into the cloth with her sharp scissors.

Sally was making a dress; a wedding dress. She made lovely dresses for the other girls. Dresses for dances. Dresses for parties. Dresses for weddings.

Though Sally was an expert dress-maker, she never seemed to have time to make anything for herself. The dress she wore was an old one and its skirt was too short and its waist too long. But the idea of clothes for herself never entered Sally's head. She was far too busy cutting and planning some one else's wardrobe.

All the dresses Sally made were cleverly done. She had loved fussing with them, ever since the days when she had dressed her doll as beautifully as any

doll in town, even if she didn't have an imported one with real hair and eyelashes like Annabelle Parrish's.

And now she was making Annabelle Parrish's wedding dress. Every shining fold of the satin seemed to say proudly: "I belong to Annabelle Parrish. She has everything that is lovely, everything that is wonderful. She was the first girl in town to have her hair bobbed. The first girl in town to go to Europe. The first girl in the crowd to announce her engagement. And now she will be the first girl of the younger set to be married."

Annabelle was that kind of a person. Whatever was newest she wanted. But as soon as the newness wore off she was finished with it, just as she had been finished with the French doll after the first two weeks of its reign.

Sally had been surprised the day that Annabelle had walked into the big living room with a big box under her arm.

"Sally," she had said, "I want you to make my wedding dress. I've always intended that you should; ever since the day you made a wedding dress for the big doll that Aunt Alice bought me in Paris when you and I were both eight years old. Do you remember?"

Sally had remembered and she wondered whether Annabelle was purposely remembering the tale wrong. The wedding dress hadn't been made for Annabelle's doll at all. It had been made for Sally's own battered child, which had been the same size as the golden-haired, blue-eyed doll from Paris. Annabelle had come to play with Sally and to show off her new doll and had found Sally making the cute wedding dress out of scraps of white satin and lace from her aunt's scrap bag. It was remarkable work for a girl of eight and Annabelle's shrewd young eyes knew it at once. She wanted the wedding dress. And she said so, with many tears. She said so, with so many tears, in fact, that her adoring aunt had gone to Sally's mother and offered to buy the doll dress.

Sally's mother had said to the child: "There's one thing that you'll have to learn, sooner or later, my dear. People with money can have almost anything they set their hearts on. You can refuse to give this dress to Annabelle for her doll. It's yours and you made it and you have a right to keep it if you want to. But Annabelle's aunt has it in her power to make things very unpleasant for me and for your aunt if she cares to. You are too young to really understand this, but I think you will, anyhow. It's up to you, Sally. Do you want to give the wedding dress to Annabelle's doll?"

Eight-year-old Sally, without a word, had brought the finished dress and put it in her mother's lap. "She'll find a way of making me not like it if she doesn't get it," she had told her mother. "You give it to her. It's all right."

And now Annabelle wanted another wedding dress. She was going to marry Jim Harvey. Every time that Sally thought of Jimmy waiting at the altar for Annabelle to come down the aisle to him in her shining satin dress, a sob caught in her throat. For until a month ago, Jimmy and Sally had been pals. Poor, both of them, they had formed a sort of pact of fellowship to keep themselves from being hurt at the things that the other young people, with their large allowances, could do.

Instead of movies or auto rides they'd go for long walks and talk about everything imaginable. "Settling the affairs of the universe," Jimmy always called it. He'd come into the big house without waiting for Sally to answer his familiar knock and would stand in the hall and call:

"Want to settle the affairs of the universe this evening, Sally? There's going to be a fine big moon and it needs some attention." Or "How about settling a few affairs of the universe this afternoon, Sally? Don't you think that Mars and Venus have been neglected lately?"

And then had come the oil! On the old Harvey farm that Jimmy had been trying in vain to sell for two years, oil had been discovered.

Now Jimmy was rich. And Annabelle had seemed to see him for the first time.

To do Annabelle justice, Sally didn't really think that it was Jimmy's money that attracted her. She had money enough of her own. But Jimmy was the latest sensation in town and Annabelle always wanted the newest of the new. So she'd taken to seeing Jimmy on one pretext or another until she had his head so turned with her flattery that he'd come to Sally one day with a new universe to talk about.

"She's so wonderful, Sally," he said. "I don't see how it is that she can possibly be in love with me. But she is.

And she is even willing to marry me. She told me so last night when we sat on the porch at the country club and looked at the moon."

Sally remembered many evenings in the past when it had been her eyes that had looked at the moon with Jimmy, but she didn't say so. How could she? Jimmy wouldn't have understood.

"You are sure that you love her, Jimmy?" she had asked with an ache in her heart. "Sure that she's the girl you want to be with for the rest of your life?"

"She's so lovely," Jimmy had replied, with that rapt, fascinated gaze in his eyes. "I want to go on living for a thousand years so that I can look at her all the time. She is such a glorious person. I want to do wonders and lay my rewards at her feet. I want to work for her. To give her things!"

"How I wish that he'd say that to me!" Sally mourned in her heart. But aloud, she answered: "I do hope that you'll be happy, Jimmy. I—I like you a lot, you know."

"Yes, Sally, we've been great pals, haven't we?" His voice had been cheerfully matter of fact then, but Sally hadn't even dared to answer for fear that she'd start to cry.

Pals? Perhaps Jimmy had been a pal to her, but Sally had never felt like a pal of Jimmy's. It seemed to her that she had loved him ever since the days when they had wandered off after school to pick walnuts in the woods and had come home and spread them on the old tin roof of the barn. She could even remember how they had tried to scrub the walnut stains off of their hands and how their mothers had scolded at the sight of the stains.

Gallant young Jimmy with his head high above the poverty that had always threatened. Proud young Jimmy with his glorious ambitions. Wonderful young Jimmy with his charm and his sweetness.

And now he said that they had been "pals." Secretly Sally hugged to herself the knowledge that she had always been his sweetheart instead of his pal. "And I'm going to stay his sweetheart, even if he never knows about it," she told herself fiercely as she watched him disappear down the old garden path later in the evening, on his way to meet Annabelle. "Annabelle can make him love her, but she can't ever make me stop loving him."

Sally was tempted to slash into the shining lengths of white satin with destroying scissors. How could she make the dress in which Annabelle was to become Mrs. Jimmy Harvey? For the last two years Sally had been planning the dress in which she herself was to assume that new title. The design had been changed many times with the passing vagaries of fashion. But always there was ivory-white satin; slim flowing lines, with touches of frosty bridal lace to match the lace of a bridal veil. That was to be Sally's wedding dress; now she was copying her latest sketch for Annabelle's dress.

"Since he wants her," she whispered to herself as she bent over her work, "he shall have her as lovely as I can make him see her. It's her looks that he likes. He says that she's beautiful and I know that she isn't. But she shall be beautiful on the day that she marries him, if I can do anything to make her beautiful."

Annabelle didn't even want to be bothered with fittings. "We've always been the same size, you and I," she had said carelessly over the telephone when Sally had told her that the dress was ready for a fitting, "so why don't you just try the thing on yourself? I can trust you to make the thing as beautifully as though it were for yourself. Good-by."

As Sally walked away from the phone, she was in a fury. She wanted to slash into the dress with her scissors.

She wanted to take it apart and put it together in the most unbecoming lines possible, so that Annabelle would look ugly. "If she's ugly, then Jimmy won't love her," she thought hopefully, "and maybe he'll love me." But even as the words formed in her mind, she knew that she would go ahead with her first plan to make Annabelle the most beautiful bridal gown that had ever been seen in the town.

Standing before the triple mirror in the tiny fitting room, Sally slipped into the wedding dress. Even in its unfinished state, it was lovely. The clinging folds swirled into a hint of a train. The waist curved smoothly beneath the slenderness of Sally's young loveliness. The ivory whiteness of the satin made her smooth skin seem even more transparent.

With her eyes half closed, she stood before the mirror and stared into its hazy depths, imagining that it was she, Sally, who was to walk down the aisle of the church in this loveliest of all wedding dresses, to meet the love in Jimmy's eyes as he waited for her at the altar.

"I beg your pardon," said a voice behind her, "I knocked but nobody answered, and the door was open, so I walked in."

"I'm alone in the house just now," she said, turning to look up at the tall young man who stood inside the door. "Did you want to see me?"

"I did. And I do. That is, if you're Miss Sally Blair."

"Yes—I'm Miss Blair," Sally replied hurriedly.

"And I'm Phillip Hamlin, of Cecile & Co. I want to talk to you about a position with us."

"Cecile & Co. Not the designers?" Sally stared at him in amazement.

"Yes. The designers. Have you ten minutes to spare?"

"If you'll wait until I take off this dress that I'm making for a customer.

There doesn't seem to be any fitting to do. I tried it on because we're the same size."

"You designed that yourself? A wedding dress?"

"Yes—to both questions." She blushed a little at the admiration in his glance.

"It's a beautiful thing. Where shall I wait? In the hall?"

"If you will. I'll only be a minute."

It wasn't more than three minutes that he was kept waiting.

"Is this the sketch for the dress you were trying on?" he asked as Sally ushered him to a seat beside her cutting table.

"Yes. I find that I work better that way than by making patterns. Somehow, when I draw something I usually know how I want to cut it."

"You don't use patterns? Even those you cut yourself? You simply work from these sketches? Why—that's genius, Miss Blair."

Sally shrugged her shoulders carelessly. "Not genius. It just happens to be the way I work."

"You remember a costume that you did for Mrs. Tom Powers? For the Chicago opening of the League musical comedy?"

Sally nodded, a slow smile playing around her lips. "I loved doing that. She's an old friend of my aunt's. She used to live here in town and she came back for a visit last year. I made a street dress for her and then the costume."

"It was the costume that was so noteworthy. I am commissioned by Cecile & Co. to get the designer of it to do three costumes for us and not to take 'no' for an answer. And also three evening dresses, and a tailored outfit, too. The directions are on this sheet of paper. Do you think that you will be able to do these?"

Sally smiled whimsically. "I'd love to try. That is if you think I can really



"I'm alone in the house just now," she said, turning to look up at the tall young man who stood there. "Did you want to see me?"

do it well enough to please such a big concern."

"I'll tell you frankly that these preliminary orders are a sort of tryout. If these go as well as we hope they will, we want to make a definite contract with you. Either to come to Chicago and work for us in our place there, or to stay here and design and to give us your entire output at a rather respectable salary."

"I've never dared think that I'd work for Cecile & Co."

Phillip Hamlin smiled understandingly. "We've been doing a bit of investigating since Mrs. Powers told us who made her costume. I can tell you that the investigations have been satisfactory. If these dresses turn out as we feel they should, the job is yours. I can offer you a hundred dollars for the making of each of these seven costumes. We furnish the materials, of course. Is that satisfactory? We can talk prices on the salary later."

"Satisfactory! It's wonderful. I've never made so much money in my life before."

"You can start at once?"

Sally nodded her well-shaped head quickly. "As soon as I finish the wedding dress I'm making for—for a friend of mine."

"Will it take long?"

"Just a day. I work fast. Anyway, she wants the dress soon."

But she didn't want it that soon. Annabelle called up during the evening. "I'm just phoning," she said, "to tell you that you needn't rush with my dress. I'm going to Bermuda for a week or two. A friend of mine has bought one of those new cabin planes and is giving a sort of airplane-yacht party to Bermuda. The wedding won't take place for another month, so take your time with the dress."

"Jimmy didn't tell me," said Sally, startled into frankness.

"Is Jimmy supposed to tell you everything?" demanded Annabelle mockingly. "If he tells you everything you'd better make him tell you why I'm going to Bermuda. Good-by."

Sally was sitting at her cutting table with sketches and samples of silks spread out before her when Jimmy came that evening. He seemed tired.

"Any universes that need settling?" he asked with forced gayety, but she knew that he wasn't really gay.

"Come in and hear about my new universe," Sally invited. "Something has happened. Something wonderful."

"You aren't going to be married?"

Sally looked up, mock surprise in her eyes.

"Me? Married? To whom, pray tell? No, it's a wonderful chance at a new job. Cecile & Co." She told him all about it, from the first minute when the man had come into the house.

"It's the most glorious thing that's happened for ages," he said. "I've just been wondering whether I dared suggest a plan. It's this——"

But Jim didn't have a chance to begin telling about the plan because the doorbell rang and it was Phillip Hamlin.

"I'm not leaving town until morning and I thought that I'd drop in and talk over the new job with you," he explained to Sally. "However, if you're busy, or if I'm intruding, I'll go back to the hotel."

Sally held the door open wide. "Oh, no, I'm not busy. I've just been telling a friend of mine about the offer from your company. Come in, won't you?"

He followed her into the bare hall. "A friend? The girl you are making the wedding dress for?"

"No. The man she's going to marry. He's an old pal of mine." Even as she said the words Sally knew that they weren't true, but she knew that Jimmy could hear every word that was being said in the hall, so she used words about their friendship.

She introduced the two men and they all sat down to discuss the wonders of the new offer.

"I knew the minute I saw the costume that the designer of it was talented," said Hamlin finally, with an admiring glance at Sally. "But I didn't even dream that she'd be this charming. Now I'm beginning to hope that the office will send me down here pretty often. In fact, I'd be tempted to invite myself down occasionally if I could persuade Miss Sally to take a little time off from the work that she's doing for us."

"Time off?" asked Sally, puzzled. "Time for what?"

"Time to dance. To go to the theater. To play. Don't you ever play, Miss Sally? Don't they permit pretty girls to play in your town, Mr. Harvey?"

Jimmy frowned and Sally, afraid of an argument, said hastily, "I don't know exactly what you mean by playing, Mr. Hamlin. I don't go to dances very often and we seldom have any plays. I only go to the movies, and then not very often, though I love them. We don't do much exciting. We just walk." She looked at Jimmy.

"And settle the affairs of the universe," he added, with his old smile. "Sally and I have been pals for years. We've always walked and talked until—recently."

"About your respective love affairs, I suppose," suggested Phillip Hamlin, with a smile in Sally's direction.

"About mine," corrected Jimmy, with a frown as if to ask what business it was of Hamlin's.

"Love affairs," laughed Sally. "I haven't any. I haven't ever had time to be in love." She caught a glimpse of Jimmy's face as she said it. Poor kid. He looked worried. Perhaps he and Annabelle had had a quarrel before she had left. "If he only loved me instead of Annabelle," she thought to her-

self, "I wouldn't let him be worried like that. Why does she go away without him just before their wedding?"

"I thought that everybody had time to be in love," said Hamlin. "I've always intended to get around to it eventually myself, when I met a girl like some one I used to dream about."

"And who was that—*Cinderella*?" laughed Sally, blushing a little at the admiring look in the man's eyes.

"No, *Sleeping Beauty*. Did you have the book with the big colored illustrations? *Sleeping Beauty* in my picture book was a little slim thing with an adorable tip-tilted chin. Her face was heart-shaped and her hair was silvery-gold and she had gray eyes and tiny helpless-looking hands."

Sally blushed again. For Sally herself was exactly as he had described the *Sleeping Beauty*. Her hair was of pale-silvery gold. Her eyes were gray. She was small and slim. And her hands that were really so efficient with a needle or a pair of scissors or a pencil and sketching pad, looked so small that they seemed helpless and appealing.

"You know," said Phillip Hamlin, as he was saying good night on the doorstep later in the evening, "you look just like *Sleeping Beauty* in my picture book."

"Do I?" Sally was glad that the dimness of the porch light prevented him from seeing her blush.

"Yes. But you are too good to be true. Are you true?" He put out his hand and took her fingers in his. "You feel true. Your hands are as tiny as the hands in the picture."

"But they're not helpless," she reminded him. "I can draw and sew and even cook. I do all sorts of things that girls in fairy tales would never think of doing. I'm not romantic a bit."

"But that's what makes you all the nicer," he told her. "You combine all the nicest features of fairy-tale girls and real girls of to-day. I'd like to be

real friends—if you'll let me. I'm coming back this way next week. May I stop and see you? And will you come somewhere and dance with me?"

"I never go out to dance. I haven't anything to wear."

"But why don't you make yourself a dress? There's time. You could use one of the designs you make for us. I've almost forgotten one of the reasons I stopped this evening. I wanted to give you this to clinch our bargain." He opened a billfold that he took from his pocket and handed her two crisp bills. Sally couldn't see the denomination, but they made her feel rich just to finger their crispness.

"Hadn't you better wait until I'm finished?" she asked.

"You can have the rest when you're finished. That's just something to seal the bargain. I haven't anything to do with it. It's Cecile & Co. who sends it to you. But I'm anxious to hear what you have to say. Will you go dancing with me next Saturday night? At eight?"

"If you'll take a chance on my dancing. It's not very good. I haven't had much practice."

After he had gone, Sally stood on the doorstep for a moment before she went into the house. She knew that Jimmy was waiting to say good night. He didn't even look up from his book as she came into the room, but waited until she had settled herself on the opposite side of the table before he said, still looking at the page before him, as if he were reading from the book:

"He seems to be pretty friendly on short acquaintance. You never saw him before, did you? Hadn't you better go a little slow?"

She looked at him in surprise. "Mr. Hamlin was just trying to be nice, I think." Jimmy still looked worried. Sally wondered whether he'd say anything about Annabelle's trip or whether she'd better open the subject herself.

Suddenly he arose and tossed the book to the table.

"I'm going home," he said shortly. "I don't feel like talking. See you after a day or so."

As was his custom, he walked out and closed the door behind him without waiting for her to go to the door with him, and she sat in her chair thinking over the events of the day.

Then, with a sigh at the memory of Jimmy's shortness, she gathered up her sketches and settled them in a pile on the cutting table with the samples of silk and lace, before she turned out the light and went to lock up for the night.

The old house was big for one person, but she had hated to leave it after her mother and her aunt had died. So she had stayed on, with only old Norah to come in and clean every day. She liked solitude and yet there were many evenings when the lonesomeness seemed almost unbearable.

It wasn't until she was ready to hop into bed that she remembered the money Phillip Hamlin had given her to clinch the agreement with Cecile & Co.

She had put them on the dressing table and she walked across the room and looked at them. Then she rubbed her eyes and looked again. Two hundred-dollar bills stared up at her. What couldn't she do with two hundred dollars? And there was five hundred more to come after the designs had been made. And more—and more—and more—after more designs could be started.

But then, remembering Jimmy's hurt eyes, she climbed into bed and turned out her light and cried herself to sleep in spite of the good news and the two crisp bills and the prospective dancing date with handsome Phillip Hamlin.

The next week was a busy one. On impulse she made her new evening dress exactly like the wedding dress she was making for Annabelle, except for the pale sunny yellow of its color and the

length of its skirt. The gown cleared the floor a few inches instead of having a train like the wedding dress, but otherwise the design was exactly like Annabelle's dress. She even bought fragile bridal lace and applied it to the neck of the dress after dyeing it to the exact shade of the sunny yellow of the dress.

With the money that Hamlin had paid her she was able to buy all of the new accessories she needed to go with the dress. She even had time to have dainty evening slippers dyed to match the dress and to shop until she found just the shade of pale yellow in suede gloves that went best with her dress. Then she made an intriguing little evening wrap of amber-colored transparent velvet. The soft folds of the light skirt swirling out from under the short dark-colored wrap made her look like a sunny garden flower.

On Saturday night she was all dressed and was standing in front of the triple mirror when she heard somebody in the doorway. As she looked up, she expected to see Phillip Hamlin. But it was Jimmy.

"Gosh, Sally! Where'd you get the garb?" he demanded.

"Made it. Why shouldn't I? Do you think I'm going to make dresses for every other girl in town all my life and never take time to make anything for myself?" Somehow Sally was furiously angry at the surprised expression on his face.

"Of course. Why shouldn't you? Now that you've got it, we ought to celebrate? Can't we go out somewhere and settle the affairs of the universe in a different way this evening? By going some place where those golden things will feel at home?"

"I have a date," she replied shortly, feeling terribly hurt. So Jimmy was no different from any other man. They were all alike. You could be the most wonderful friend in the world to them



*"She's going to marry me!" announced an angry voice beside them.
 "She's mine. We've been in love with each other for years and neither
 of us had sense enough to know it."*

and all they cared for was the way you looked. If she had dressed up like this, Jimmy would probably have thought her pretty ages ago, Sally felt resentfully. Now—what was the use? There was Annabelle.

But Annabelle was away. And if Jimmy wanted his girls to be pretty and useless the way Annabelle was, then Sally decided she'd be pretty and

useless, too. She'd flatter him the way Annabelle did. She'd use every one of Annabelle's own methods of technique to give him exactly what he wanted.

Sally wanted to sit down in her old chair, in all that glory of golden gown and new slippers, long gloves, and cry. It seemed to her unbearable that Jimmy should like her, just for a pretty dress and a touch of rouge on her cheeks,

when for years she had given him every loyalty, had adored him for every virtue he had and a few that she'd only imagined.

But instead of crying, she laughed. And then she said nice things to him, hating herself for copying Annabelle, until her flattering words were interrupted by Phillip Hamlin's arrival.

"Wait a minute, Sally"—Jimmy caught her arm as she started for the door to let Phillip Hamlin in—"you're not going to run away from me now, just as we've been having such a wonderful time?"

"Wonderful time?" Had Jimmy been having a wonderful time just listening to flattery and flirting with a girl made lovely by a new dress? Sally tossed a smile over her shoulder at him and made a little face.

"Little boys must go home when their elders want to go out," she told him. "But there are other evenings."

"To-morrow? No, by gosh, I won't wait until to-morrow. Where are you going? To the country club? I'll go, too. I'll take you away from him."

"Wait a minute," she called after him, but Jim waved a gay hand at her and disappeared in the direction of the back door, leaving her to open the door to Phillip Hamlin.

Was that Jimmy who was so impressed by the sight of a few flub-dubs?—Sally asked herself. What should she do? She could reject with hauteur the very notion that he could join their party. She could freeze his budding admiration. She could flirt with Phillip Hamlin until Jimmy was sure to go away, discouraged. She could remember Annabelle or she could imitate her. She could keep on giving Jimmy the flattery that he lapped up. Keep on saying coquettish things to him. Keep on dressing for his eyes. Give him, in other words, what he wanted, and try to take him away from Annabelle during the month of her absence.

And in the few seconds it took her to cross the hall and open the door to Phillip, she made up her mind. She would give Jimmy what he wanted.

"Now you are a golden girl, more like *Sleeping Beauty* than ever," said Phillip, as she greeted him.

"More like *Cinderella* on her way to the ball," she told him.

"Your slippers aren't glass," he protested, looking down.

"Neither glass nor tiny," she said. "Hadn't we better go?"

They went. Sally salved her conscience for flirting with Phillip by saying that she was practicing for Jimmy. But it was very pleasant just the same. She told him that she had all the sketches made and promised to show them to him the next day.

The dancing itself was something that Sally enjoyed thoroughly. She was rounding a corner in Phillip's arms, looking up into his admiring eyes while he said something very flattering, when suddenly she saw Jimmy. But he wasn't alone. He was dancing and with Annabelle!

The room seemed to revolve around Sally as her feet mechanically moved in time to the music.

How could Annabelle be with Jimmy? Annabelle was on her way to Bermuda. Jimmy had promised to come to the dance in order to dance with Sally.

But, after all, he was engaged to Annabelle, Sally told herself. She had been giving him what he wanted a long time before Sally ever thought of doing it. Now Annabelle was winning the race. It was too late for Sally to think of coming in first. But at least she could hide the way she felt. She could flirt with Phillip, so that Jimmy would never know that she had thought of loving a man engaged to another girl. She looked up at Phillip and laughed.

"You say such nice things to me," she said, "and I'm not used to having nice things said to me."

"I don't believe you," he murmured in a low voice under the haunting strains of the music, "but even if I did, I'm afraid I'd have to keep on saying them. You see—I really mean them."

Startled, she lost her smile. His eyes were sincere, she saw, not mocking, as hers had been.

"You—I don't understand," she faltered. She felt him leading her toward an open doorway and they danced into a hallway and stopped dancing. But his arm still encircled her.

"You've haunted me all week, Sally," he told her, and she knew from the tone of his voice and the expression in his eyes that he was perfectly sincere. "I keep feeling as if my fairy-tale picture had come to life. I know that you can't care for me in such a short time. But won't you give me a chance to make you care for me? Let me come to see you often. Let me show you how happy I'd make you if you married me. Will you, Sally?"

"She will not. She's going to marry me!" announced an angry voice beside them. It was Jimmy. He had followed them into the hallway. "She's mine. We've been in love with each other for years and years and neither of us had sense enough to know it. You don't know it, Sally," he said angrily, turning to her with a new fire in his eyes, "but you love me. You've loved me for years and I'm going to spend the rest of my life in trying to prove it to you. Do you think I'd let you marry another man?"

"And what about me?" asked Annabelle's amused voice. "I'd a slight notion that you'd intended to honor me with your attentions for the rest of your life."

"You!" He turned on Annabelle angrily. "It's all your fault! You know it is. It was you who told me that I was more in love with Sally than I was with you. That's why we had the fight before you went to Bermuda. Then

you came back and demanded that I bring you here to-night. You waiting for me when I got home. Knowing that I loved Sally. That I'd loved her all my life. Telling me that you didn't love me anyhow, but that you wanted the 'newest thing around the place.' That's the kind of a girl you are."

Sally wanted to laugh. Suddenly Jimmy sounded so utterly ridiculous, talking like that.

At last she knew what Jimmy was like.

Not the godlike person with glorious ambitions that she had dreamed of. Just a rather ridiculous man who fell for pretty clothes and flattering words like any other man. He had a temper like any other man; he liked to be flirted with, like any other man.

It would be easy enough to give him what he wanted, now that she knew how. All that she'd have to do would be to flutter her eyelashes at him and tell him that she'd loved him all the time and had never known it until he'd told her.

He was waiting for her to speak. Suddenly she felt that she wanted to get away from him. To get away from Annabelle. To get away from everybody in the world except this new man who had come into her life and made of it something lovely and glorious.

It was Phillip she wanted, not Jimmy. She turned and saw Phillip standing silent, pain in his eyes. She smiled at him and tried to make her smile say the things she wanted him to know.

Somehow she felt, as he smiled-back at her, that he knew her thoughts.

"You're beautiful!" Jimmy was saying and she couldn't help remembering that he'd said exactly the same things about Annabelle. "You're the loveliest thing I ever saw."

"You've made a mistake, Annabelle," she said clearly. "Jimmy and I aren't in love with each other. We were just pals, that's all."

She didn't look at Jimmy. She didn't look at Annabelle after the first glance at her amazement. She turned to Phillip and held out her hand to him.

"Won't you take me home now, Phillip darling?" she said and smiled deliberately into his eyes, feeling a glamour that she had never known before. "There are so many things that I want to tell you about."

"Things about us?" asked Phillip's voice, filled with a happy note. "I'm going to love talking about us—all our lives."

With his arm around Sally's slender waist, Phillip led her out onto the porch and down the path toward the field where the cars were parked.

Halfway, they stopped and Phillip, bending, kissed Sally's soft lips.

"My dream girl! My darling! I never dared hope that you could really learn to care for me. It seems too good to be true. Are you sure that I'm not dreaming?"

Sally's silvery laughter floated on the night air. "Of course you're not dreaming, honey. I'm just as real as real can be and so are you. And to prove it I'm going to give you this." She stood up on tiptoe and shyly kissed his cheek.

With a low cry he caught her to him and, held tightly in his arms, Sally listened to words used by lovers the world over, but always new to the loved one.



DEVOTION

I PLUCKED a lily, pale and slender,
 Sheathed in white—and cool to hold;
 But I could see, through petals tender,
 A heart the color of warm, red gold.

At first I had but one desire,
 Just to steal the gold—and go—
 But something touched the white with fire
 And fused it too with the golden glow.

The flower then looked far too lovely
 To be reared in passion's soil;
 So on an altar high above me
 I placed it where it never would spoil!

GEORGE F. MEETER.



Reaching for the Moon

By Helen Hibbard Dau

LOIS CLARK was man's idea of desirability—if statistics can be counted as reliable evidence. At twenty-one she had had five worth-while proposals—that is, from men capable of supporting her in the manner to which she was accustomed—and probably five or more others. She had attended proms, house parties, carnivals, and hops at practically every university in the East and a few of the West. At twenty-one there didn't seem to be a thrill left for her.

One summer night she sat on the sea wall that stretched across the foot of the great lawn of her father's Connecti-

cut home. Her feet, shod in dainty pale-yellow slippers that matched her fluffy chiffon dress, dangled over the edge. She rested on the palms of her hands, her shoulders hunched up near the smooth curve of her cheek and the short brown curls she wore tucked behind her ears. Her wide eyes gazed wistfully at the rippling dark water of the Sound that stretched before her, a shimmering path of moonlight across it.

Occasionally a light breeze carried a snatch of dance music down from the veranda of the big house behind her, but otherwise the stillness was broken only by such gentle sounds as the lap-

ping of water against the sand, the plaintive call of a whippoorwill, a faint rustling in the trees.

She was reflecting upon love. She had already forgotten what had brought it to mind, but she was thinking that the love she had always dreamed of was something like that round and shining moon that hung in the dark heavens above the Sound—clear, true, glowing, thrillingly full of mystery and a luminous, breath-taking beauty.

But love was not like that; love was dull, uninteresting, tiresome. She knew. She had had enough men in love with her to know. And that moon up there was quite beyond the grasp of human fingers. That was it—she had been reaching for the moon and she must reconcile herself to a substitute that in comparison was very much like an inflated balloon—lifeless.

She sighed. The man beside her moved impatiently. It was he whom she had forgotten.

“Lois?”

“What?” she asked in a hushed voice.

“Have you forgotten? Didn’t you hear?” The voice was husky, a little hurt. “Five minutes ago I made about my ninety-ninth proposal.”

She turned to look at him now. She could see his thin, quietly handsome face with its even tan color very clearly in the moonlight, even to the anxious question in his serious brown eyes. She could see that sensitive mouth that could draw into a thin line of sternness and determination as easily as it could widen into a slow, good-humored smile. She saw it now, tense and waiting.

Poor Jimmy! She couldn’t bear to hurt him. She had known him ever since she had first learned to toddle. They had played together ever since, shared each other’s triumphs and disappointments. But it was purely a brother-and-sister affair, Lois often told herself. She trusted him more than any one she knew. He was de-

pendable. He was upright. Even though his father was a very wealthy, prominent man, Jimmy could be depended on to make something of himself on his own. But marry him? There wouldn’t be a thrill in it for her.

“Lois,” he cried impatiently, “aren’t you ever going to answer me? Are you going to marry me?”

She glanced away at the moon. She saw that it was quite beyond the grasp of human fingers, and knew that a nicer, more desirable man than Jimmy couldn’t ask her to marry him. What if it weren’t a thrill?

She shrugged. “I guess I might just as well,” she finally answered.

Suddenly she felt a change in the man beside her. Turning, she saw that his humble, pleading manner had stiffened. He had drawn away and was regarding her with hard, hurt eyes.

“Oh, no,” he said with a sharp intake of breath. “Not like that!”

“Not like what, Jimmy?”

“I mean that although I’ve hounded you for the best part of my life, fairly groveled before you trying to get you to marry me, I still have enough pride not to be accepted like that—in that half-hearted, condescending tone. I’m through now, Lois—for good. I won’t bother you again—ever. The trouble with you is that you’ve been spoiled by too much attention, and you’ve chased thrills so long that you’ve grown satiated. There isn’t a new thrill left in the world for you. You can’t seem to be contented with the decent, ordinary things in life. You’ve lost all conception of what life really means.”

He tossed a half-smoked cigarette down on the sand and stood up.

“Oh, for heaven’s sake, Jimmy,” Lois flared up angrily, “don’t start lecturing me, just because you can’t have what you want, just because you can’t have a good time the way the rest of us do. You’re as staid as an old maid!”

He ignored her thrust. "Are you coming up to the house?"

"No, run along. I'll be up later."

He hesitated a moment and then swung around. She turned to watch him go. Poor old Jimmy! In spite of his determination his shoulders were drooping. She had hurt him—awfully. Tears welled up in her eyes. She brushed them away angrily. Here she was crying just because she had hurt a man. Funny! She had never done that before!

"I'm tired," she told herself. "I haven't had a good night's sleep in weeks. And I'm being a terrible hostess. Nobody would dream to look at me that that party up at the house was mine."

She rose and followed Jimmy across the lawn.

As she moved slowly up the steps to the veranda, where Japanese lanterns were swaying gently in the breeze and where a gay young crowd was dancing and laughing to the music from a radio, several stags moved toward her.

"Hi, Lois. Dance?"

"Where y'been?"

"How about giving a fellow a break now and again?"

"Lois, you promised me."

She made a playful grimace at them all, and accepted Dick Clyde, who had reached her first. As they swung into a dance her eyes searched for Jimmy. He had disappeared—gone home, probably. Oh, well, what difference did it make to her?

"Lois, aren't you listening to me?"

Dick was asking her. "You're all washed out to-night. What's on your mind? Come on and swing into things!"

He caught her closer to him and began whirling around and around at a dizzy rate of speed. They bumped other couples who called out warnings and stepped off the floor. Around and around and around they went, faster and faster.

"Dick!" shrieked Lois, laughing. "Stop! I'm giddy! I'll fall!"

Suddenly they came to an abrupt halt before the punch bowls, both laughing, struggling to catch their breaths.

"You idiot!" Lois scolded good-naturedly. "I can't stand now."

He steadied her with one hand and thrust a glass of punch at her with the other.

"Well, I got you started anyway!" he laughed triumphantly.

"I should say you did!" Only all the time she was wondering why it hadn't been any fun—that wild hilarious whirl. Was Jimmy right? In her mad rush for thrills had she become satiated—unable to enjoy anything any more? Oh, bother!

She drank down the punch; then some one came forward and tugged at her arm.

"Say, Lois." It was Bill Lake. "I brought Cartwright Hadley—you know, the aviator I told you about. Come on in and meet him."

"Oh, of course, Bill." She set her glass down, excused herself to Dick, and followed Bill through the hall into the living room.

Cartwright Hadley, tall, erect, handsome, stood talking to her father. Bill introduced him to her.

"Bill has told me so much about you," she murmured, holding out her hand and smiling up at him.

The aviator's eyes sent a twinkling glance to Bill's face.

"I hope he hasn't promised too much," he commented, bowing over her hand.

But Bill had turned to talk to her father, so Lois took the aviator's arm and they moved across the room toward the hall.

"If you know Bill at all well," she was saying to him, "you'll know how conservative he is. He didn't tell me half enough."

As she deliberately bestowed her most challenging smile upon him, she

was surprised to feel the muscles of his arm tighten beneath her fingers. He was putting himself on guard. Of course, she had been deliberately flirting with him, but most men loved that. She was a little vexed.

"I suppose you want to go out and meet every one?" she remarked coolly.

"No, not particularly. I'm sort of all in. Flew from Chicago to-day. Had to get up at an ungodly hour to make it."

"Let's escape then and go down by the water and talk. Want to?"

She was beginning to take an interest in this handsome aviator who didn't want her to flirt with him. It was something new in her life. And a new thrill very near her grasp brought zest and vitality back into her.

He hesitated and then consented affably.

"Great! A little moonlight might prove soothing to the wrought-up nerves."

She led him out a side door. They walked down the great, sloping lawn, passing a few casual, impersonal remarks between them.

"Georgeous place!" he commented, looking about the moon-drenched estate, the great old-fashioned white house with its spacious veranda and the tall oak trees waving shadows across its gabled roof.

"Yes, isn't it?"

"Nice place next door, too." His eyes had wandered to a similar, adjoining estate.

"Belongs to the Farrells," she said amiably. "They've been our neighbors for—well, all during my life anyway."

"Farrell did you say? That's funny. They don't happen to have a son, Jimmy Farrell, do they? Seems to me he used to live around here some place."

"Why, yes! Do you know him?"

"I certainly do. Great fellow, Jimmy. Best ever. In my class at Princeton."

"Oh." Lois frowned. She didn't care just then about hearing Jimmy's praises sung.

They had reached the sea wall. Lois sat down and swung her legs over; the aviator followed suit. They sat in silence for a while, both with eyes on the moon. Finally he turned to her.

"Anybody ever tell you you were good-looking?" he asked carelessly, a queer sparkle in his eyes.

Lois moved restlessly. That was what she had wanted—his interest—but somehow she didn't care now. The mention of Jimmy back there had spoiled it.

"Oh, let's talk about something that matters," she said impatiently.

The aviator stared at her in open amazement, and then his clear laugh rang into the still night.

"What luck!" he exclaimed.

She regarded him with mild surprise. "What do you mean?"

"Why, I was scared to death back there when you suggested coming out here. I thought you'd expect me to—to make love to you."

Her eyes grew round with astonishment.

"It happens," he went on to explain, "that I've just gotten engaged and I ——" He broke off, embarrassed.

"Oh," was her only comment.

They lapsed into silence a moment. Lois couldn't think of anything to say now.

Finally she ventured: "Tell me about her."

Not that she cared about hearing, but she didn't want to talk herself.

He didn't stint himself on words. He began at the beginning when he had first met her at an aviation field, and went on and on. Lois didn't listen to what he was saying. She kept her eyes on the moon. Only something about the proud elation of his low, baritone voice as it ambled on gave her the feeling of loneliness and futility, as if she

alone had been shut away from something important in life.

"Oh, say," he broke off suddenly, "am I boring you?"

She roused herself. "Oh, no. Not at all. Please go on."

"But I mean, to a girl who isn't engaged or isn't in love—you aren't are

you?" She shook her head—"I suppose it sounds silly."

Her eyes were on the sky again. "Do you suppose," she asked suddenly, "that any one could ever reach the moon?"

He looked at her quizzically. He had started to laugh but something in her face stopped him. He shrugged.



"What luck!" he exclaimed. "Why, I was scared to death back there when you suggested coming out here. I thought you'd expect me to—
to make love to you."

"Oh, I suppose if any one ever flew high enough." He felt oddly embarrassed by the foolishness and strove to change the subject. "Ever been up at night?"

"In a plane? No."

"You ought to some time. It's a big thrill."

"A thrill?" She stirred with interest.

"Yep. Feels different than it does in the daytime. Gives you a sensation of unreality with the world all dark below and just a few twinkling stars in the dark sky above. Makes you feel all alone in the universe. Makes you think, too. Kind of clears the cobwebs off your brain."

Silence again.

"Funny thing," he went on, chuckling a little and lighting a cigarette. "I went up the night I proposed to Jean—all alone. It's funny," he repeated. "You know you're crazy about a girl and that life can't be anything without her, but just before you make up your mind to pop the question, your knees get kind of wobbly and you begin to think that maybe it's all an illusion—this love business—anyway. Well, that's the way I was feeling. I always turn to the old monoplane when anything's on my mind, so I went out to the field and took it up. It was a night just like this—quiet, stars all washed out by moonlight—and I hadn't been up a minute until I saw my way clear as anything. I turned right around and went back. It was eleven when I rang the doorbell—guess she thought I was crazy. But I asked her and—well, I was lucky."

Suddenly Lois reached over and caught his arm.

"Take me?" she begged.

"Take you where?"

"Up. Up in the plane. Now. Tonight!"

"Oh, say"—he paused to rub his cigarette against the wall beside him—"we couldn't do that."

"Why not?"

"Well, for one thing the plane has had a long-enough trip to-day; so have I. Another, I don't know the country around here."

"But I do," she pleaded.

"You'd be surprised how different it looks from the air, especially at night."

"But there's a beacon at the field. Oh, please!"

He shook his head. "Besides, it doesn't seem a very wise thing, my flying off with you at this hour of the night." He drew out his watch and consulted it by moonlight. "Almost twelve."

"Oh, but you've got to! Please! Just for ten minutes! If you only knew how important this is to me. I've simply got to go."

"Why?"

"You said it was a thrill. Some one told me to-night that there wasn't a thrill left for me. I've got to—to find out."

He laughed, but still shook his head firmly.

Her voice softened to gentle coaxing. "Almost everybody knows what a wonderful flyer you are. Why, Bill told me how marvelous you were! I might never get a chance to go up with you again. Think of that! Why, I'd be as safe as if I was tucked in bed. Come along!" Suddenly she was on her feet.

Cartwright Hadley hesitated now. He was proud of his plane and his skill in handling it, and when a pretty girl—even if you aren't in love with her—flatters you, offers you a chance to show your hand at what you do best—well then—

"I oughtn't to. It isn't sane," he said doubtfully.

"Come along now," ordered Lois, laughing, for she saw that he wasn't going to refuse her. She was right. He didn't.

"Well, get a coat," he ordered. "Nothing flimsy—something good and warm."

She nodded, hurrying up the lawn. "I'll go in the side way so no one will see me," she said.

They drove out to the field in Lois's car. It was a small private field, owned by a few business men who preferred to commute by plane. At night it was apt to be deserted. It was deserted tonight, with one beacon left burning at the end of a tall mast for the guidance of any lonely flyer in need of an emergency landing place.

"You stay in the car," Cartwright Hadley ordered, "and watch for the plane to be rolled out of the hangar. When I wave, hop out and come over."

"Why can't I go along?"

"It would be better not to let any one see you. One or two of the crew are apt to be up and around."

"I'm not exactly a disgrace," she retorted, piqued.

"No," he returned indifferently, "but it's just as well to keep out of sight at this hour of night. Remember that I'm an engaged man."

"Somebody might say you had a new girl," she laughed. "Well, I suppose people would talk."

"People do—and what goes on around a field is pretty much public property. It wouldn't be very pleasant for Jean."

His tone had grown a little curt. She sensed that he was doubting the wisdom of this flight, and thought better than to annoy him. He might decide not to go.

"O. K.," she sang out cheerfully.

She slumped down in the seat and watched him go. He walked quite a way; then some one, presumably a mechanic, joined him. They paused in brief conversation before walking on together. Finally they stopped in front of a hangar, tugged at the door, and after a moment disappeared within.

A few minutes later they reappeared, wheeling a monoplane. She sat up now, watching for a chance to go.

Suddenly one man went running back toward the hangar, and when he was out of sight, the other waved violently to her. She jumped out of the car and raced madly across the field.

"Hurry," Cartwright Hadley ordered. She reached the plane, panting. He helped her scramble into the rear cockpit, and tossed a helmet and a pair of goggles into her lap.

"Duck," he called sharply.

She obeyed promptly. The other man was coming back.

"Here y'are, sir," she heard a sleepy voice say.

"All right, Hank. And remember, nobody need know that I'm out tonight."

"Yes, sir. Nobody ever learned anything from Hank. But I must say I should think you'd had enough today."

Lois, leaning way over out of sight, fitted the helmet over her head, adjusted the goggles, and fastened the safety belt around her.

Through the helmet covering her ears she heard the men's voices, low and staccato, giving directions and answers, the hum of the propeller as it started to spin, the deafening roar of the engine, at first throttled low and then let out.

The plane began to move, taxied along the runway, swaying a little and bumping now and then over broken ground. Not until she felt it lift into the air did Lois bring her head out. They were rising gently. It was the old familiar feeling—you weren't moving; it was the earth that was falling away.

Higher and higher they climbed—Cartwright Hadley didn't want to go roaring over housetops at that hour of night. Clear, cool air rushed past Lois's face, and down below a moonlit earth reeled away. It was glorious! The

moon was so near—almost near enough to touch now, all right! She laughed from sheer delight of the sensation.

He had said that it swept the cobwebs off your brain. And it did. Her mind felt as clear and cool now as the rush of air against her face, not bothered with any doubts. Only she couldn't think with it. She could only feel.

She leaned over to look down on the shadowy earth. Bathed in the pale white light of the moon, neat Connecticut farm land, now flat, now rolling into a small hill, stretched beneath her. There were dark clusters of trees here and there, and occasionally roof tops emerging irregularly from among the branches; and far to one side lay the Sound, its ripples touched with moonlight.

As the plane banked suddenly, she saw the horizon lift crazily, and she laughed out loud. The sound of her laugh was lost in the roar from the engine.

Then she leaned back and looked up at the great expanse of the dark sky above.

This was a thrill, not a gasping, gripping thrill like the first time she had looped in a plane or like the times when she and Dick Clyde raced their cars at top speed along empty highways at three in the morning. It was different. It didn't have that sort of elated, delicious fear that straining every muscle and hanging on with every nerve against a miss—a miss that would mean a smash—gave you. It was a safe feeling, riding through the night air like that, peaceful even, in spite of the rending din of the motor. Contentment flowed through her, contentment more delicious, more profound, more satisfying than any hairbreadth antics could give her. Jimmy was wrong; she wasn't satiated. She could enjoy this. She closed her eyes tight to shut out everything but the feel of it.

When she opened them again Cartwright Hadley was motioning that he was going to turn back. She nodded assent. She hadn't had half enough, but she knew that he was tired.

He banked the plane, swung in a wide half circle, and turned back. Gradually as they approached the field he decreased altitude.

Now the field lay just a little ahead of them, flooded with moonlight, the beacon burning clearly into the night. It was outskirted by newly developed plots marked out for sale, overgrown and sparsely scattered with trees. They were sailing over these, seeming to skim the treetops—only of course they were much higher—when suddenly the engine sputtered.

She looked up sharply. It sputtered again. She could see by the motion of the pilot's head that he was jerking frantically at something. For just a second her heart seemed to stop beating. Something went cold and tight inside of her. Were they going to crash? Would they be killed? No, no, no!

The engine sputtered again. She could see the aviator struggling grimly against something. She didn't know what, but if he didn't succeed it would mean— She wouldn't let the word form in her mind. She didn't want to be killed. She didn't want to die.

The sputter became almost continuous now, and then suddenly it died out entirely—and the motor with it. In the ensuing quiet she heard Cartwright Hadley swear to himself.

They were gone then. She clutched tightly to the sides of the cockpit. Somehow it didn't seem real. This couldn't be Lois Clark, who had danced at her own party scarcely three quarters of an hour before, slipping down to death!

The man in front of her had turned back, his mouth drawn in an angry, fierce line. He was blaming her then.

"I'll try to land her," he shouted.



Suddenly he caught her to him, crying out her name, and his lips pressed her quivering lips still.

"When she hits run for it. Danger of fire."

In a daze of cold fear Lois nodded. He would try to land it. Try! The word seemed so small, so unreliable. There didn't seem to be any hope in it. Her breath caught in a quick sob. This

was where her longing for thrills had brought her!

Then she stopped thinking about herself. It wouldn't matter about her. But what about her mother and father? What about that young flyer in the forward cockpit with a brilliant career

ahead of him? What about the girl he wanted to marry? A newspaper headline flashed into her mind:

YOUNG AVIATOR AND GIRL KILLED
IN MIDNIGHT CRASH

People would talk. He had said so. It wouldn't leave a very nice memory for that girl. If he had been killed on duty it wouldn't be so bad—anything but this for her.

Lois groaned. It was all her fault, all her selfishness, her greediness for thrills. She never wanted another thrill! She would even rather die now than to have to live through another sickening thrill like this.

The landing gear was brushing tree-tops now. In a minute they would crash. It was a minute of sickening, dizzy terror. She squeezed her eyes tight.

There was a snapping of branches. She felt the plane swerve crazily, tilt, and there was a violent, shocking jolt, a resounding crash, the crackling and splitting sound of wood and metal, then silence, deep and awful.

Lois opened her eyes wide. She trembled uncontrollably; her heart pounded; her head buzzed; and her hands still clung to the sides of the cockpit, cold and damp.

She was badly shaken, but otherwise she seemed all right. Carefully she stretched first one arm and then the other, first one leg and then the other to reassure herself. A flood of relief swept over her.

She looked around. She saw that one wing had struck a small maple in the landing. It had swung the plane around and caused it to fall obliquely on the other wing. The wings were crushed, the landing gear smashed, but by some miracle the fuselage had escaped any great damage.

Then she thought about Cartwright Hadley. He wasn't in sight. He had

gone. He had warned her to run and she had forgotten. How soon did fire break out? For a moment terror held her motionless. Then with numb fingers she managed to unfasten the safety belt.

As she stood up, still shaking, she saw the aviator, slumped down in the cockpit ahead. She reached over and shook him frantically. He didn't budge. Chill terror crept down her spine. No, he couldn't have been killed! If she had escaped, the chances were that he had, too. She would have to go for help. But first she must get him away from the plane, away from the danger of fire.

She scrambled out of the plane to the side of his cockpit. She put her arms beneath his and tried to pull him out. But he was a dead weight. She tugged and tugged, her breath coming in short sobs; still she couldn't budge him. Frantically she tried again and again. But it was no use. Tears of helpless despair poured down her cheeks. If only she could have died!

Suddenly she saw some one racing across the empty lot toward them.

"Help!" she gasped.

"Coming," called a steady voice. It was Jimmy—Jimmy Farrell! The very comfort of it was more than she could bear. She sank down on the ground, sobbing.

"Lois—Lois!" he cried. "Are you hurt?"

He sank down on the ground beside her.

"No, no," she sobbed. "I'm all right, but get him out. He said fire."

He took hold of her arm, his fingers digging into her flesh and forced her to look up at him. When he was sure that the anguish on her face was terror and not physical pain, he stood up again.

"Thank Heaven!" he whispered.

Without another word he turned away and set to work. She saw him

easily lift Cartwright Hadley out of the cockpit. Jimmy was strong. Jimmy was dependable. Once he had loved her. To have Jimmy love her would be sweet and satisfying—like flying through the clear air had been before the danger.

That was the sort of thrill she wanted—Jimmy's love. Life would be hopeless, life would be empty, life would be nothing at all without it. Now she could see it so clearly—when it was too late. He had said he was through before, and now there were more reasons than ever for him to be through.

"Is he alive?" she asked in a faint, wretched voice from her place on the ground. She could see Jimmy working over the aviator.

"Yes. Nothing broken either, I guess. I've felt his arms and legs. Knocked out by the force of the landing—that's all. He's coming around."

Suddenly Lois scrambled to her feet.

"What—what'll I do—Jimmy?" she asked miserably.

He looked up sharply. "Guess you'd better get home as fast as you can, Lois," he said gently. "Your name had better not be used in this."

The man on the ground stirred. "Get the girl away," he mumbled. "There'll be an awful mess in the papers."

"Yes, yes, old fellow, just lie still a minute."

Jimmy straightened and faced Lois calmly, his face tense.

"I was smoking on the lawn and saw

you start away," he explained quickly. "I guessed you were up to something and followed in my car. I sat there watching you take off from the field and come back. I heard the engine stop and all. We're at the south end of the field. Guess nobody else has noticed yet, but you can't tell. Dodge through and get to your car and drive home. Some one will have to stay here with Hadley. I'll say that I was in the plane with him. And if any one sees you, say you saw the plane come down and came to investigate."

As he spoke he took the helmet and goggles from her, was disarranging his tie and rumpling his hair. Another time Lois might have laughed at the absurdity of it, but not now.

"Jimmy, you'd do this for—for me?" She stepped closer to

him, peering questioningly up into his face.

When he answered she couldn't quite make out his expression, but his voice was level.

"Let's put it that I'm doing it for him. We're old friends, Hadley and I."

She gave a quick, miserable sob, and suddenly tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Oh, Jimmy, I know you said you were through, but I can't bear it. I just can't bear it! I suppose you'll never want me now, Jimmy, but I love you so! I did all the time without knowing it. Why didn't you tell me I did? Didn't you know? There'll never be any one else. And, Jimmy—



Jimmy—I never want another thrill. I mean I never want another thrill but just you!”

“You’re—hysterical—excited, Lois.” His voice had grown tight and husky now.

The man on the ground stirred, sat up, holding his head.

“Get that girl away,” he ordered crossly.

Jimmy wasn’t listening.

“I never felt saner, surer of myself than I do now,” Lois was saying. “Jimmy, I mean it—I love you!”

He stood very still for a minute, staring into her face that was turned up to his and in the moonlight. It was a sober, pleading little face with a small quivering mouth and tears trembling on long lashes, an unhappy face. It was

more than he could bear—to see her unhappy.

Suddenly he caught her to him, crying out her name, and his lips pressed her quivering lips still.

For a long wonderful moment she rested there against him; then she broke away.

“I’ll be waiting,” she whispered tremulously. “I’ll be waiting for you on the veranda!”

She turned and fled along the edge of the lot. As her yellow slippers skimmed over the rough ground, her face, radiant and joyous, was turned up to the moon. In that moment when Jimmy had held her close something quite clear and true and glowing, something that was love, had risen up and up inside of her—oh, quite high enough to reach the moon!



BECAUSE OF YOU

SWIFTLY a rapture grips me, when the night
 Brings dreams of you, and all my heart is stirred—
 I seem to see you in the pale moonlight,
 And hear your dear low voice in loving word;

Slowly I close my eyes and feel you near,
 Wraithlike you walk within the silv’ry gloom,
 I sense the love which you have for me, dear,
 And joy is with me in the quiet room;

And then I feel the restless, eager urge
 To hold you in my arms, to know you care,
 And suddenly, there is the sick’ning surge
 Of loneliness, because you are not there!

PETER A. LEA.



The Unexpected Bride

By Barbara West

BERRY was alone in the book shop the day Mrs. Leyton Brook came in with her son, Ware.

"I'm yachting to Panama, my dear," said Mrs. Brook, "and I want you to help me choose something to read."

Berry flushed with pleasure. She openly adored Mrs. Brook, but while she hunted through the latest shipments for the right novels and biographies, her thoughts were with Ware rather than with his mother.

Probably no young man in California had ever been more eagerly discussed than Ware Brook. His amazing good looks; his great fortune—quite independent of his mother's; his football record at Stanford; his polo; his amusing if startling escapades; his flirtations. Always the eyes of feminine California were turned on Ware.

"Come here, dear," his mother called. "Help Miss Carter and me to find something really good."

"How's this?" he suggested wickedly. "The Murder in Peach Alley,' 'The Mystery of the Pallid Eye,' or 'The Curse of the Viper's Breed'?"

"Mercy!" said his mother. "That's all too exciting for an old girl like me."

"Now, Bubbles, none of that!" Her son caught her arm. "Old girl indeed! When I was just planning to pay my debts by entering you in a bathing-beauty contest!"

"Ware, you villain! Come and be sensible. Help us."

"All right. How's this, Bubbles?" asked her irrepressible son. "'Fifi, the Foolish Flapper,' by Dimples Daw. About right as to age?"

With a heart as light as springtime, he indulged in the youthful sport of kidding his mother, treating her more like a sweetheart or a kid sister. And Mrs. Brook laughed and blushed like a girl, scolding him gayly.

Berry enjoyed it all. Only she wished Ware would notice that she were in existence. He did in a way. That is, he treated her with charming courtesy. But he didn't, for example, see what she looked like. If old Silas Hooper doted upon her hazel eyes with the long, dark lashes in such charming contradiction to her soft, red-gold hair, on her firm little chin with the dimple in it, and on her mouth like a curled begonia petal, Ware Brook was totally blind to them. He would undoubtedly have shown the same courtesy to her aunt.

Mrs. Brook, on the other hand, was sweet. When Ware finally settled himself before a fascinating shelf of air fiction, she asked Berry if she got much time herself to read all these tempting books.

"Sometimes." Berry's eyes dropped. "But there's always some one in here, and interruptions make it hard to really enjoy a book."

"Wouldn't you like to come up to The Oleanders and browse through our

library on one of your afternoons off?" Mrs. Brook asked.

Berry had very few afternoons off, but she couldn't say so. It didn't seem loyal to her aunt. So she exclaimed: "How kind of you."

"Not at all. I'd love to have you. You'd be quite undisturbed, and if I'm out, I'll leave word with Rowley, our butler, to take good care of you. He'll get you tea or anything you want."

Mrs. Brook really meant it, too. Berry, who had received so little kindness in her life, felt her eyes fill with tears. This beautiful, gracious, light-hearted woman! She watched her leave presently, the handsome son carrying her books and holding his mother's arm as if he loved to do it. Berry sighed a little wistfully.

"Dazzled?" asked a voice beside her.

She turned to find her cousin, Amy, regarding her with a cryptic smile.

"What do you mean—dazzled?"

"What would I mean when Ware Brook has just breezed in and out of your life, and you're making a noise like a broken heart?"

"Amy, don't be silly!"

"Wait till I tell Mr. Hooper!"

Amy was not pretty. She might have been, but sulks and ill-nature had ruined any natural beauty she might have had. She was jealous of Berry to the point of torture. Ever since her cousin's mother had died, and Berry—left a double orphan without a cent to her name unless one counted her mother's engagement ring—had come to live with Amy's parents, Aunt Laura and Uncle Jed, Amy had suffered. In return, she had taken her measure of revenge.

Hard as Berry worked in the book shop, business was poor. Perhaps it was the location; perhaps it was Uncle Jed's management. Whatever the reason, Uncle Jed had taken out mortgages—on shop and books—till now Silas Hooper, who held the mortgages, ap-

peared to own the whole family, body and soul.

"I'll tell you something about that young fool," Amy offered suddenly.

"You mean Mr. Brook?"

"Sure—who else? They say he's rushing Ferne LaTour off her feet, and that if Mrs. Brook doesn't look out, she'll be Ferne's mother-in-law first thing she knows."

Berry answered quietly: "Well, why shouldn't he? Miss LaTour's beautiful. I love her pictures."

"Yes, but without her peroxide and her face lifts they say she's all of forty."

"I don't believe that," Berry replied honestly.

Another customer claimed her at that moment, and she tried to keep her thoughts on business. But it was hard. She was thinking of Ware; of how he would look at a girl when he was really interested; of how he looked at beautiful, lustrous Ferne LaTour when he made love to her.

That night Silas Hooper called, and, as usual, Berry had to entertain him.

Silas was all of fifty-five—a weazened, sharp-eyed little man with hands like talons and clothes that looked old and greasy. Something about him made Berry shudder to the heart every time he gave his short ugly cackle of a laugh. To-night there was a gleam in his eyes as they rested on the bright-gold of her hair that made one think the miser was coveting further treasure.

Presently she seemed to be alone with him—by design she afterward learned—and he moved close to her, resting his hands on his knees and peering into her face.

"What would you think, Berry, if I gave you a chance at a fine, big house and a good, solid husband to look after you?"

Her fingers curled distastefully in upon her palms. She felt faint.

"I—I don't want a husband for years and years, Mr. Hooper."

"Ha," he chuckled. "That's a few years too long for Silas, eh? You're a good-looking girl, Berry. A piece too thin, but good enough for a fellow like me who doesn't ask more'n what's reasonable. If I'm satisfied with your age, there's no call for you to complain of it. Come here and sit a bit closer."

He proposed to her fully and at length. She could see his beady eyes gloating, and Berry grew sick with loathing. Suddenly her aunt and uncle came in and acted as if she had accepted Silas Hooper. Aunt Laura kissed her, and Uncle Jed, whom she had always feared and mistrusted, patted her on the shoulder.

"It's a great match you're making, Berry. Mr. Hooper's a fine man and a rich one. There's not many girls——"

"But I'm not going to marry him!" Berry suddenly interrupted. "Why do you act as if I were?"

Terrified at what they would say, she ran to the door and fled upstairs to her room. Here Amy joined her, to offer a few choice thrusts.

"Don't feel bad, Berry. Maybe when you're marrying Silas you can close your eyes and pretend it's Ware Brook!"

"Do be quiet!" Berry wept. "I don't know what's come over all of you. I'd rather be dead than married to Silas."

The next day, as was to be expected, she was in disgrace. Toward the middle of the afternoon, while her uncle slept, she managed to escape from the constant reproaches of her aunt and slip out for a breath of air.

Mrs. Brook had asked her to visit The Oleanders whenever she wished—why not to-day? And perhaps—Mrs. Brook was so sweet and understanding—she could ask her advice. Possibly a vague hope stirred in her mind that the gracious society woman would offer her some sort of position in her own household.

She took a trolley to the North Bay,

where The Oleanders—loveliest of all estates in Hibiscus—stretched back to the hills like a vista of Arcady; where great, wrought-iron gates flanked by dark, shining laurel, opened to admit her to winding driveway and formal gardens.

Berry had a moment of fright. She was so shabby in her mended blue suit—so shabby and poor-looking!

But apparently Rowley, the butler, was prepared for her. On hearing her name, he invited her in at once.

"Mrs. Brook left last night for Panama, miss, but she said you were to have full run of the library in her absence."

Berry was surprised, and disappointed, too. She had not realized that Mrs. Brook was leaving so soon. Or Ware, either, for that matter. At that guilty thought the color flamed high in her smooth young cheeks.

"Wasn't I silly?" she scolded herself.

But despite her disappointment, she loved the big library with its masses of books lining the walls; its thin, strong ladders running along the grooves of the higher shelves; its wealth of flowers in tall jardinières; and its friendly fire in the big grate.

Sliding doors, slightly open, communicated with another room that, from the glimpse Berry caught of a big desk outfitted in jade, seemed to be a writing room. Suddenly, cuddled down in the depths of a huge upholstered chair, she heard voices—a man's and a girl's—and saw two people stroll past the opening of that sliding door.

They were Ware and a lovely blond creature—surely LaTour herself! Ware hadn't gone with his mother!

Berry heard them sit down.

"Darling," she heard Ware say, "it's sweet—it's precious of you to come out here like this. O Ferne, I think you're so beautiful!"

Shivers ran down Berry's spine. She would have to get away quickly. Ware

would hate her if he found her now—after that speech intended for just one adored pair of ears.

"Do you?" came the actress's caressing tones. "Ware, you sweet thing, how could any woman resist you! No wonder your mother hates to part with you to me! She must have been disappointed when you wouldn't go on the trip with her."

Creeping frantically across the floor to the great curtains concealing the door into the main hall, Berry felt the strangest sensations—a sort of despair numbing her heart, a futile anger against this lovely, selfish woman who was taking Ware Brook, so blithe and debonair, away from his mother, and from every other girl, including herself. She pressed her hand over her ears to silence his voice, to silence those throbbing protests of love. But she had to remove her hands to push aside the heavy tapestry of the portières, and then she heard:

"I suppose, Ware darling, now's the time—if ever!"

And Ware's voice, after a quivering silence: "All I want is to make you happy, sweetheart. Mother's a peach. She'll soon love you as much as I do!"

Berry turned and caught a glimpse, from this new vantage point, of a man holding a girl against his heart. Then the curtains closed behind her, and she fled noiselessly from the house.

She wanted to weep, she wanted to creep into a hole and die. For Ferne LaTour, the one man in the world that Berry knew she could love; for herself—Silas Hooper.

That night she had it out with her aunt and uncle.

"I won't marry Mr. Hooper!" she told them desperately. "I couldn't love him—no girl could love him—and it's wrong to marry without love. That's something every girl has a right to!"

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed her aunt. "This is what comes of all that trashy

"All right. How's this, Bubbles?" asked Mrs. Brook's irrepressible son. "'Fifi, the Foolish Flapper,' by Dimples Daw. About right as to age?"



reading you do when you should be dusting the books. Berry, I'm ashamed of you!"

"You owe it to your aunt and me," said Uncle Jed. "We took you in when you needed a home. Now it is your duty and privilege to save us that home."

For the first time Berry realized to what lengths miserly little Silas must have gone to pay for her; she grasped just what she was up against.

"But I can't marry him!" she whispered. "He's—he's terrible!"

"Then you're an ungrateful little beast!" said Amy. "Why, you'd have starved or gone to an orphan home if we hadn't taken you in."

The net tightened. The arguments, the threats, the pleas began to prevail. Berry grew hysterical; and they sent her to bed. But the next day was the same, and the one following.

Then, from a customer interested in aviation literature, she heard of the excursion to San Francisco. It was being run for three nights by the new Coastline Air Company as an advertisement. The astonishingly low fare was twenty dollars. The planes were scheduled to leave the Hibiscus Flying Field at midnight, to reach San Francisco an hour later.

But how to go? How to get twenty dollars and enough over to keep her till she got work? There was just one way: To pawn her mother's engagement ring—a small diamond in a worn setting—at the little shop in the next block marked with the sign of the three gold balls.

Somehow Berry managed to slip out and do this without rousing suspicion.

She got thirty dollars for her mother's ring, and before she gave it up, she whispered silently, tragically: "Little ring, I'll buy you back with the very first money I save. You brought mother love and happiness, now you must bring me freedom."

There was no time to lose; Silas was coming again that night. Necessity gave Berry wings and caution. She made her preparations, some clothing, and a few toilet articles in an old brief case. This, with her coat, hat, gloves, and purse she hid in the shop. Then, just before supper, she put on her best black silk dress with the cream ruffles at neck and sleeves.

"Well, for crying out the news! Are you dressing up for old Si Hooper?" Amy burst into giggles. "O mother, I believe Berry's secretly tickled with the idea of being Mrs. Silas!"

Aunt Laura gave Berry a quick, amazed look and relaxed.

"That's right, my dear. Don't laugh at her, Amy, now she's acting sensible."

They left her alone with Silas when he came, and she made no protest, for on this development her plan hinged. She even smiled at him—though her spirit writhed—when his greedy eyes devoured her golden loveliness. But when he sidled closer, wiping his lips with a dry little hand, she burst out:

"Please, Mr. Hooper, let's wait till we know each other better. To-night just tell me things about yourself. Uncle Jed says you're awfully clever."

"Shy, eh?" he winked. "Well we'll soon change all that, won't we, Berry?"

But her suggestion was inspired, for it seemed that he liked nothing better than to tell of his business coups and sharp deals. At eleven o'clock she dodged his farewell caress so that it fell on the hair above her ear, and, shuddering, showed him to the door of the now empty shop.

No sooner did the bell clang behind him than she grabbed her things, pulled

on the tight little hat, the dark coat; turned out the lights, and waited till she saw Silas board a car at the corner. Then, silent as a ghost, brief case in hand, Berry slipped from the book shop and sped around the corner. Four blocks away she found a cruising taxi, and drove in it to the airport.

Here she was directed to a long, low building just off the great bare grounds and adjoining the sheds or hangars. She opened a door to a row of telephone booths in which she could see a girl talking—a girl in dark clothes with a bright wing of hair escaping her tight little hat. Berry moved on through another door to a room where a tired-looking man sat at a desk. He looked up, stifled a yawn, and rose politely.

"I think I'd better guide you through these dark corners to your plane, ma'am."

"Oh," said Berry, suddenly overcome by the enormity of what she was doing. "I'm going to San Francisco, you know. It's a quarter to twelve, isn't it? Or am I late?"

"You're all right," he said kindly. "They're still having engine trouble, but I guess your pilot knows his job."

This made Berry, who knew nothing about flying, vaguely uneasy. She followed her guide a distance of a short city block to what seemed a monster of a plane coughing and sputtering in an alarming fashion. Three men were working on the engine by torchlight. Her escort helped Berry up a small ladder leaning against the fuselage into the forward cockpit. Here she found a helmet and a windbreaker of fine leather.

"If you'll put 'em on, ma'am, I'll strap you in?" said her guide.

The engine began to purr smoothly. Berry realized that the trouble, whatever it was, was over. Her guide shouted to some one: "All O. K., sir. I've strapped her in," and the pilot replied, "Good—thanks a lot." Then the

plane glided swiftly from its position, turned, and darted like an arrow across the field. It stopped moving, and Berry knew they were in the air.

Higher and higher the plane rose in a succession of glides. Steady, now, with the wind in her face, the world below her, the moon low and to the left, a great, frosted orange floating above an endless stretch of ocean.

Berry felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned and looked about, caught a glimpse of dark, laughing eyes. Then a mouth was pressed on hers—quickly, ardently.

"Oh!" she cried.

Of course the pilot couldn't hear. The roar of the motor was much too loud. Dropping his goggles in place, he had sunk back to his seat, busy with stick and controls. Berry stared out at the moon like a startled baby.

Her lips tingled, her whole being tingled. What a wild thing to happen! A kiss in the air, standing out all by itself—without form or personality behind it—just a moon and two laughing, dark eyes.

It was a long time, out there in space, with the mad music of the night penetrating somehow through the roar of machinery, before it occurred to Berry to be angry. Then, when she realized that she should, she did become angry.

The nerve of that young pilot—daring to kiss her! He should be reported to his company. She made up a speech in which she told him this. Only somehow it was hard to make the words go just right. It seemed as if those gay, dark eyes laughed all the harder. Did he act this way with all his passengers?—she wondered.

Then suddenly, for the first time, it occurred to Berry to wonder about the other passengers. Did a separate plane carry each one? And why hadn't they made her buy a ticket before she left?

A sense of something wrong—something out of the picture—communicated

itself to her. Looking down, she saw that they flew directly over a burnished sheet of water. Surely they were off the course to San Francisco! Completely helpless, she was a prey to a thousand suspicions, a thousand wild conjectures. Had she boarded the wrong plane?

She didn't notice when the engine faltered, like a pulse beating false. But it grew worse, and presently she was frightened. She felt for a speaking tube, but she couldn't find one. Perhaps the engine hadn't been properly adjusted back at the field. All at once it stopped, and the ensuing silence was the most terrifying thing Berry had ever endured.

While they volplaned down in a long, too abrupt glide, she saw a stretch of beach beneath them, a little island. She closed her eyes, gritted her teeth. If she had a parachute, would she have the strength to jump? No, she knew she wouldn't.

Dimly aware that the pilot was saying something reassuring—"Don't be frightened, dear, it'll be all right"—she clutched the seat with both hands.

They struck the sand to the churn of beating surf. There was a sickening crash, and the great machine piled up, groaning. Berry's scream was thin and unreal. A pain stabbed one foot.

"My darling—my beautiful golden darling." She heard a man's voice cry. "I'll never forgive myself!" Kisses on her face and hands—burning, repentant little kisses. "Are you hurt? Your little foot—it was caught! Tell me—beautiful."

"Oh!" She struggled to free herself. "You—you shouldn't kiss me that way!"

They had come down on the western beach, where the moon still hung revealingly. At her words, the man started back, looked in her face. She looked in his and cried out:

"Oh, it isn't—you!"

His goggles were again pushed back.

Not even the disguise of leather helmet and moonlight could hide Ware Brook.

"And who are you?"

His voice was quiet but ominous. It held a whole rising scale of shock, of anger.

"I? Why, I'm no one you would remember," Berry wailed. "This is terrible. I thought I was on the excursion plane—the one to San Francisco."

He dropped her. He strode back and forth on a strip of sand, hands clenched, rage mounting.

"As though any one on earth would believe that! As though every one living doesn't know that a passenger ship is three times the size of this poor wreck—besides being a cabin plane, with room for passengers!" His words were edged with scorn, with sarcasm. "But no—you take my wife's place in my own machine—a small one, with two cockpits only, and you ask me to believe it."

"But it's true!" cried Berry, fighting back the tears. To think that he was married, that this was his honeymoon with Ferne! That was what they had been planning to do in his mother's absence. No wonder he hated her. Unable to read the strange outcome of this adventure, she felt her heart breaking.

"I was running away," she pleaded. "I never saw flying machines close before. How could I tell? The man in the office said he would guide me to my ship. I said I was going to San Francisco. There was a girl in the telephone booth—she was a blond girl—was she Fer— Was she your wife?"

In his exasperation Ware threw his helmet on the ground. "Why, you even saw her—went right past her! She got out when I was working on the engine so she could telephone."

"You see the man must have taken me for her," sobbed Berry, weeping openly now. "We both had dark clothes and yellow hair. Only I told him I

was going to San Francisco. Why wouldn't he know from that?"

"Oh, heck, because I hadn't told where we were going. He thought he'd learned something. And to think of the fool taking you for her!"

It would be impossible to imagine a more scathing indictment than Ware's fury that Berry should be taken for his beautiful Ferne. Berry, hearing it, sobbed openly, too nervous to control herself.

"I'm—sorry. I'm terribly—sorry!"

"Some honeymoon!" he stormed.

"Some swell honeymoon!" Impatiently he strode away—back and forth, back and forth, on the narrow beach, fighting for possession. When he got himself in hand, he returned. "Let's get out of here. There's a hotel half a mile away."

Berry struggled to her feet—sixty-three inches of unadulterated woe. Then she gave a little moan and sank down again.

"Foot hurting?" he asked.

"Yes. But it doesn't matter. You go ahead. I'll follow."

"Nonsense." He sounded brusque, but she could see he felt ashamed of himself. "Let me look at your foot."

The tiny slipper had been torn at the side; there was a hole an inch long. The instep had been twisted, but there was no open cut.

"I'll mend this hole with a strip of paper," said Ware. "That'll keep the sand from getting in."

He felt in the forward cockpit of the plane, and presently drew from a side pocket a neatly fitted pad. The top sheet he tore off and adjusted cleverly in the side of Berry's slipper. She stood on it, and with his help, managed to limp a little.

"This won't do," said Ware. "Hang onto my neck and I'll carry you."

"No," Berry muttered. "I'm going to walk."

"Don't be absurd," he told her. "We'd never get anywhere at this pace."

He picked her up, and she was amazed at his strength. Actually she seemed to be no strain on his splendid physique. He carried her as he would a bag of sand—without emotion; with, at first, a sense of distaste.

Her arms about his neck, she continued to sob because she couldn't stop. She had no handkerchief, and her tears rolled down, dampening his shirt. She was too miserable to care.

He drew up at last and gave her his handkerchief. Her little sobs would have softened a heart of stone.

"Now look here," he said, "you'll just make yourself sick. I realize I—I've behaved rottenly, and I'm awfully sorry. I was sort of taken off my guard when I found—well, I mean—I should be kicked, the way I talked to a girl like you when it wasn't a bit your fault."

Berry didn't answer, and this urged him to further efforts. "Honestly, I feel sunk over all I said. I keep remembering— Of course, I never thought for a minute you'd taken—er, any one else's place on purpose. I was just sore."

"Put me down," said Berry presently. "I'm sure I can walk now."

The moon, shining through eucalyptus, made delicate amber lace across their shoulders and at their feet. Ware's natural impudence returned to him with a rush.

"Don't you like to have me carry you?" he asked innocently.

"No, I don't!"

"How extraordinary!" Then he grew serious again. "I apologize for that, too. My mother says I'd kid at my own funeral, and here I am kidding at—" He stopped abruptly, but the inference was plain—kidding at a time almost as bad as his funeral. "Tell me," he asked kindly, "who you are and where you were going?"

She told him briefly, and he explained about the hotel.

"It's called the Villa Clematis, and

it's closed in the winter and spring months, because till June the winds are high around the island. But we thought it would be an ideal spot for our—I mean, we both liked the idea of coming here. Fortunately we could, because I happen to own the place. My dad built it twenty years ago. Only I discovered that Tim O'Dwyer, the caretaker, had lit out and thrown up the job without warning.

"When I told my fiancée, she suggested that I engage two servants—a man and a woman—who've been in her family for years. So I brought them over here three days ago, and I guess they have everything in shape by now. I just mention this, so you'll understand if they appear upset when I arrive with the wrong girl. You see, they know I married their mistress this evening."

"Oh, dear, I've ruined everything, haven't I?" wailed Berry. "You don't know how awful I feel!" The tears were threatening again.

"Please don't cry. It isn't your fault! I'll get in touch with my wife by radio. There's a good broadcasting set here. She can hire a boat and have it bring her over, and you can go back on it. Meanwhile"—with youthful optimism—"let's make the best of things."

Sarah and Giles Witner, the new caretakers, had heard the arrival of the plane. They were waiting in readiness, Sarah with a presentation of roses and lilacs for the bride. After the first shock, they behaved rather well about the exchange of girls. Sarah hastily made up a fresh bed in a guest room two doors down from the bridal suite, and bathed and bandaged Berry's ankle. Berry fell asleep, completely exhausted, with the roar of the surf in her ears, and the salt tang of the sea mingled with the fragrance of a thousand sleepy blooms.

The moon had disappeared when she woke up. It was dark as pitch. She couldn't tell just what had aroused her,



but she was suddenly very much awake, straining her ears for some repeated sound. A feeling of fear, of something gone wrong, was creeping through her.

Her fear drove her from her bed, drove her to the door, where she stood trembling, listening. Yes, there was a sound, a stealthy footstep, in the hall outside. Berry turned the knob of her door and opened it.

Down the hall she saw the light from a flash carefully shaded. It stopped before a door, one of the doors of the bridal suite. Berry slipped into her coat and watched.

*Ware hugged her violently.
"Sweet—lovely—beautiful!
Will you marry me when all
this wretched business is
cleared up?"*

She saw a hand try the knob; she saw the door open; then distinctly she saw the flash turn full on some object within the room. There was the glint of light on ugly, squat steel.

Berry screamed with all the power of her lungs.

"Ware—Mr. Brook—look out!"

She rushed down the hall barefooted and grabbed the arm that was aiming death at the sleeping bridegroom. The flash went out at once. There was a brief, silent struggle, and the prowler disappeared—vanished like a puff of smoke.

Berry, panting, on her knees, was

suddenly aware of her host in his pajamas.

"Good heavens, what's the matter?"

He had turned on the light in his room. He lifted Berry while she poured out her story.

"But you must have dreamed it," he insisted. "I didn't hear a sound, though I admit I sleep like a load of lead."

Earnestly, with a certain force of conviction, Berry repeated her wild tale. Ware got into his dressing gown and slippers. He took a poker from the fireplace.

"I'm going to hunt this place over. I'll call Witner. You'd better lock yourself in your room till I get back." His glance fell on her bare feet, one bandaged, the other slim and singularly charming. Ware Brook seemed just a trifle confused. "Yes, you'd better go to your room."

Berry hastily dressed. She felt sure she couldn't sleep again to-night. When Ware knocked she threw open the door and found him with Giles Witner.

"There doesn't seem to be any one about," said Ware. "We've looked everywhere. Since you're all dressed, perhaps you'd like to have a cup of coffee or something."

Berry didn't want a thing, but she hated to be left alone. Ware took her at once to a small, attractive sitting room across the hall and touched a match to wood laid in the fireplace.

"If you'll wait just a scratch," he said, "I'll get some clothes on."

Presently he returned in his flying suit, just as Witner returned with a tray of steaming coffee and sandwiches.

"We were thinking, sir, the missus and me, that maybe we'd better have a look at the summer cottages to-morrow."

"Good idea," said Ware. "You turn in now. I'll sit up a while and keep an eye on things."

Left alone, with a fire and a snug little supper—Berry with her feet on

the sofa to rest the injured one—they began to hit it off as they had not done before.

"Reason tells me that you dreamed all that business about the fellow and the gun," said Ware. "But somehow there's a little voice that keeps whispering you did see him. By the way, the radio wires are all smashed. I couldn't send a word. Same thing with the *Hummingbird*"—meaning his plane. "The storms must have been worse than usual, for they've wrecked the cable and even the supply launch. We're marooned, Miss Berry. No telephone, radio, ship, or plane—no nothin'. Guess," he ventured whimsically, "we'll have to swim home."

"Oh!" Berry's eyes were repentant. "You couldn't get word to Miss LaTour—I mean, Mrs. Brook?"

"You know me?" said Ware, quickly.

Berry told him about the book shop—that she had both seen him and heard of his engagement. He relaxed.

"I was beginning to think you were the fellow with the gun," he grinned. "No, I couldn't get word anywhere. But—my wife will probably understand what's happened when the bird at the airport tells her he put you on in her place. She'll get a boat to bring her over."

To prove the report that he was one of the most charming young men in the State, Ware Brook appeared to forget his own troubles and devoted himself to entertaining Berry—amusing her, making her happy, reassuring her. He won her confidence and drew from her the story of Silas Hooper. At her description of the man, Ware became quite hot.

"I suppose as long as the world lasts," he stormed, "there'll be brutes trying to force pretty girls into unnatural marriages like that. Gee, I hate to hear about it. It makes me mad all through. I guess"—he hesitated—"I guess maybe it's a good thing you took my ship by

accident. Wait till Ferne—my—er—wife comes. She'll know what to do."

Berry was a little embarrassed, a little doubtful of the reaction of Ferne LaTour, after the trick that had been inadvertently played upon that exquisite bride. Besides, the charm of Ware Brook was stealing over her anew in all its potency. Somehow the thought of him in the actress's lovely arms tore her heart in shreds.

But she had had practically no sleep, and she was tired. Toward five o'clock she dozed on the sofa.

When Berry awoke at high noon, she felt guilty enough. After a bath and a fresh bandage on her foot, she was ready for a combination breakfast and lunch downstairs. And here, to her amazement, Ware joined her, looking fresh as rain.

"Last night's findings verified—radio bust—launch bust—everything including telephone bust," he reported.

"How terrible!" said Berry tragically. "If you only had your wife here it wouldn't really matter for a few days, would it? And it's all my fault!"

This time he actually hurried to save her feelings. "If you scold yourself that way I'll have you indicted for cruelty to flappers!"

Later in the afternoon he took her arm and helped her down to the beach. The sands were pure gold in the sun—so was Berry's hair. In her dress she looked like a black poppy with a golden heart. Ware said so.

"I wonder if you really have a heart of gold," he teased her, "or if you're hard and cruel like other pretty girls."

The color flamed in Berry's cheeks.

"Oh, so you think I'm pretty!" she managed to chatter back.

"Was there ever another opinion?" he questioned, eyes lively. "I thought that one was unanimous."

Her foot felt so much better that she wandered on with him up a little bluff in the direction of a charming cottage

roofed with trailing clematis and wisteria. They found their own conversation so engrossing that they looked dazed when they heard the sound.

Plunk it said, and splintered something.

Simultaneously Ware clapped his hand on his arm. "Great salamander!"

"What is it?" cried Berry.

"Some one shot at me. He's got a silencer. Look."

A bullet had grazed his thin shirt. The material and the skin beneath it were burned. Ware looked about and saw that a flagpole had been splintered.

"Come!" begged Berry. "They're in that cottage. Please don't wait."

She grabbed him by the arm and dragged him out of range. Then, forgetting her sore foot, she ran, still pulling on his hand. Not till they were safely in the upstairs sitting room of the villa would she stop.

"They nearly killed you," she panted. "Ware, there's a plot to do away with you!"

Hands in pockets, he faced her solemnly. She had unconsciously used his first name. To make her perfectly comfortable about it, he called her Berry—as easily as though it had always been that way.

"It looks like it. I'll get old Witner to come with me on a round of inspection. We'll see what's in those cottages. Then we can collect the baggage from the plane."

Berry was doubly alarmed. "Please," she begged, "don't go with that man. I can't help it, but I don't trust him; or the woman, either."

She managed to keep him by her side for the rest of the day, materially assisted by the fact that storm clouds gathered and it rained heavily. They played poker chips, they read aloud, they told stories. And still the boat bearing the bride to her groom did not arrive. Something, it seemed, was working like a blind, invisible force.

After dinner, Berry could see that Ware was heavy with sleep, nature asserting itself after his long hours of strain.

"I don't believe there's any danger to-night," he said. "I'm sure Witner's all right. And the place is locked and barred. If you're frightened, I want you to promise to call me. Will you?"

Berry gave her promise with a heavy heart, but a talk with Sarah Witner afterward raised her spirits. The woman was so kind and attentive, hovering around the bed, rebandaging the ankle, which was practically well now. Then, when she was alone, Berry made a strange discovery. On investigating a small lump in the bed, she found a squat little automatic between the mattress and the springs. Had a friend slipped it in there?—she wondered. Surely Ware would have told her if he had done it.

She tried to sleep, but she had an impending sense of something wrong, some pressing disaster. That Ware had dangerous enemies was only too apparent. Probably his great wealth was the basis of the reason. Either that or the place was haunted. To-night it seemed almost easy to believe in ghosts. Berry read a book she had taken from the library till somewhere she heard a clock strike three. Suddenly her light went out.

Berry turned off the gas. She lay tense as a violin string for a few minutes; then, unable to endure it any longer, she went to the door.

It was locked from the outside. Frantic with terror, Berry pulled on her clothes in the dark, slipped the revolver in her belt, and went to the window. Five feet below ran a two-foot ornamental ledge inclosing a wall garden of clematis and trailing geranium. With beating heart, she climbed out and let herself down till she stood in the earth and flowers. Clinging to the wall, she crept along a distance of forty feet till

she reached what she guessed must be Ware's window.

In the pulsing darkness she felt it and found it closed. Not only this, but presently she discovered that the cracks at the side of the sash were stuffed with strips of cloth.

The meaning of it came over her like a flash. There had been a light in Ware's room—they had turned the gas off and on again! Berry pounded against the window till she broke it.

"Ware—O Ware Brook! Darling Ware! Wake up! Wake up!"

She broke away more of the pane, feeling sick at the smell of escaping gas. She couldn't make that heavy sleeper here, but she could dimly see the outline of the bed. With all her strength, she threw her shoe at it.

That roused him. He came staggering to the window, the shoe in his hand.

"What the——" he began, and broke into a fit of coughing. The fresh air revived him a little; with his foot, he kicked an invisible door shut, gave Berry her shoe, and turned away.

"Come here! Come here!" she cried. "Don't go back to bed!"

Such, it seemed, was not his intention. He was trying his room door. That, like Berry's, was locked from the outside. He hurried back, yanked up the window frame, from which she had pulled away most of the packing, and swung himself out. Berry steadied him.

"Can you keep on the ledge," she asked. "Are you dizzy?"

"Don't worry. I'm all right. Steer straight ahead and you'll find an iron staircase."

What followed seemed unreal, an impossible nightmare. After the terrors of the ledge, the iron staircase, the garden, Ware's determination to hunt for Giles Witner, her own desperate pleas that they should escape somewhere! Following this a cautious flight to the sands, down footholds in an almost perpendicular cliff!

On their way toward the wrecked *Hummingbird*, now their objective, Ware explained why he had not been suffocated by the gas. He had left a light on in a large bathroom adjoining his sleeping quarters. The door between was open only a crack, so that it had taken some time for the gas actually to reach him. Some one, he said, seeing the light must have turned the gas off, then on again, at the main with the intention of asphyxiating him. They had closed his window from the outside and stuffed the cracks.

"They're out to get me, Berry," he admitted, "but why? And, oh, you little marvel, you've saved my life again! Was there ever such a girl! I—I wish we had met long ago."

Was he regretting his foolish, hasty marriage? Of course he would never say so. But Berry's heart was suddenly light as sunshine. To change the subject, she told him about the revolver she had found in her bed. Ware examined it by his electric torch and found all but one chamber loaded, as though it had fired a single shot.

"Were they trying to implicate you in the shooting this afternoon?" he asked aghast.

Berry remembered how attentive Sarah Witner had been that evening. Had Sarah been trying to get the planted revolver back after they had decided to give up the shooting? It made her sick with horror to realize that if Ware had been shot the investigators might have found in her bed a revolver loaded with bullets matching

the one that had killed him. It seemed probable that she had been framed.

Ware got his baggage from the *Hummingbird*. He dressed behind the fuselage, and then, with Berry holding his torch, he attempted to mend the small broadcasting set, though there seemed small hope of success. Dawn broke, all rose and amber and violet, and he worked with the light of day while Berry shook the sand from her shoes.

The paper with which Ware had mended one of them came out, and Berry smoothed it before refolding it. There was writing on it. She caught just a few words at the beginning before something impelled her to look up the hill. Then:

"Look, Ware, look!" She grasped his arm with icy fingers. "They're creeping down

through the eucalyptus grove. I see four men, and they're coming right toward us."

Ware gave a snort of rage. "Attacking in a body, eh? Yes, I see 'em. There's Witner—not a doubt. Time's getting short, and caution's out of date. Here, dear, keep low in the cockpit. Don't show your blessed head. The poor old boat will have to be our fort."

It was a strange moment. They looked into one another's eyes and something happened—something that never would have happened if they hadn't been facing death together. Ware, without a thought of guilt in his heart, took Berry in his arms and kissed her.

"Don't be afraid," he told her softly. "I'll look after you."



Then he made her crouch beside him while he sent a shot of warning from the enemy's own revolver in the direction of those slinking figures.

"Look out. I'm armed!" that shot informed them.

Berry remembered that while they had been racing from the hotel she had heard a faint drone, like the hum of an engine. She wondered if a boat had just brought in reinforcements, or if these men had been on the island all the time.

That single shot was answered with surprising suddenness by a shower of bullets that spattered on the wings of the plane.

Ware grabbed Berry. "My gosh, they're trying to explode the tank. There's a good bit of gas in it, too. I guess we'll have to get out, dear."

"They'll kill you if we do!" she said in despair.

There was another fusillade—shots falling around them like peas. Shielding Berry with his body as well as he could, Ware lifted her down behind one of the crumpled wings.

"Run!" he whispered. "Ahead of me—don't look back. There's a cave around the curve of the beach. If we can make it, we can barricade ourselves in."

Simultaneously the tank of the *Hummingbird* exploded, and a flame shot twenty feet in the air. Under cover of this diversion they ran, Ware pushing Berry ahead of him. When their enemies sighted them, they had almost reached the cave. A fresh shower of bullets—one spattering the sand not a foot away, and they found their retreat. Immediately Ware and Berry flung themselves upon the smaller rocks, throwing up a barricade.

The noise of firing increased, became deafening. There were shouts. A man's scream, angry voices. Ware, the barricade completed, sank back and caught his companion's hand.

"If they get me, what will you do?" he asked in an agony.

Her eyes met his with an expression he had never seen in them. "Does it matter to you?" she asked.

"I think it matters more than anything. It's just a question of minutes, Berry. I can't hold them long with four rounds of shot."

"Then," she said, "I want to tell you something. I love you, Ware."

His hand tightened on hers. "If I had the right, dear, I might have a fitting answer to that. I've lived a long time in the last thirty-six hours, longer than ever before in my life. But—I have a wife."

"I think I'll give you the right," said Berry suddenly. "Here's a letter addressed to you from Ferne LaTour. She wrote it on your observation pad, and you tore it off to mend the hole in my shoe. I read the first line without realizing what it was. That's as far as I went."

It was quieter now. Ware looked out to see what the enemy was doing. There was no one in sight; so he took the paper from Berry and read it.

DEAR WARE: I am not your wife. That ceremony was illegal. I have a husband living in Mexico, where I shall go, now that I am splitting up with my gang. I've finished with pictures. My last one showed me that my day as an actress is over, though nice boys like you don't notice these things. The plan is to kill you on the island, my dear, in such a way that it will seem an accident. Then according to the wills we drew up together this morning—weren't you a lamb falling in so quickly with my suggestion?—I, as your widow, would inherit the major portion of the Brook millions, and in turn I should divide them with my partners.

I can't do it, Ware. I love you. Aren't I a fool? Go back home, dear. Keep away from the island. In a little while I'll send a boy to tell you to read this before you leave the airport.

FERNE.

Ware was silent. His first and principal reaction, one could see, was blank shock—there was also sorrow, anger,

hurt. This letter was written by the woman around whom he had fluttered as a moth around a candle; the woman he thought he had married. Even if, in the face of true love, he had realized his mistake—the youthful error of infatuation for an unscrupulously clever woman—he was still hurt, filled with horror of this thing.

“Hide it,” he said at last, “where you can get it if they pin my murder on you.”

Then he peered out through a loop-hole in the rocks. Berry, watching him with her heart in her eyes, saw him stiffen.

“What is it?” she asked.

“Why, it’s Tim O’Dwyer!”

“The missing caretaker?”

Ware nodded his head quickly.

“Yes. I’ll hail him. Hi, Tim—hi, there! Are you one of this bunch of crooks?”

“Not I, sorr,” said a voice from Erin. “And is it yourself there behind the rocks? Right glad I am to see you alive. I was thinking ye’d be over here when I couldn’t trace you nowheres else. There’s six of a police force on the island, and they’ve got the varmints rounded up. Come out, sorr, come out. You’ll be safe now, sorr.”

“But look here, you old war horse, how did you manage to bring a force of police?”

“Sure, sorr, they kidnaped me and carried me down the coast, but I made me escape and told me story in San Francisco. A bunch of us came out on the police launch.”

Berry remembered the hum of the engine she had heard before dawn!

“You’re a hero, Tim,” his young master told him. “I’ll see that they pin a gold medal on your noble breast. Now run off, like a good sport. I’ve—er, something to say to a lady.”

Tim went, and Ware turned to Berry.

“It’s over,” he said softly. “All over, my dear, and we’re both alive. Do you still love me?”

Berry, fighting tears, both of relief and renunciation, shook her head.

“Oh, I shouldn’t have said that, Mr. Brook. I just said it because I thought we were both going to be killed and then——”

“You mean it wasn’t true, Berry?” he interrupted.

“No—it—it wasn’t true.”

“Stop that,” said Ware sternly.

“Look in my eyes now—not that way; this way—and say: ‘I don’t love you, Ware Brook. Though I can see you’ve fallen for me like a ton of molasses, it makes no difference. I simply don’t love you!’ Say it, Berry.”

“But I can’t,” she admitted, cheeks scarlet.

“Because——” he stopped and waited.

“Because—I do.”

Ware hugged her violently. “Sweet—lovely—beautiful! A swell chance that brute Silas has of getting you. Will you let me take you to Bubbles—that’s my mother—and then will you marry me when all this wretched business is cleared up?”

“I will,” said Berry gorgeously, and gave him her soft, breathless lips.





The Stroke Of Eight

By E. Almaz Stout

A Serial—Part V

CHAPTER XIII.

PAULINE'S wedding day was only two weeks off, and she was busy with visits to dressmakers and shops.

It had been difficult to find a satisfactory substitute for her at the office, and she had refused to leave until some one had been secured, and that had been only a week before.

The wedding arrangements were being kept absolutely secret, for both Pauline and Peter had suffered so much humiliation through the publicity of the latter's trial, that they had both agreed nothing should be said beforehand, and that their marriage should be kept quite quiet and should only be announced after they had left town.

Only Viola and Roger, Wilbur Fulton, Thomas Squire and Avis Grail

were in the secret, and they had all been pledged to silence.

To Pauline's chagrin she was never able to recapture the glow of her first evening with Peter. The next time they met he seemed comparatively cold, though still courteous and considerate as ever.

She tried to exercise the deliberate fascination she found easy that first evening, but it was not natural to her to pose, and when he did not respond she shut up like the leaves of a sensitive plant at the touch of a cold finger.

By tacit consent they seldom met alone. Peter had taken an instant liking to Viola Shelton, his artistic instincts aroused and attracted by her beauty, which was more vivid and arresting in her new happiness than it

had ever been before, and Viola constantly made the third at the little lunches and dinners at which he entertained his fiancée.

They were not easy days for Pauline, for her pride and her love dragged her in different directions. More than once, in sudden impulse she said to Peter that perhaps they had better break off their engagement before it was too late, but he had almost indignantly refused to listen to her.

"I am sorry if I am disappointing you," he said one day. "But I am doing my best. Those awful weeks tried me more than I realized myself, and my nerves are still on edge. I shall be quite myself when I get away. I only wish to goodness you would have done as I wanted and married me at once. We should have been in Switzerland by now. Be patient with me, Pauline dear."

And Pauline allowed herself to be comforted. After all, was not Peter urging her to hurry their wedding—not to postpone it? Why, therefore, should she worry?

But his nerves seemed to grow more and not less frayed, and on this day, with their wedding a bare two weeks away, he had been unusually upset at lunch and looked ill and haggard.

They had arranged to go to a picture gallery together in the afternoon, but as they rose from the luncheon table, Pauline said quietly:

"I don't think I'll go to the gallery with you, Peter. You go alone. There is some shopping I ought to do."

The flash of relief in his eyes had gone almost before it appeared, but she had seen it, and it had sent the blood draining away from her heart and had left her feeling cold and sick.

"Really? Must you do it? Well, if you must. But I am sorry. Shall I get you a taxi?"

"No, thanks, I would rather walk. You stay and pay the bill, Peter. I'll hurry off. No, don't come to the door, please."

She made her way to the door and out into the street. Once there, however, she turned away from the shops and made straight for the park. It was a glorious summer day, it would be cool and restful there, and at this hour there would not be many people about.

With a feeling of depression, she made her way to the park where she found a shady bench a few yards back from the bridle path. As she sat there she worked out her problem all over again and once more she decided she would go straight on.

Why should she not believe Peter? He had said it was only "nerves" that was the matter with him. He had told her again and again he wanted their engagement and marriage to go forward.

Her face was pale, but her eyes were hard as she said aloud: "I won't give him up. I couldn't bear it now. I've

THE STORY SO FAR:

AT eight o'clock one evening, Viola, wife of Roger Shelton, is in the apartment of Wilbur Fulton, when they hear a shot. Pauline Prentice, cousin of Viola, comes and takes Viola home with her. On their way out at eight thirty they see Peter Maryon at the door of Winston Grant's apartment. The next morning Grant is found murdered, and Peter is accused. Pauline realizes that he is innocent because Viola stated that the shot was heard at eight o'clock. At the trial things look bad for Peter, and Pauline, realizing it, tells the judge that she was in Fulton's apartment at eight o'clock when the shot was fired, and saw Peter at Grant's door at eight thirty. Peter is free, but Pauline's name is ruined. Peter and Fulton both ask her to marry them, and she accepts Peter.

suffered enough. I'll get something out of life."

She looked up as a shadow fell across the sunlight in front of her, and started as she saw Wilbur Fulton standing before her, hat in hand.

"Daydreaming, dear lady? I have been watching you for some time, but you didn't see me. May I come and sit with you a little?"

"Do," she said with a forced laugh. "I am delighted to see you. I was beginning to get more than a little bored with my own thoughts."

"Bored?" he said, lifting his eyebrows, as he put his felt hat on his knees, "I should have described your thoughts with another adjective. May I make a guess at them? You were wondering whether it was really worth while going on with an engagement with a man who is a fool and sap enough not to be in love with you!"

"Mr. Fulton!" Pauline's face had colored enough now as she turned her eyes, flashing with indignation, to him. "How dare you!"

"You know my dear Pauline, I dare most things. Do think very hard before it is too late. Are you likely to be happy with a man, however much you may love him, if he does not love you?"

"How do you know? I mean," she added, biting her lips, "why should you suppose he doesn't love me? Am I so unattractive that it's impossible?"

For an instant he laid his fingers, slim, brown, strong fingers on her arm.

"You know that isn't my thought. I have already said he is a sap and a fool. But I watched you two at the theater the other night. Oh, you didn't see me. I was in the back of the box, and you two were in the second row of the orchestra. I watched you quite a good deal. I know you care for him more than a little. But he was merely polite to you."

"Then it's very lucky for me that no one knows he is going to marry me, if his indifference is so patent." Her voice

was hard and cutting. "But you know I do not admit you are right. And, in any case why should you wish to hurt me?"

"Because," he said in a low voice, leaning forward, "I don't want to see you wreck and spoil your life at the beginning. Give me your word of honor you truly think you are going to be happy with Maryon and I won't say another word."

Pauline met his eyes defiantly.

"I think you are quite wrong. I ought to know, and I am sure Mr. Maryon cares for me more than you think, and I—I love him with all my heart, and I am quite certain we shall be very happy." Fulton met her eyes for a few seconds without speaking. Then he leaned back in his chair and said lightly:

"I am delighted to hear it. Now I have fulfilled my duties, I have nothing more to say. You know the only thing I am thinking of is your happiness. Since you tell me that is assured, I am satisfied—if not convinced. What a lovely day it is! How attractive the pink frocks of those kiddies over there look against the green."

Pauline caught the ball he threw to her and answered him as lightly. "Don't they? How lucky children are to have these lovely parks. I once heard with astonishment a poor woman living in a small town say that city children were luckier than village children, because the latter often only have the country roads to play in, as so many of the fields are under cultivation and are, of course, private property, while city children have all this grass and these trees. At the time I thought it ridiculous and far-fetched, but I see what she meant."

"I agree with your country woman. Did you ever see anything as happy as those babies there, rolling on the grass with that puppy as though they just loved it? Hello, what's the matter?"

He started up as the shrill cry of terror reached their ears, followed by the sound of madly pounding horse's hoofs.

An instant later, around the corner came a great black horse, obviously half wild with terror, white foam flicking from its mouth, while a young girl, riding astride, without a hat and with her hair streaming wildly behind her, tugged quite futilely at the reins. Her face was ghastly, and it was obvious her nerve had gone, for she was screaming, terrifying the maddened animal still more.

With a bound Wilbur Fulton was at the edge of the path, standing taut and with braced muscles.

Pauline put her hands up to her lips to keep back the cry that rose to them. What was he going to do? What could he do? The horse would knock him down and trample him.

As the great animal thundered by, he jumped forward, seized the rein on the near side, putting his full weight into the pull, while he cried out peremptorily to the girl: "Sit tight! Don't lose your nerve!"

The horse in its surprise hesitated, stumbled, continued galloping for a few yards, swerving so that Fulton, whose whole weight was pulling at the bit, was dragged against a tree, and then stopped.

It all happened in such a flash that Pauline had no time to move or call out. And in the same instant the girl slid, still sobbing with terror, from the saddle, while Fulton pitched forward and lay quite still on the grass at the side of the path.

As Pauline ran forward an elderly man on a thick heavy horse came dashing along, and gave a little cry as he caught sight of the disheveled, crying girl.

"Essie, are you safe?"

The broad furrowed face was gray and beaded with perspiration as he pulled up his horse and rather clumsily dismounted.

"Yes, dad, thanks to this gentleman, who saved me."

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They turned to where Fulton, lying on the grass, was already opening his eyes as Pauline bent over him.

"I'm all right," he gasped. "Don't look so scared."

"Oh-oh," Pauline whispered. "When I saw you hit the tree I was so afraid you were seriously hurt."

"Don't you know Satan looks after his own?" he asked with a wry smile as he sat up. Lucky my skull, like my skin, is pretty thick." He put his hand up quickly to his forehead which was grazed and rapidly rising into a lump.

"I understand, sir, you saved my daughter from a terrible accident. You possibly even saved her life." The elderly man came up to Fulton and wrung his hand. "Is there anything I can do?"

"Yes, if you would be so good as to get me a taxi. I'll go straight home I believe."

He stumbled to a bench and sat down, while the man remounted his horse and hurried off to the highway, only a short distance off, and in a few minutes returned to say that a taxi was waiting.

Fulton rose and staggered toward it and, turning to Pauline, said, "Good-by."

She shook her head. "No, of course I'm coming with you. But hadn't you better go to a hospital, or to a doctor on the way?"

"No, Johnson's an ex-ambulance man. He can do all I want. But I don't like to bother you to come."

"Nonsense, you may faint or something in the taxi. Of course I'm coming."

She took the card the girl's father held out and promised that some one should send him news the next day, though Fulton himself laughed at the suggestion that he had received anything but a knock which would have no effect whatever.

It was only a short distance to Grayning Apartments, and the taxi drew up

Fulton turned his dark eyes, which twinkled in spite of the pain he was suffering, to Pauline.

"I am glad I have been able to interest you at last. It's almost worth getting a crack on the head."

The hall man came forward to open the taxi door and Fulton got out saying: "Tell Johnson to come up right away, will you?" Then, as the man hurried off to the basement to summon the valet, Fulton turned to Pauline and added in a low voice as he shook hands: "I shan't forget your gentleness to me to-day. You were very good to me."

"Can't I do anything to help? Are you sure Johnson can do all that is necessary? Or shall I come up?"

"No, thank you. Though I'll never forget you were willing to do even that. Good-by my dear."

As Pauline drove away in the taxi to her own apartment she drew a deep breath. It came to her in a rush all that had happened since she had last driven away from that door, all the humiliation, all the horror, all the misery, and then the change in her own life and her own future.

That last time, she had gone hating



"Viola, I am sorry for the wrong I so nearly did you. I mean it. I want you to forgive me."

and despising Wilbur Fulton with all her soul. To-day she knew that if she had not got against him all she had, she might not only have felt the admiration any woman must feel for a man who can do a brave action without fuss or hesitation, but she might even have felt grateful for a friendship he was obviously willing to give her.

Then she remembered how nearly he had wrecked Viola's life, and her heart again hardened against him.

"Viola! Please stop one moment. You know I really haven't got the fever!"

It was a week later and Wilbur Fulton, emerging from a shop in West Fifty-seventh Street, almost ran into Viola Shelton who, after one glance at him, tried to hurry on with a bow that was almost a cut.

"But I—I don't want to speak to you." Her face had turned pale and her voice was a shade unsteady.

"Perhaps not. But it won't hurt you to give me two minutes. I really want to speak to you. Come down here. It'll be quiet and we shan't be likely to meet any one."

They were at the corner of Fifty-eighth Street and, after a second's hesitation, Viola, always weak, turned down the quiet street with him.

He looked at her closely before he said:

"You are looking splendid, Viola, and more beautiful than ever."

There was that quick throb in his musical, husky voice that had once so nearly been her undoing, and something of her stiffness melted. Does the woman exist whom flattery, especially obviously genuine flattery, cannot touch?

"Thank you. I am very well."

"And Pauline tells me you are very happy."

"Pauline?" Viola lifted her eyebrows.

"Well, Miss Prentice, then. But I think of her as Pauline. I want to

know from your own lips that you are sufficiently happy, that you can forgive me. I wish you would, Viola. It really would be a weight off my mind."

Viola's face was rosy enough now. Oh, it wasn't all your fault. I was quite as much to blame."

"No, no, you weren't. For you were a dear little, ignorant girl, although you were a married woman, who hadn't the least idea what you were doing. I did know, and I knew you would have hated me and—and everything when we had grown tired of each other. I—it was unpardonable of me. You weren't fair game. And, on my soul, Viola, I am sorry for the wrong I so nearly did you. I mean it. I very badly want you to forgive me."

There was no questioning his sincerity now, and his dark face was serious and pleading.

In an instant her small hand was held out. "Of course I do. The only person I find it hard to forgive is myself. You see, Pauline has had such an awful time through me. So many people think badly of her. Even Roger says he can never feel toward her as he used to do. Think how terrible that is for me. He is quite nice to her when other people are there. But in his heart he disapproves of what he believes she did, and he can't get over it."

"But you'll never tell him?"

"No," Viola shook her head. "No, I haven't the courage. I hate the burden I must always carry. But Pauline says for her sake no one, not even Roger, must know of her—her perjury."

His eyes glowed as he said quickly:

"Of course I think she is the most wonderful woman I ever met. I wish she were not going to marry Maryon!"

"Why not?" Viola turned amazed eyes to him. "I think it's splendid. They are both young and good-looking, both fond of the same things. Peter is a dear. I am devoted to him. And I love Pauline. I am delighted they are

going to be married. It's just the right solution of everything. She won't have to work any more, or at least, if she does, it will be for her own husband. Why aren't you glad she is going to be happy, seeing you admire her?"

"Because I don't think she will be happy. He isn't good enough for her. He is too much of a boy. And then, he isn't in love with her."

Viola paused. "I'm sure he's very fond of her. What makes you think he isn't in love with her?"

"Because I've seen them together."

"So have I—often, and I don't agree with you. You know the wedding is next Wednesday?"

"Yes. You are going?"

"Of course. Are you? Pauline has told me, you know, that she sees you sometimes, and that you are the only other person she has told of her engagement."

"No, I shan't go, even if she asks me."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I——" A faint flush rose under the tan of his cheeks. "I would rather not."

As Viola stood still, her hand held out in readiness to say good-by to him, a swift inspiration came to her.

"Why, Wilbur, I believe you are in love with her yourself!"

For a moment he looked dazed, as though the words had struck him a physical blow. Then a flush flamed right up to the roots of his dark hair.

"Well, if I am, she has no use for me and is going to marry Maryon in less than a week. Must you go? Well, it was nice of you to give me a few minutes. Good-by."

He replaced the hat he had been holding in his hand and hurried on, the blood pounding against his temples.

Why hadn't he realized it before? His offer to Pauline had been made partly out of chivalrous appreciation, partly out of genuine compunction for what she had suffered through his un-

forgivable pursuit of Viola Shelton, partly out of sheer deviltry. Then he had become interested and attracted. It had amused him to fight down her resentment and dislike bit by bit. It had piqued and pleased him to make her realize he was not wholly bad. He had found her a delightful, entertaining companion. Her coolness, her ready wit, had forced his admiration. But it had not pierced his consciousness that he was in love with her.

But Viola's words had torn the bandage from his eyes. That was the reason he so hated the idea of her marrying Maryon, that was why the very mention of his name subtly irritated him. He was in love with Pauline Prentice himself! More—much more. He, who had made making love to women into a fine art, who had fooled and played and compromised and flirted, who had fallen in and out of what he had been pleased to call love, as easily as a duck walks in and out of water, was not only in love with Pauline Prentice, but he loved her as he had never loved any woman before.

He realized for the first time he loved every hair of her head, every glance of her great steadfast gray eyes, every humorous twist of her curved crimson lips.

All his old flirtations and intrigues suddenly appeared sordid, degrading, humiliating.

He took off his felt hat as, crossing Fifth Avenue he entered the park and let the cool summer air play on his bared head. In some subtle way he was lifting his hat to his thoughts of Pauline.

He loved her. She was the sweetest, cleanest, dearest woman he had ever met.

He loved her. He wanted her. He wanted her for his wife.

He thought of her standing by his side dressed in white in the dimness of a church chancel.

He thought of her clasped in his arms, his lips touching hers, yielding in a passion of love he felt she could know when

once she awoke out of her girlhood's dream.

He drew in a long deep breath. He loved Pauline. And in five days she was to be married to another man.

He walked on, not knowing where he went, and many a curious eye turned to gaze after the distinguished-looking man, with the dark hair touched with gray about the temples and ears, who walked steadily on with unseeing eyes, his hat crushed in his hand.

Suddenly a woman, with reddened lips and unnaturally flaxen hair, started up from the bench where she had been sitting, idly watching the passers-by, and intercepted him with a a little high-pitched laugh.

"Hello, Wilbur, imagine seeing you here at this hour. I hope you are as glad to see me as I am to see you."

He looked at her blankly for a second, hardly comprehending, and the blood rushed to her face under its coating of cream and powder.

"You're not going to pretend you don't know me!" Her voice was sharp with mortification.

His eyes narrowed as he came back to earth.

"I beg your pardon, Belle. Why should I pretend I didn't know you? My thoughts were far away, that's all."

"Thinking of the latest 'she'?" she said, falling in and walking on by his side. "Who is she?"

"You're wrong. There's no one."

"Oh, come, Wilbur." Belle Armstrong, who had been divorced twice, looked at him archly. "I know you too well to believe that."

"You may, all the same."

"You mean there is no woman in your life at all?" she asked incredulously. "I just don't believe you!"

He felt he could have struck her. His thoughts had been full of a sweet, clean-souled girl with honest gray eyes, and now this woman, with her subtle inuendo, with her cruel reminder, was

soiling everything, was pushing him back into the mud of his own past which it was his one idea to try and forget.

With difficulty he kept back the retort that rose to his lips, and answered instead: "You know that I have a great"—he paused deliberately and then added cuttingly—"admiration for your sex. But I have been learning lately that I can get along very well by myself."

She thought she knew him far too well to believe him. But if it were so? If, indeed, there was no other woman in whom he was specially interested at the moment?

She moved imperceptibly nearer him.

"I think I am glad to hear that," she said softly. I—I hated it when I heard you were always with Mrs. Wood and then with that little woman—I forget her name—that lovely, fair-haired wife of some lawyer. But if there is really no one you are keen on at present—We were very good pals once. I am still at the Carlyon. If you would care to dine any evening, I have the same old cook you always declared cooked better than any one in New York."

Wilbur felt a sensation of nausea.

There had been a time when he would have been willing to meet her halfway. They had carried on a violent flirtation during the time of her second husband, a flirtation which even a year ago he might have been quite willing to renew, given such open provocation. But today, as he looked at the powder-coated cheeks, at the darkened eyes with their look of scarcely veiled eager acquisitiveness, he marveled that he had ever been attracted.

"You are very good," he murmured, "but I am engaged every day for the next two weeks, and then I expect to leave town."

Belle Armstrong was game, and she knew exactly when she was checkmated.

She smiled at him artfully as she paused and held out her hand. "Of course. It was absurd to hope to find

you disengaged. Well, I really must run along now. I have already made myself late for an appointment with my dressmaker in my wish to chat for a few minutes with an old friend. By-by! We shall probably run across each other at Goodwood."

As he watched her cross the street, her tiny feet, in their high-heeled monstrosities, threading their way through the traffic, he drew in his breath.

"And that's the type of woman I was once willing to spend all my life with," he said to himself. "How could I have been such a blind fool?"

CHAPTER XIV

"O Mr. Squire, how lovely! How can I thank you enough?"

Pauline turned a sparkling face to the old man, and held out her hand impulsively.

He took it between both his and patted it gently. "You like it, my dear?"

"Like it? It's gorgeous. I never saw anything so lovely."

She held out her left arm, twisting her wrist, on which shone and twinkled a small watch exquisitely set with brilliants, mounted on a narrow black ribbon.

"I am so glad you like it. You know Peter is as dear to me as my own son, and I wanted to give his wife something to remember me by."

"It is more than kind of you. I know you have given him such a generous present, and, of course, I never thought of having anything myself."

"But most girls expect presents when they are going to be married, don't they? He smiled whimsically at her.

"Of course. But I am not being married in quite the usual way. I mean—no one knows anything about it."

"That is a little hard on you. All girls like a fuss at their weddings."

"But you know why we decided to let no one know. We have both been before

the public eye considerably more than either of us likes."

"Yes, yes, and I think you are very wise. Only I am sorry for you, having to do without bridesmaids and fal-lals."

At Mr. Squire's own pressing request Peter had taken Pauline to see him a few days after their engagement, and the old man had taken a great liking to the girl who owed Peter's proposal entirely to him.

He had been afraid at first that he might have assumed too heavy a responsibility and might have made a mistake in putting the idea into Peter's head. But the first five minutes Pauline spent in his room convinced him that Peter had done the best thing for himself he was ever likely to do in having persuaded her to be his wife.

He liked her soft deep voice and quiet reserved manners. He liked her steadfast gray eyes and the line of her chin and jaw. He liked her simple, well-cut clothes. He liked everything about her, he told himself.

Pauline felt his liking and approval and, after her many humiliating experiences of the past few weeks, the approval of this courteous old man, who seemed to belong to another age, was very soothing. She blossomed under it and showed herself in a light which reminded Peter of the first evening they had dined together at the Helton.

She had been to see the old man once or twice since by herself, and to-day she had gone at his request to receive his wedding present. He had written and told her he wanted her to himself for half an hour, so if she would come at four he would ask Peter to come to tea at half past and take her home.

Suddenly Pauline put her hand on his arm. "Mr. Squire," she said in a low voice, "I wish I had courage to say something to you."

"Can't you say anything that is in your thoughts? I should have thought you might. I am very safe. And I am very



"Good-by, Pauline. I hope you will both be very happy. Peter, my boy, you've won a treasure. Show you know how to appreciate it!"

old, and no man lives to my age without acquiring a certain amount of wisdom. You may trust me, Pauline."

"I know I can." She stopped, and her face slowly paled. After a few moments she went on with difficulty. "It's about Peter?"

His dark eyes looked at her closely under heavy brows. "Yes, my dear?"

"I—I hope I am not doing him a great wrong in marrying him?"

"On the contrary, I think you are going to do him a lot of good."

A smile hovered on her face for a moment.

"Ah, but you are awfully sweet to me, nicer than I deserve you to be. You see, Peter does not—is not in love with me."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite sure. It's a thing about which no woman, even a woman with so little experience as I have had, can make a mistake."

"And you—are you in love with him?"

Her face was one burning blush as she nodded. "Yes—I think so. But if I loved him a little more I should probably refuse to marry him."

"My dear, I don't think I quite understand."

She fingered her new watch with nervous fingers. "From the first day Peter came in to Mr. Bond's office I—I thought him different from any man I had ever seen. I was not the sort of girl to think much about men. I had always been too busy either learning my job or earning my living. But to me he always seemed a sort of fairy prince. I did not know him well, of course, but—well, I suppose I endowed him in my thoughts with every sort of virtue. Then when he asked me to marry him after his acquittal, I could not believe it at first. He told me he—he was not in love with me and naturally he knew I couldn't be with him, but he told me he really wanted me as—a companion. I realized at the time he was proposing to me out of chivalry, and of course I refused his offer. He told me to think it over for a week and I agreed, though, of course, I never meant to marry him. It seemed too absurd. Then I was lonely and unhappy, and he seemed a sort of refuge. It suddenly came to me—why shouldn't I take him at his word? I won't tell you all that led up to my doing the very thing I said I wouldn't. But I—I wrote and accepted him."

"And you are a little doubtful now?" His voice was very gentle.

"Not for myself. Of course it is just like a wonderful dream to me to think of traveling with him—of being alone with him, of belonging to him. You see I have been a very solitary sort of girl since my mother died, and it's the thought of belonging to some one by right, of having some one I am entitled to and of having some one to share things with, that is so—so wonderful to me. I know it's horribly selfish of me, but I want him so badly!"

"Well, my dear, you've got him, and in a very few days you are going to be his wife."

"I know," Pauline answered in a low voice. But am I justified in doing it? You see Peter is younger—in himself, I mean—than I thought he was. Supposing he regrets marrying me? Supposing he falls in love afterward with some one else? I—I shall have cheated him."

"My dear, I think if I were you I would leave that. If he isn't in love with you now, he certainly is not in love with any one else. Peter is as straight as a die. You will be his wife. That means he will put you before every woman in the world. He is not likely to fall in love with any one else after he has married you."

In his own heart he thought that if Peter were fool enough not to be in love with Pauline now, when once that sweet-eyed, clean-souled girl was his wife, he soon would be.

"Then you don't think it wrong and selfish of me to marry him?"

"Dear child, I have told you I love Peter as my own son. I would sooner know that you were to be his companion through life than any other I have ever met! Is that enough?"

"O, Mr. Squire!" A sob rose for a moment to Pauline's throat and she turned her eyes, misty with tears of gratitude, up to him. "You can say that in spite of things looking so black against me in connection with Mr.—Mr. Fulton?"

His face grew very grave. "I don't understand that, I admit. But I do know there was no real wrong. Whatever took you to that man's apartment, however compromising the circumstances were made to seem, I know that there was nothing wrong in your mind, nothing of which my Peter's wife need be ashamed!"

Pauline's answer was to stoop her head quickly and to press her lips to the

fine wrinkled hand lying on the arm of the big leather chair.

At that moment Peter came into the room and stopped short.

"Come in, my boy," Mr. Squire called gayly, "I'm not at all sure it isn't a very good thing you came when you did. I have so fallen in love with your Pauline that if I were half a century younger I should probably be fighting you for her, you lucky young dog!"

But Peter's entrance had brought an element of constraint, and though all three of them tried hard to appear at their ease, the effort was obvious and as soon as tea was over Pauline said she must be getting home.

As she said good-by to Mr. Squire, the old man said: "I don't suppose I shall see you again till you two come back from Switzerland. Remember I shall expect your very first visit to be to me. Good-by, Pauline. I hope you will both be very happy. Peter, my boy, you've won a treasure. Show you know how to appreciate it!"

"I do appreciate it," Peter said quickly. In that atmosphere of approval Pauline was looking her best, and the man does not exist who does not think the more of a woman whom another man admires, even if the man be an old one.

The glances of admiration he gave her set Pauline's heart beating more quickly. She told herself that, after all, she need not reproach herself. She could and she would make Peter happy. She would make him love her. Peter's best friend had told her not to be afraid, but to be reassured that Peter was as lucky as she was. Well, she would not worry any more. She would accept the gift the gods sent her. She would be happy. She would not allow another doubt to cross her mind.

She turned to him with a brilliant smile.

"I think it's rather lucky I shan't be seeing Mr. Squire for a little time. He

is so sweet to me he would certainly turn my head."

"Don't you believe it, Peter," Mr. Squire said, smiling as he saw the friendliness of Peter's action as he took hold of Pauline's arm, ready to lead her out of the room. "The very lovely head of your young woman is screwed on far too firmly for any old buffer like myself to shift it. Good-by. Take care of her, Peter. Bless you both."

As they walked down the stone stairs, Peter's hand lightly resting on Pauline's arm, she leaned a little closer to him.

"Peter, you are sure—sure you want me?"

The words were a statement rather than a question.

In the dimness of the badly lighted staircase, Peter met her eyes squarely.

"Quite, quite sure."

And Pauline, hearing the sincerity of his voice, and obvious to the utter lack of passion in his eyes, told herself she was satisfied, that her last lingering doubt was dispelled.

She lifted her face to his and gave him the first kiss she had ever offered him as she whispered:

"I'm glad—glad. I will try to make you very happy."

The next morning as Viola was pouring out Roger's breakfast coffee, he looked up from an important letter he had been reading for the second time, and said:

"Are you very busy to-day, dear?"

"I have a committee meeting for Mrs. Melton's bazaar at eleven. But I am quite free this afternoon. Why?"

"I wish you would go and see one of my clerks. Poor chap, he's been ill and away from the office for some weeks. I ought to go myself and would go, only I am so rushed with work, I don't know which way to turn. He lives with his mother out in the wilds of New Jersey. Would it be asking too much of you to

go and see if you can do anything for them?"

"Of course I shall be only too pleased. Just give me his name and address."

"I must telephone the address from the office. The boy's name is Martin Palin."

"Why, wasn't that the name of the clerk with the thick kid gloves you sent for your keys a few weeks ago?"

"Yes, I believe I did. But I didn't know he wore kid gloves! He doesn't get a big salary. I must raise it when he comes back. Illness is always expensive. Take him some fruit and flowers or anything you think of, and tell them not to worry over expenses, as I'll help with the doctor's bill."

Viola got up quickly and, putting her arms around his neck, leaned her cheek against the top of his head.

"Roger, you darling! How thoughtful you are!"

He drew her face down and kissed it. "It's your fault! Six months ago I'm afraid I shouldn't have thought of it. But your love, sweetheart, seems to have given me a new pair of eyes with which to see the world."

Very graciously, very tenderly, she kissed first one eyelid then the other.

"Bless your dear eyes," she whispered.

He laughed a little unsteadily as she made her way back to her own seat.

"My dear, we are both a little sentimental, and at nine o'clock in the morning! Well, I must be off, for I have to go through a long brief before Robert Lenning has it at ten thirty. I'll phone Palin's address later on. If you are out I'll tell Matthews to write it down."

Faithful to her promise Viola ordered the car for three o'clock and at a few minutes before the hour got up a little reluctantly from her comfortable couch to get ready.

At one time she would have allowed the genuine excuse she had now to consider her own feelings, to overrule her promise. But love had given her a new

perception, not only of her relations to her husband, but of her relations to her neighbor.

As she crossed the room the doorbell rang and a moment later Peter Maryon was shown in.

"What luck to find you," he said. "I have called to ask you if you'll come and help me choose a dressing case for Pauline. I've looked at three or four, but a woman will know better what a woman would like."

"Of course I will, if you'll come out to Jersey with me afterward. That's the car at the door now," she added, looking out of the window. "I've got to go and see one of my husband's men who is ill."

"With pleasure. I've nothing to do this afternoon and shall be only too glad to have the chance of doing something with you."

She looked at him curiously. There was a ring of depression in his voice and he looked thin and haggard.

"What is Pauline doing? Isn't she free?"

"I don't think so. I saw her yesterday and she said she would be busy until to-morrow. She is dining with me to-morrow night."

Viola hesitated, then decided to say nothing and with a brief "Sit down and wait for a minute, will you? I won't be long," she left the room.

They drove to a small baggage shop and Viola decided on a dressing case with tortoise-shell fittings as the one Pauline would like best, and then they set out for Highbury, where Mrs. Palin and her son had the lower part of the house.

Laburnum Avenue was one of those gray, monotonous places, where all the houses are alike—one door in the middle of the front, a window on either side and three windows in each of the two upper floors—and where the only difference lies in the window curtains or in an occasional window box. It came at



Viola got up quickly and, putting her arms around his neck, leaned her cheek against the top of his head. "Roger, you darling! How thoughtful you are!"

the end of a succession of gray monotonous streets, all apparently exactly alike, all quite respectable, quite decently kept and quite depressing.

Viola gave a little shudder.

"O Mr. Maryon, how I should hate to live in a street like this. Where everything is so much alike, I am even sure the people must grow to be alike. I truly believe I'd rather live in a real

slum. At least there is more color and more variety."

"You wouldn't!" Peter said grimly. "You'd hate the noise and the smell and the animals—I mean the small animals that attack humans and love to torment them. You've no idea how smart some of the people living here turn out. Oh, it's not our smartness, I admit. But it's very real to themselves. Look at

that girl just coming out of that house. Now doesn't she look nice?"

Viola laughed as a pretty young thing in white sports shoes and a white sports coat swung along, with a tennis racket in her hand.

"She does. She looks charming. Here, this is 115." She tapped sharply on the glass and the man drew up at one of the houses that was so exactly like its remaining three hundred and seven neighbors.

Outside the door were two bells, the lower one with the name Palin painted above it.

Viola pressed the button and after a long wait the door was opened by a small woman as gray and drab as the outside of the house. She wore a black gown, her hair was gray, her faded eyes were gray and her very skin looked gray.

"Are you Mrs. Palin?" Viola asked pleasantly, her own freshness, her radiant looks and health forming a cruel contrast to the little woman who seemed none too pleased to see her.

"Yes, I am Mrs. Palin."

"Then may I come in for a few minutes? My husband, Mr. Shelton, asked me to call."

A dull flush rose unbecomingly to the gray cheeks.

"Certainly. If you'll please come into the parlor. It is kind of you to call."

Without appearing to notice Peter, who was behind Viola, Mrs. Palin led the way into the parlor which was furnished exactly as the outside would lead one to expect. A shabby mahogany and horsehair couch, a round table with books on it, ghastly pictures on the walls and a few chairs to match the couch.

"Won't you sit down, Mrs. Shelton," the little woman said formally, and then turned to Peter, who was carrying a bunch of roses and a great basket of fruit.

Suddenly she gave a low cry and staggered, clutching hold of the table to steady herself.

"What is it?" Viola asked quickly. "Are you ill, Mrs. Palin?"

"No, no," she answered in a breathless, stifled voice. "But what has he come for?" She pointed a work-stained shaking finger at Peter.

"Mr. Maryon has kindly driven out with me. Why—do you know him?"

"No, no. How should I know him? Of course I don't." Her voice was harsh and rasping and she was making a very obvious effort to control herself. "He—he reminded me of some one I knew once, that's all. Won't you sit down, Mrs. Shelton?"

"Thank you. Marveling at her hostess's display of feeling, Viola sat down and said graciously, "I do hope your son is better? I only heard to-day for the first time he had been ill."

"Yes, thank you, he's better. He hopes to get back to the office next week. It's very good of Mr. Shelton to keep his place open so long."

"Not at all. My husband mentioned to me this morning that as soon as he gets back he means to raise your son's salary. I have brought him a little fruit. Is he well enough to see me?"

"No, no, certainly not!" The little woman half rose to her feet, then sat down again. "He could not see any one."

"I am sorry. I met your son once. He came to the house for my husband's keys and I thought then he looked very delicate. He said he hoped some day to go abroad with you. I should think the climate there might suit him. I hope ——" There came the sound of a slow step in the passage outside and the rattle of a turning doorknob.

Mrs. Palin rose from her place on the farther side of the room and literally hurled herself across the room.

"Martin," she cried, "don't come in. There are visitors here!"

But even as she spoke the door opened and a gaunt figure in a shabby dressing gown stood in the doorway. Viola mis-

took the reason for Mrs. Palin's excitement and said quickly:

"Oh, it doesn't matter that Mr. Palin isn't properly dressed. I am so glad to see you. But oughtn't you to lie down? Mr. Maryon—quickly!"

Peter was at the boy's side, even before Viola's cry. For Martin Palin swayed forward, and certainly would have fallen if Peter had not caught him. He was a mere bag of bones, and he seemed a featherweight to the strong man as he carried him over to the couch and laid him gently down. But he tried to struggle to a sitting position as he gasped out:

"Who is that? What name did you say?" And he pointed, with the same horror on his face that had been on his mother's, at Peter.

"Mr. Maryon," Viola answered, wondering if they were both quite mad.

Then the boy gave a loud hysterical shriek. "He's come to take me! Tell him I didn't mean to do it. Mother, save me! Save me!"

In a moment the little woman was on her knees by his side, her arms around him, and she was hiding his contorted face against her shoulder.

"Hush, my boy, hush, my darling. You are quite safe. Hush, Martin, my dear, my dear! Hush, don't say anything!"

The boy clung to her, his emaciated figure shaking. Then he pushed her away with sudden fervish strength, so that she fell back against the table, and he sat up on the edge of the couch, his lank, fair hair falling across his forehead which was dewed with sweat.

"I can't bear it any longer, it's killing me. Of course you've come to take me. I'll confess. I never meant to do it—but I killed Mr. Winston Grant!"

"Great Heaven above!" The words came from Peter who stood still, staring at the pitiful figure on the sofa. "You—killed—Mr. Grant?"

"Yes." Martin's head fell forward

into his hands, and he rocked himself to and fro, moaning pitifully.

Mrs. Palin had collapsed, a crumpled heap by his side.

"Are you telling the truth? Or are you suffering from delusions?" Peter strode forward, his face and voice stern and hard.

"It's the truth." Mrs. Palin rose to her feet, her small face ghastly, but a strange dignity in her narrow flat figure. "He killed him, but he's as innocent as that lady there"—pointing at Viola—"of any intention to murder him."

But Peter only heard her first words, and his face was terrible as he laid a heavy hand on the shrinking lad's shoulder.

"You killed him—you knew I was accused of it—you knew I was very nearly condemned, and you let me go through all that awful time? You would have let me die for what you did?"

"No, Mr. Maryon!" Mrs. Palin confronted him with flashing eyes. "No, Mr. Maryon, we should not have done that. I was in court when you were tried. Martin was ill in bed. If things had gone against you I should have told the truth. I knew you were innocent, so I didn't think you could be condemned. But when I saw that almost certainly you would be, I stood up to tell the truth. Only a young lady got up at the same time and swore that the shot which killed Mr. Grant had been fired when plenty of people could prove you were nowhere near Grayling Apartments. I realized then my boy had been given a second chance. He is my only son, the only thing I have left in the world. I took that chance for him."

Peter and Viola, watching and listening, felt a little thrill run through them. That small, gray figure had suddenly become endowed with something more than dignity, with something approaching nobility. The hardness faded from Peter's face as that nobility reached him.

"Now you must know what hap-

pened." Mrs. Palin went on, motioning Peter almost imperiously to sit down. "I can tell you better than Martin, and I know—everything. Some years ago, when Martin was only eighteen, he was in Mr. Grant's service. He was his valet, I suppose you'd call it. Only Martin was always quick and sharp, and Mr. Grant found he was good at writing and figures, and he made him sort of clerk or secretary as well. I mean, he used to write his letters, as well as wait on him.

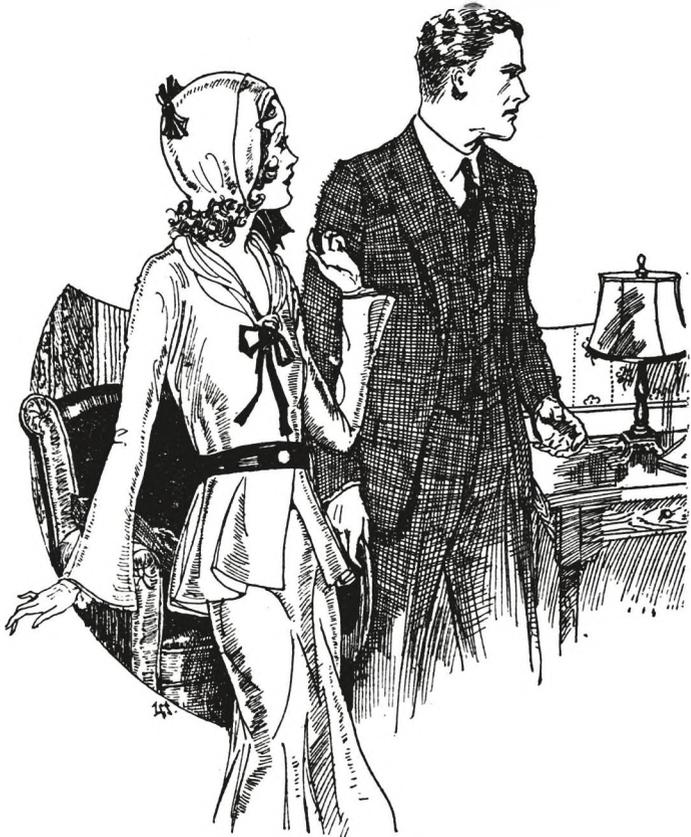
"Well, one day Martin, who had got into bad company with a lot of young fellows who led him astray, wanted some money badly. He had been betting and gambling, and of course he had been losing, and the man to whom he owed the money swore he would get him in trouble if he didn't pay at once. Martin didn't want to lose his position and Mr. Grant was away and expected to be away some time longer. Martin borrowed some of his money."

"Tell the truth, mother," Martin interrupted in a hoarse voice. "Say I stole it."

A flush stained the ghastly cheeks of the little woman fighting his battle.

"You didn't steal it. You borrowed it, for you meant to pay it back." Then turning back to Viola and Peter who

were watching her, barely breathing for interest, she went on: "Mr. Grant came back unexpectedly, found out what Martin had done and dismissed him.



"Great Heaven above!" The words came from Peter, who stood still, staring at the pitiful figure on the sofa. "You—killed—Mr. Grant?"

But first he made him sign a confession, made him put in black and white that he was a thief though, as I told you, he wasn't!" she added passionately.

"Well, he kept that paper. He was a fiend was that man. He said it would be useful. And so it was. He often did ugly, dirty things, not things exactly against the law, but things he wouldn't have been liked to be found doing. When he wanted them done, he sent for Martin. My boy is a clean, honest

boy—yes, he is, in spite of all there is that seems against him—and he hated doing some of the things he had to. But when he tried to refuse, Mr. Grant showed him that cursed piece of paper and said if he disobeyed he would show it to his new boss. Martin knew that

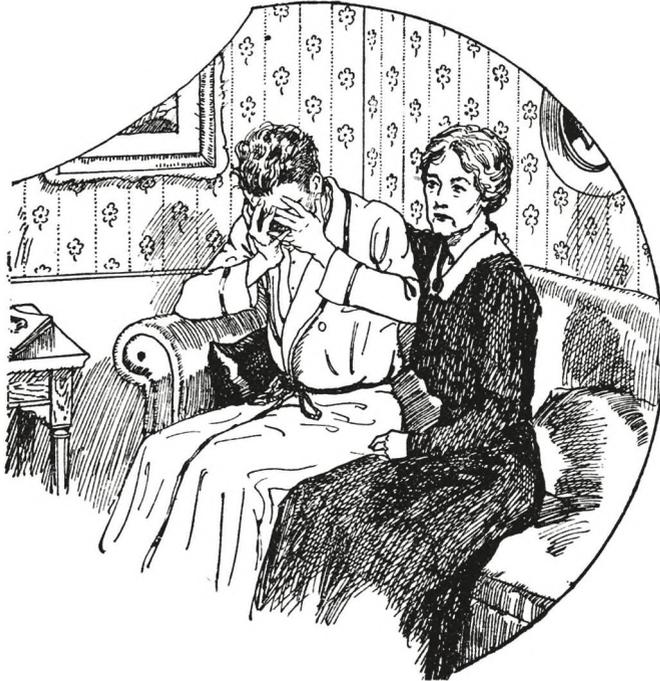
only been living at the Grayling Apartments a year, and it was the first time Martin had been there. He didn't want to go, but he didn't dare disobey. The thing that Mr. Grant wanted him to do was shameful. Martin said he wouldn't do it. Mr. Grant threatened him. Said

he'd tell Mr. Shelton. All this time they were in his bedroom, for Mr. Grant was dressing for dinner. Then suddenly Martin lost his head. He saw the gun that Mr. Grant always kept handy lying on the dressing table. He picked it up and pointed it at him, and told him that if he didn't give him back that paper he'd shoot him. It was just a threat. Martin didn't even understand how to use a gun."

Suddenly Martin sat up, his eyes starting out of his head with terror, as if the whole scene were again vividly present, his voice, shrill and

piercing, filling the room.

"You should have seen Mr. Grant's face. It—it was the face of a devil! He shouted to me to put the gun down or he'd kill me. I was terrified of him. I meant to put it down—on my honor I did. But as I turned I caught my foot in the carpet and I fell forward. Then I heard a shot and a loud groan, and then I watched Mr. Grant sink down, down, till he lay on the floor. I felt I was going mad. I can see him now." His voice rose to a shriek. "His cruel, white face looking up at me, and the blood—blood covering his shirt front. He was dead! And I had killed him!"



Mr. Shelton, who was hard, though I admit it was kind of him to ask you to come to-day, would not keep a man who had had to sign that paper, and he always had to give in."

"What a cruel, horrible thing to do!" Viola broke in, tears running down her beautiful face. "Poor boy, I am so sorry."

She put out a swift hand and laid it on the boy's shoulder. He was lying back now, with closed eyes, and it looked as if he were almost unconscious.

"Well, that awful night Mr. Grant sent for him. He told him to be at his apartment at half past seven. He had

Once again Mrs. Palin was at her son's side as she tried to calm him.

"Don't, Martin. It's all over. You didn't mean to do it."

"I know, I know," the lad moaned. "But the judge wouldn't believe it. He'd send me to the chair." He put his trembling hands up to his throat as though he were choking. "Mr. Maryon. Is the cell an awful place?"

Peter felt a sick pity as he looked at the tortured face.

"Pretty awful."

"Oh!" The word was one long shudder. And then a heavy silence fell on them, a silence in which the ticking of the cheap clock sounded like small, clear hammer blows.

Martin's face was hidden in his hands, but Mrs. Palin was watching Peter with eyes whose gray dimness had suddenly become translucent.

Viola drew in her breath as she looked at her, for the small drab face was transfigured.

"Mr. Maryon" the tense voice made them all start "what are you going to do?"

Peter's blue eyes, filled with perplexity, turned from the waiting mother to the boy on the sofa, whose thin wretched frame was shaken every few seconds by long shuddering sobs.

"I—don't—know."

Slowly she took one or two steps forward. Then she held out a hand in mute supplication. Viola turned away. She could not look at that tortured face with the soul shining nakedly in the transfigured eyes. And suddenly Viola remembered a picture which had impressed her more than any picture she had ever seen, a picture in a Florentine gallery which Roger had shown her on their honeymoon journey. The picture had represented the Mother of Christ standing at the foot of Her Son's Cross. And in her eyes had been the look that was shining now in the eyes of Martin Palin's mother. Viola, who hoped one

day before long to be a mother herself, was broken by it, and a little pitiful sob rose to her throat.

"I think—I shall—do nothing," Peter said slowly, painfully.

"You mean?" The two words were merely a whisper.

Suddenly the tension was broken as Peter flung his head back with one of his old impetuous movements.

"What's the good? I've been through the fire for the death of Winston Grant. What's the sense of any one going through it for a second time? He deserved what he got, anyway. Look here Palin, don't worry. I shan't give your secret away. I am certain it was an accident, just as you say it was. I won't say anything. Here's my hand on it."

He held out his hand, but the sudden revulsion was too much for Martin. For, as he started up with an incredulous look in his staring eyes, he pitched forward and fell in a dead faint.

Peter stooped down and picked up the emaciated figure, which was as light as a child's, and laid it on the sofa.

"Shall I go and get a doctor?" he asked, turning to Mrs. Palin who was already bathing her son's forehead with water which she had poured from a glass on the side table on to her coarse handkerchief.

She shook her head. "No. He has fainted like this before. It's only weakness and the excitement."

"I am sure you would like us to go," Viola said, rising, and looking at the white, pitifully thin face on the sofa.

Mrs. Palin looked up at Peter. "If you could wait for a minute, sir? Martin will be better soon." Already the boy had opened his eyes, and the faint color was ebbing into the ghastly cheeks. "I should like just a word alone with you."

Viola took a step forward. "You stay, Peter. I'll go and wait outside in the car. I have a book and I don't mind how long I wait. Don't hurry. Good-by, Mrs. Palin. I hope your son will

soon be better." And she passed quickly out of the room.

"Don't you think your son ought to get back to bed? He doesn't look fit to be up."

"Yes. I'll help him when you've gone."

"Nonsense, let me help him now. Come, Palin, I can see you are feeling better. Will you let me carry you to your room? You'll be wise, old man, to get to bed."

"Thank you, sir. It's very good of you, but I don't like to trouble you."

"It's no trouble. You know you are no weight. Where shall I take him?" he turned to Mrs. Palin as he gathered the boy, who was a mere bundle of skin and bones, in his arms.

She opened the door and led the way up a narrow flight of stairs, covered with a cheap linoleum, to the first floor and to a front room there.

It was poorly furnished, with merely the barest of necessities, cheap oilcloth on the floor, a cracked looking-glass on the painted chest of drawers, chipped china on a wooden washstand, but the room and the bed linen were spotlessly clean.

As Peter laid his burden down on the bed and, in spite of Martin's protest, took off his shoes and helped him to undress, he thought with a pang at his heart how sordid were the home surroundings of millions of men and women who keep up an outward appearance and make a brave show to the world.

His artist's imagination stirred to the thought of all the little petty economies that the room bore witness must be necessary, to enable a boy like Palin to keep up the outward semblance of respectability and of "black-coatedness," which was essential to secure even as modest a place as that of junior clerk in Mr. Shelton's office.

When at last Martin, clad in his cheap clean pajamas, was lying back on the

pillow, already dozing off in the utter weariness of weakness, Peter felt a lump rise to his throat.

How little equipped was a boy like that to fight an unscrupulous, ruthless man of Winston Grant's type. No wonder that, once in his clutches, he had been unable to escape. No wonder that at last, goaded by fear and hatred, he had seized the gun and had threatened his persecutor's life. It was easy enough to believe his story, for it was impossible to think of Martin Palin as being capable of deliberate murder.

"We can leave him now. He'll be all right. He's going to sleep."

Mrs. Palin stood with her hand on the open door, waiting for Peter to precede her.

Peter gave one last look of pity at the face as white as the pillows on which it lay, and then went downstairs.

"I won't keep you a minute, sir," Mrs. Palin said as she closed the sitting-room door. "But did you really mean you won't give Martin away?"

"Of course I did. There's no sense in telling things now. Your son couldn't stand much more."

"I know, sir, that's just it. It would kill him outright. He's never known a day's health or peace since. You could see what he was like when he saw you and Mrs. Shelton. Do you know, he told me a queer thing some weeks ago. He had to go to Mrs. Shelton's house to get his keys—that was the first time he had seen Mrs. Shelton. He told me when he came back he could almost swear he had seen her in front of him on the staircase of Grayling Apartments that night he—he went to Mr. Grant's apartment."

Peter shook his head. "He must have mistaken some one else for her. Women all dress so much alike now."

"That's true. I told him it must have been his imagination. I don't know how to thank you for what you are doing for Martin."

"That's all right. If you can get him well enough, I should try and take him away. Get him right out of the country, where he can start afresh, have a chance of forgetting things."

She met his eyes in silence, and the words stopped on his lips. He knew she realized there was little chance of his going anywhere.

"Well, well," he said hurriedly, "I hope he'll soon pick up. I'm going abroad myself in a few days, but if there is anything I can do before that, let me know, will you? That is my address." He laid a card on the table.

"Thank you. I——" She stopped. Then she said in a low voice. "I can't find words to say what I want. But if ever you've loved any one in your life you will know what I'm feeling. I can only say that if there is a God, and I believe there is, He'll pay you back for what you've done to-day."

Then she opened the door and, after a moment's awkward hesitation, Peter went out.

Viola laid her book down on the opposite seat when he took his place in the car.

"Well?" she said, turning to him.

"Well?" he answered with a forced smile. "Wouldn't you have done what I did?"

"I don't know," she said slowly. "I am and always have been a coward. I don't think I should have had the courage. But I admire you more than words can say."

"Nonsense," he said gruffly. "If any good could come of giving up that poor boy to justice, I should do it. But nothing could. It was an accident, but the law might not call it that. I think he's awfully ill myself. I shouldn't think he's got very long. By the way, his mother told me he thought he had seen you on the staircase of Grayling Apartments that night, walking up in front of him. I told her it was nonsense. You couldn't have been there."

Luckily for Viola at that moment a car darted out from a side street and nearly collided with her limousine. She gave a sharp cry, for since her accident her nerves were not as good in a car as they had been, and she half started up from her seat.

Nothing happened, the collision was averted by Baines's careful driving, but by the time the little excitement was over, Viola had recovered herself and was able to answer Peter's question calmly.

"How absurd! How could I have been there? Isn't it disgraceful the way cars come dashing out of side streets like that? That is the way accidents happen. Where shall I put you down? Just tell Baines, will you."

After she had dropped Peter at the point he had suggested, she leaned back in the car, still trembling.

Would the wretched past never leave her in peace? Would the memory of that terrible night never go?

Now she understood why that look—half of fear, half of recognition—had crossed Martin Palin's face that day he had come for his employer's keys. If he had seen her—she might have seen him!

But he was not likely ever to speak of it to any one else. Fear on his own account would prevent him from ever mentioning his suspicions to a living soul. Mrs. Palin had spoken of it to Peter, because Peter knew the truth of Grant's death, and Peter had not believed it.

Luckily for her, Peter's trial had not taken place till several months after the fateful January 28th, and it had not occurred to Roger that that was the very night he had had the slight motor accident which had sent him back home a few minutes before she herself and Pauline returned. If it had, he might have wondered how it was that Pauline should state she was dining alone with Fulton when she and Viola had been

supposed to be dining together. But that thought had never occurred to Roger and, after all this lapse of time, there seemed no reason why it ever should.

But the Palins offered a new point of danger, and Viola found herself praying that Martin might recover quickly, so that he and his mother could go away.

It was far too late now for it ever to be possible to confess. All these months of silence, of allowing Pauline to suffer in her stead, would damn her even more than her first offense.

She gave a little sob. However happy she and Roger might be, there would always be one closed door between them. However ardently she de-

sired to have perfect confidence, to have nothing but the truth between them, there was the one chapter in her life of which she might never speak to him. That was her lifelong punishment for her one false step.

She told herself it was hard and cruel. Other women had done far worse than she had done, had achieved what she had only contemplated, and had never suffered for it.

Well, if she could help it, Roger should never know. She owed that to him. Whatever it cost her, she would keep Roger's belief and love to the end. No one was hurt by her doing it, except Pauline. And Pauline had offered and insisted on the sacrifice.

TO BE CONCLUDED.



LOVE'S RADIO

DEAREST," she wrote, "I want you so to-night,
More than I ever wanted you before.
Outside the wind blows down the rain-swept streets
And, creeping in, taps softly at my door.
I long to feel your arms about me, dear,
To sit with you before the cheerful fire
And hear your whispered tenderness, for you
And you alone are all that I desire."

Then quickly spanning dark and wintry ways
Across the winding miles of drifted snow,
From Station LOVE this message
Came flashing to her on love's radio.

"I'm lonely, too, sweetheart, in this dull town
That is so far away from you, and miss
Your soft caress, your smile, you low, sweet voice,
But, most of all, I miss your tender kiss;
Soon I will be coming back to claim you.
Wait for me, dear—the time will soon pass by,
Then we'll forget these weary, dreary days,
And be together always, you and I."

H. H. FARISS.



Desperate Measures

By Jennie Marks

If the Beresford summer home on Long Island had not burned down, Marjorie Beresford never would have met Paul Williams. She might even have married one of the rich and socially prominent young men whom her mother took such pains to thrust in her path.

The house caught fire at night. Marjorie was trapped by the flames in her room. She was already growing weak and dizzy from the smoke, when a huge figure loomed up at the window.

"There, there, don't you worry," said a deep, soothing voice. "Little Willie's come to fetch you down." And he swung her over his shoulder and ran lightly down the ladder.

Marjorie's rescuer was Albert Williams, known in the fire department as "Little Willie" because he was six feet two inches tall, and broad in proportion—a blond, blue-eyed, jovial giant. He modestly disclaimed special credit for the rescue, and refused to consider

a reward; it had merely been done in the course of his duty.

However, Marjorie was not to be put off like that. She visited his house when he was at work, and inveigled his wife into a long conversation. Their house was all paid for, Marjorie learned, so she could not have the pleasure of paying off a mortgage. But there were several installments still due on their automobile, and Marjorie decided that their radio needed to be replaced.

After these small matters had been attended to, over the Williamses' surprised protests, the circus providentially made its appearance. Marjorie, who harbored a secret love for the circus herself, took the three Williams children. She treated them to the best seats, bought them all the popcorn and balloons that their hearts desired, and allowed them to feed the elephants as many peanuts as they wanted to.

"But isn't there something I can do for Mr. Williams himself?" Marjorie asked as she delivered the children to their mother.

"There is one thing," Mrs. Williams admitted, "but Albert is shy about asking you himself."

"Oh, what is it?"

"Well, Albert has a young brother who has just finished college. Albert helped him as much as he could, and for the rest he earned his way through. He studied business administration, or something like that, and he was a good student. But he hasn't found a job yet. He's working as a life guard at Asbury Park for the summer.

"Albert would like nothing better than to see Paul get a good start in business. He thought, since your father is president of such a big insurance company——"

"That there might be a position for him? Of course there will! I'll see to it, if it means something to Mr. Williams. When will his brother be ready to start?"

"The second week in September."

"Hm-m-m!" That exclamation meant: "Just the time when I'm going to start work myself!" Aloud Marjorie said: "You tell Mr. Williams to tell his brother that he has a job."

The Beresford family was distinguished not only for its money, but for the business ability of its head and the good looks of the younger generation. Marjorie was slim and straight. Her eyes were gray, shot with green; her hair had a burnished-copper hue; her chin, while shapely, was firm.

Insurance interested the younger generation but little. Marjorie's sister pleased her mother by making a socially brilliant marriage. Of her two brothers, one thought he was going to be an artist, and spent most of his time in Paris. The other was nominally following in his father's footsteps, but actually he used his knowledge of the laws of chance, gained from his insurance experience, the better to play the races.

Since Marjorie was the youngest, she had ample opportunity to observe and disapprove. At college she studied all the higher mathematics and business courses in the curriculum. On the day after her graduation, she announced: "I'm going to work in the fall as an insurance clerk."

A skeptical "Oh, yeah?" chorus greeted her proclamation. But she repeated it the next day and the next. By the fifth day her eyes were flashing green. Her father knew that green in Marjorie's eyes was a danger signal, whatever it might mean at a railroad crossing. He gave in with good grace.

"Sure you'll go to work if you want to! Aiming to be the first big woman executive in insurance? Which job do you want?"

"I'll start at the bottom, of course, and learn the business from the ground up."

Thus it happened that on the second

Monday in September, two brand-new college graduates reported for work. Marjorie arrived early, because she came with her father. He was usually at his desk at a quarter to nine, much to the distress of his less punctual employees.

Marjorie went promptly to the room where she was to work in the company of two dozen other girls. She was to be known at her job as Marjorie Wedgewood—her full name was Marjorie Wedgewood Beresford. There was no reason, she argued, why she should be known as the president's daughter, and thus be accorded extra privileges. Of course, the truth might leak out eventually. A number of the company's officers, and the employees who worked directly under her father, knew her. But at least the pseudonym would give her a chance to start on her own merits.

Nine o'clock had not yet arrived, and there were only two other girls in the room, when a handsome masculine figure appeared at the door. All the girls' eyes turned naturally in his direction. Marjorie recognized him at a glance—Little Willie's young brother. The family resemblance was unmistakable.

Paul was not quite so tall as his brother—not more than six feet. He was less bulky, too, but broad of shoulder and slim of waist. His light hair was bleached almost white by the summer sun, his face was a ruddy tan, and by contrast his eyes looked bluer than seemed humanly possible.

Perhaps it was the recognition in Marjorie's eyes that drew Paul. At any rate, after a moment's hesitation he walked to her and asked: "Pardon me, could you direct me to Room 417?"

"Why, yes. You can get to it by going through that other door, or else you can go back down the corridor and take the first turn to the left."

Commonplace words their lips were speaking. But their eyes—the blue and the gray-green—were saying other

things far from commonplace, too important for words. Their eyes were saying that life would never be the same again after that chance encounter.

"Thank you," Paul said, still lingering. "I'm starting to work here today," he added hesitantly. "I hope we'll see more of each other."

"We probably will." Marjorie tried to sound casual. "We're on the same floor. Maybe we'll see each other at lunch hour, if you expect to eat in the cafeteria upstairs. The company runs it for the employees, you know."

"Oh, yes—yes, of course I'm going to eat there."

Marjorie had expected to be thrilled by her first day's work. Instead, a pair of blue eyes danced between her and the figures on which she was trying to concentrate. In place of the efficient face of the woman who was explaining her work to her, she kept seeing a handsome, sun-tanned face, and hearing over and over again every word he had spoken.

At lunch hour she hastened to the cafeteria. Fear gripped her—fear that he wouldn't be there. She had learned that all the employees did not have lunch at the same time.

He was not there, either standing in the long line or at a table. Apprehensively she picked up a tray and took her place in line. She had almost reached the end of the long counter when he appeared. Then they did have the same lunch hour! What a relief!

She saved a seat for him beside her own. In a few minutes he joined her. They introduced themselves; Marjorie gave her name as Wedgewood, of course.

"Have you been here long?" he asked.

"Not very," she replied vaguely. She couldn't tell him that she was just starting, because she had shown familiarity with the company and its work.

Conversation was slow at first. Mar-

jorie, however, was experienced enough in the fine points of social conversation to draw him out. It was not long before he was giving her his impressions of his first morning's work. He had already noted two or three points in the work where procedure might be improved.

"Why don't you suggest them to the head of your department?" Marjorie asked. "They like suggestions."

"Don't you think I'd better wait at least a couple of weeks?"

"It might be better," Marjorie agreed seriously.

They saw each other almost every day after that. By the end of a week Marjorie had learned quite a lot about Paul's circumstances. That he had worked his way through college with his brother's aid she already knew. She learned that on his meager beginner's salary he was already contributing to the support of a widowed mother, and saving to pay his debt to his brother. To eke out expenses, he worked every evening for several hours as a life guard and instructor at a great, new, glittering swimming pool in one of New York's biggest hotels.

"But isn't that too hard for you?" Marjorie asked.

"Oh, no, I'm strong," he replied simply.

"I suppose I can't really appreciate what those financial obligations mean," she said thoughtfully. "You see, I have only myself to—to support."

Paul could not ask her to go out with him in the evening. But during the third week of their acquaintance he asked her if she would go to the movies with him on Saturday afternoon. Marjorie thought of the shopping and the tea that were supposed to occupy her afternoon, and promptly answered: "Yes." She had never dreamed that a movie show could be so thrilling—just because Paul was sitting beside her and holding her hand.

It was only a couple of weeks later that her father greeted her cheerfully one evening.

"Well, well, Marjorie, your fireman's brother certainly is making a fine start. He offered a few suggestions that Hurley thought good enough to call to my attention. That boy is going to get somewhere."

"Isn't that nice?" said Marjorie calmly. She didn't dare show how very pleased she was. Nor did she dare tell Paul that the president of the company had expressed approbation, because it would have meant revealing her identity.

That matter of her identity worried her. How would Paul act when he found out?

"But I think," she reflected, "that pretty soon he's going to tell me he loves me. He'll ask me to wait for him till he's made a start. First I'll promise, and then I'll tell him who I am, after he can't back out."

The plan sounded all right, though Marjorie knew there were plenty of chances for hitches in it. All she could do was hope for the best.

It looked as though it was going to be smooth sailing. The morning even came when Marjorie awakened with the feeling: "To-day is the day." She could hardly live through the morning hours, till she met Paul at lunch. His face assured her that her feminine intuition had not deceived her.

In that crowded, noisy cafeteria they sat as though apart from the rest, in an island of blissful serenity. They were still under the spell when they got out of the elevator on their floor. Then Paul spoke.

"Marjorie, there's something—I want to tell you—"

"Oh, Miss Beresford!"

A cruel voice shattering a delicious dream! Marjorie tried to pretend not to hear. But the voice persisted: "Miss Beresford!" There at Marjorie's elbow



Paul's face had turned white. "You are—Marjorie Beresford?" he demanded between clenched teeth.

stood one of the stenographers from her father's office, who had seen Marjorie there many times before she had started working. Marjorie had to turn her head in acknowledgment.

"Your father asked me to give you this." The girl handed her a note..

Paul's face had turned white.

"You are—Marjorie Beresford?" he demanded between clenched teeth.

She could only nod mutely.

"The—heiress—my brother rescued?"
Again she nodded mutely.

Without another word, he turned on his heel and walked away. For a moment Marjorie stood rooted to the spot. Then she ran after him.

"Paul! Paul!" she called. He paid no attention. She could not make a scene. With a heart of lead she walked back to her desk. Only then did she think of looking at the note in her hand from her father.

Marjie, dear, your mother just phoned. She asked me to remind you to stop for her at the Eddingtons' on your way home.

So her life had been ruined over that! With sudden fury she tore the

note into tiny scraps and scattered them vindictively over the floor.

Marjorie had never guessed before what a dull, drab place the world could be—and all because, when Paul Williams saw her, he gave her the briefest of nods and dashed away. Her work and play went on as before, as far as any one could see, but life itself had become hollow and empty.

At first her faculties were totally numbed. Gradually her mind came back into working order. She put it to work on solving the problem: "What shall I do?" For do something she must.

Would a letter help? But he could simply ignore a letter. Should she walk boldly to his desk and start to talk? No, it would be dreadfully embarrassing if he turned his head away and refused to answer. A hundred schemes, more or less wild, occurred to her, but she was obliged to reject them all.

Dreary weeks passed. One evening after work, Marjorie got into the elevator with Helen Bates, the girl who worked at the desk next to hers. A second later Paul walked in. He nodded casually to the two girls.

Helen saw Marjorie's eyes on him, still following him as they all emptied out of the elevator.

"He's good-looking, isn't he?" Helen remarked. "And say, you should see how gorgeous he looks in a bathing suit! You know he's down at the Hotel Atwood swimming pool in the evening. That's some swell pool!"

Marjorie let Helen go on describing the glories of the pool, because her words had planted a tiny seed in Marjorie's mind. It was a scheme as wild as any she had worked out, but it appealed to her. It had been known to work—at least in the movies.

"Of course, some one treated me to the swim there," Helen finished with a giggle. "When I pay for myself, I swim at the Y."

Marjorie had never cared to immerse herself in a lot of cold wet water during the winter. Helen didn't know that, or she would have been surprised to hear Marjorie say: "The pool sounds lovely from your description. I'd love to have a swim there, but I don't know anybody to go with. Suppose you and I go there some evening. Oh, I know it's kind of expensive, but I'll treat."

"Why—uh——"

"Please let me," Marjorie begged. "You must have heard by this time that my father's the president of the company. So you see I have loads of money to spend."

"Yes, I have heard it," Helen admitted. "But——" She studied the tip of her shoe for a minute, then looked up. "All right," she said with a smile. "I'll let you treat. Maybe I'll have a chance to do something for you some time."

"You're doing something for me right now—by going with me."

Helen, of course, couldn't guess the full import of that remark.

Two evenings later, Marjorie Beresford and Helen Bates were among those present at the Hotel Atwood swimming pool.

"There's our blond hero," said Helen with a giggle. "Let's go over and say hello to him."

That suited Marjorie's plan perfectly. She wanted Paul to know that she was there. But she let Helen do all the talking. After a minute they both plunged in. Helen stayed near the edge, taking advantage of her opportunity to improve her stroke under the guidance of so handsome an instructor. Marjorie struck out for the deep water.

Marjorie was a good swimmer, but even a good swimmer can get a cramp. She waited till she happened to be left alone in a deep corner of the pool. She began to flounder and splutter, cried, "Help! Help!" and went down.

The response was instantaneous. A few of the people in the pool began to swim toward her. But not before Paul had shot like an arrow into the water and was racing to her with long, swift strokes.

As she came up and raised her head above the water, she heard an anguished cry of "Marjorie!" escape his lips. She went down again, and then she felt his strong arms drawing her up.

By that time she actually had gotten enough water up her nose to make her groggy. But she was far from unconscious—not too unconscious, at any rate, to hear the words he was saying in the brief moment while he swam with her to the edge.

"Marjie, dearest! Marjie, my love! It's all right—I'm here! Marjie, dearest! Open your eyes and look at me!"

Waiting hands were ready to draw her out of the water and apply, rather superfluously, artificial respiration. It was only a moment before she thought it safe to stir and open her eyes.

"I'm—all right," she assured Helen and the others who were hovering about.

As she spoke, she was straining her eyes for her rescuer. Wouldn't he have to come to her now, kneel beside her, tell her how much he loved her, how desolated he would have been by her loss? Instead, at the first sign of life in her he had disappeared.

There was nothing for Marjorie to do but rest a while, warm in the folds of a woolen blanket, then dress and go home. Helen insisted on going with her, though Marjorie urged her to stay. She felt responsible for spoiling Helen's swim. ♦

Before she left, however, Marjorie at least had to thank her rescuer. He was back at his post by that time in a dry bathing suit.

"Thank you for saving me from drowning," she said. How utterly insipid that sounded! "It seems to be a habit of the Williams family to rescue me—from fire and water."

"We only do our duty," he replied gravely. His face was impassive. Marjorie stared incredulously. Such self-control! Wasn't he going to say anything more? After those passionate words he had whispered when he thought she couldn't hear?

So he would stand on his pride! He would drive her to desperate measures!

"Good-by," she said, and turned away before he could see the green glint that had come into her eyes.

She gave herself and Paul a full week to recover from their experience. The evening came when she lingered on her way home. She knew how long it would take Paul to reach the apartment where he lived with his mother. Ten minutes later, while he would still be eating the hasty dinner he took before leaving for the pool, she telephoned him.

"This is Mr. Hurley's secretary. Something extremely important turned up to-day at the last minute. It must be acted on before to-morrow. Mr. Hurley wants to see every one in the department at eight. . . . It's too bad you have an appointment. Can't you put it off? This is awfully important. . . . All right, I'll tell Mr. Hurley you'll be there. . . . Oh—uh—Mr. Williams, you'll find Mr. Hurley in the president's office."

She hung up the receiver, breathless from the effort of speaking in a voice pitched unnaturally high. She drew a sigh of relief. Paul suspected nothing. Things like that might happen.

"This is important," Marjorie reassured herself. "Important enough to make him take an evening off."

At a quarter to eight, Marjorie stepped out of the one elevator that was running.

"One of the young men who works here is coming up," she told the elevator man. "Bring him to this floor without a word."

"C. K., Miss Beresford," the man promised solemnly.

At eight o'clock to the minute Paul Williams opened the door of Mr. Beresford's office and walked in.

Bang! He jumped. The door had slammed shut behind him.

He took in the situation at a glance. The outer office was empty. But through the open door to the inner office, he could see, sitting behind Mr. Beresford's expansive mahogany desk, the lone little figure of Marjorie.

A wave of angry red surged to his face. He seized the doorknob and shook it. The heavy door was firmly locked. He strode into the inner office and faced Marjorie. She had stood up and was gazing at him with wide green eyes.

"You tricked me into coming here!"

"I had to. You wouldn't talk to me otherwise."

"Let me out!"

"I will not."

"How did you close that door?"

"There's a little jigger hidden away on father's desk. Oh, it won't do you any good to look for it," she told him, as he made a lunge for the desk. "You'll never find it. If you're not careful, you may press something that will set off a burglar alarm. Then a couple of night watchmen will come dashing in. They have keys, of course. You wouldn't want them to find us here together, would you?"

"Gr-r-r-r!" he answered, or at least that was how it sounded. "What are you trying to do—compromise me?"

"Oh, what a dramatic expression! Do go on with the next line. 'Unhand me, villain!' Isn't that it?"

"How dared you do this?" he raged.

Marjorie walked around the desk and up to Paul.

"I'll tell you how I dared. Because I knew you loved me."

The blood drained from his face.

"You—what?"

"I knew you loved me. Oh, Paul, you can't deny it! You can't! You know you love me."

"I—I—I——" he stammered, and was silent.

"There! I knew it! I knew that day when you found out who I was that you were going to tell me you loved me. And last week at the pool, when you were swimming with me, what you said——"

"You heard? Then you were faking that drowning!" The angry red flooded his face once more.

"Yes, I faked it! Now what are you going to do about it?" The color was mounting to Marjorie's cheeks, too.

"Trying to make a fool of me!"

"No! Trying to show you what a fool you are!"

"I'm not a fool!"

"You are!"

"I'm not!"

"You're a fool to stand on your pride like that. You're a fool to think that money ever ought to come between two who love each other. Because, you see, I love you, too." And her eyes were as soft and gray as April clouds. The light of understanding seemed suddenly to burst upon Paul. He gave her one stricken look, then turned his head away.

"You're right, Marjorie," he said huskily. "I am a fool."

"Why, you are not! Don't say such a thing about yourself! You're clever! You're going to do big things. Why, my father has heard of you already!" She reached up and took his face be-



tween her hands. "O Paul, aren't you going to kiss me?"

He did not answer in words. But into his kiss was packed all the yearning of those weeks of separation. There were more kisses then, and Marjorie found that it was bliss just to be held so close in his arms.

"Sweetheart," he whispered finally, "I can't ask you to marry me until—I can stand on my own feet. Will you wait?"

"As long as you want me to."

"And—and I couldn't think of taking any money with you."

"Just as you say," she assented meekly. "But you'll let father give us

a wedding present, won't you? Like furnishing our apartment, for instance?"

"We-ell—I suppose so—if it will please you."

"Oh, I'm going to enjoy so much picking out the furniture for our apartment! You know," she confessed, "when I said I wanted to go to work, father teased me about aiming to be an insurance executive. But then, the first day I worked I met you, Paul dear. And I decided I'd rather be chief executive in your household."

Which confession very properly called for a few more kisses and tender words of love from Paul.



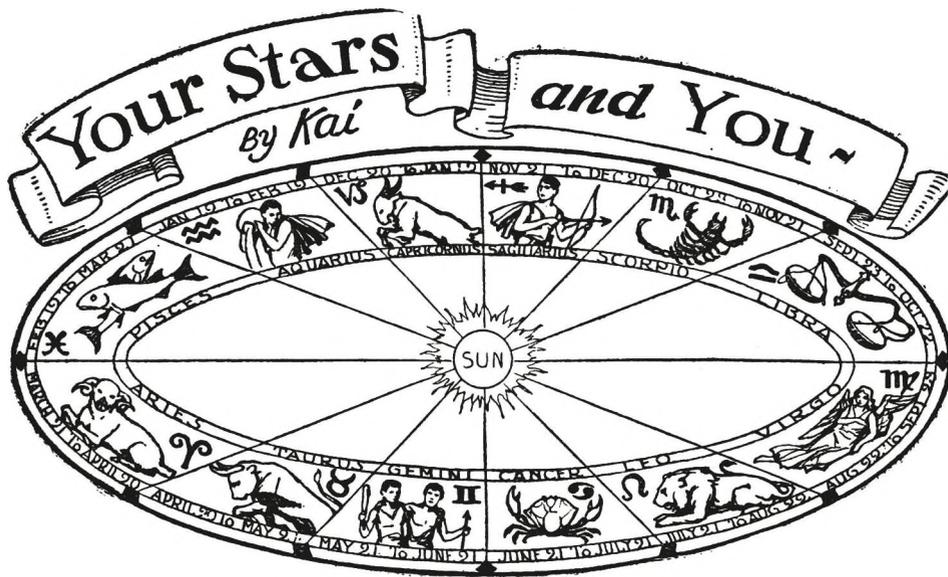
A SONG OF LOVE

I HOLD you in my arms and feel
 The warmth and wonder of your kiss,
 I long like knights of old to kneel
 In thankfulness for so much bliss.

My pulsing heart is singing, dear,
 A song of love's sweet ecstasy,
 And paradise is very near
 With promise of the love to be.

I kiss your throat, your hands and arms,
 The white lids of your eyes so blue,
 And in the rapture of your charms
 I long to kiss the heart of you!

RUBY WOODARD.



YOUR WEEK.

The planets this week are vying with each other to gain supremacy in the heavens—which means a seven-day period of mixed influences. And I mean *mixed!* There is only one answer; keep your equilibrium and judge all things by their true significance. If you have to react to one extreme, bend backward toward the steady and self-controlled side and not toward these upsetting, emotional influences that will make you only more miserable. Did you ever stop to think of the psychology of starting the day with a smile? It seems to me we might apply the suggestion made in a couple of our popular songs. Remember back in the War days when you were told to "Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile"? Now we have a new one that is just about right, I think: "Smile, darn ya, smile!" It is a good old world, after all. Not that I am advocating the Pollyanna theory entirely; I believe in dealing with facts, but there is generally some little detail of your life about which you can be glad.

It is hard to accept changes and eruptions with good grace, but this A. D. 1931 is a year of changes, and you may as well get used to the idea. Do not fight changes. There is a scheme behind our existence, and you have a powerful control over weaving the pattern. You who fail to see how fast we are moving will fail to capitalize on your efforts, new methods, new scientific developments and discoveries, television. Get ready for progress! Perhaps you are not supposed to continue in

old grooves; perhaps you are supposed to combine your experiences of the past and your knowledge in pursuing new ideas and practices that may seem strange to you now, but which will be old stuff five years hence. Sum up your assets; have a frank talk with yourself; improve and progress! The influences this week are energetic and active, conducive to sound and introspective thinking, but you must watch out for instability and inflated opinions and queer happenings.

DAY BY DAY.

**Saturday,
June
13th.**

♄

To-day is stable and expansive. There are conflicting influences in force for the next seven days, but the superficial aspects to-day are sounder and more reliable than any for the next few days. Clear up old relationships; deal with concrete ideas and propositions, with old people, and with matters relating to property. The morning hours until noon are highly favorable for business, and the remainder of the day is excellent for pleasure, love affairs, especially during the late evening hours.

**Sunday,
June
14th.**

♁

A day filled with plans, discussions, and artistic interests. Write letters or engage in other literary efforts. It is a good day for excursions and

- travel and for the ladies to consider changes in and plans for wearing apparel.
- Monday, June 15th.** ☉
Follow your usual routine and consider new plans for expansion of interests. The day is aggressive, favorable, and the influences are idealistic and inspirational. You will need concentration to follow an intelligent and progressive course to-day and to-morrow, but you can turn the events of the day in profitable directions if you use your natural talents and act with objective foresight.
- Tuesday, June 16th.** ♂
Here we are with the force and vagueness of Mars and Neptune strongly affecting our lives to-day and carrying over its influences into our individual affairs for the next few months. It is a good idea to be fairly cautious in your activity to-day and during the remainder of the week in your daily lives. This is true particularly in any dealings that concern the emotions or love affairs. The afternoon is active and pleasant; the evening is adaptable to social affairs and enjoyment. Unfortunately, there are always "ifs" and "don'ts," especially throughout this year. The events of the current period will lead to strange consequences if your affairs are not handled with your best judgment.
- Wednesday, June 17th.** ♄
This is a nervous and irritating day and not favorable for important dealings. Put on the brakes and get plenty of relaxation and rest.
- Thursday, June 18th.** ♃
Another perplexing and irritating day. Expect your affairs to meet with delays and confusion. Be careful of strangers and new propositions. This is not a time to speculate about anything that is intangible. Believe nothing you hear and half you see; hold the solid article in
- your hand before you believe you have it.
- Friday, June 19th.** ♀
To-day is somewhat calmer and more favorable for business dealings. The morning hours are sound, and if your efforts are constructive the day should turn out to your advantage. There are favorable periods for pursuing your general lines of activity in the afternoon and evening. Make the day count in your favor.
- IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN—**
- March 21st and April 20th**
(Aries ♈)
—you Aries folks have to prepare for unexpected financial troubles and restraint if you were born between April 10th and 16th; take no chances. It is a period of change, travel, and upheavals if your birthday occurs between April 6th and 11th. There is activity, both socially and in business if born between March 22nd and April 5th.
- April 20th and May 21st**
(Taurus ♉)
—this is a pleasant, profitable, and enjoyable week for you. There is social activity, affairs of the heart, pleasure, and interest in artistic channels if born between May 19th and 21st, April 21st and 26th, or around May 24th. Changes and travel are in store if born between May 7th and 12th; very constructive and a settled state of affairs if born between May 10th and 16th. This latter group are in line for opportunities, new sources of income, and adjustment of old affairs that have been proving sources of annoyance during months in the past; it is a 'avorable period for you' Take advantage of it.
- May 21st and June 21st**
(Gemini ♊)
—the current week is not so favorable if born between May 22nd and June 1st; inflated ideas and emotional stress should be avoided, and you should walk away from trouble and worry; protect your health. There are good influences for the Gemini folks born between June 7th and 17th, and there will be unexpected returns and developments for you.

June 21st and July 21st
(Cancer ♋)

—this is a week of restriction, financial worries, and domestic difficulties for the Cancerians born between July 14th and 20th, and unfavorable conditions in the lives of you who were born between July 9th and 12th. If born between June 22nd and July 5th, there is pleasure, release from the strain under which you have been living, favorable changes, removals, and travel.

July 21st and August 22nd
(Leo ♌)

—this period is very favorable throughout for the Leo people, except trouble with your love affairs if born between August 21st and 24th. Those of you who are under beneficial planetary influences have birthdays between August 9th and 18th.

August 22nd and September 23rd
(Virgo ♍)

—read the special article about Mars and Neptune in this department this week if born between August 24th and September 1st. The Virgo people who are under stable and beneficial influences from the planets were born between September 13th and 23rd.

September 23rd and October 22nd
(Libra ♎)

—you Librans who celebrate your birthdays between September 25th and 29th may look forward to a pleasant, energetic, and uplifting seven days; you may further your affairs at this time. Act with caution; make wise decisions; do nothing hastily, and reconcile yourself to limited conditions in the home and in partnerships if you were born between October 12th and 19th.

October 22nd and November 21st
(Scorpio ♏)

—you folks will find affairs to your liking during this period of your life, especially if born between November 12th and 17th. Old associations will bring you pleasure and profit, and all conditions surrounding you at this time will be very satisfactory. It is not so pleasant in the department that deals with love interests and emotions for the folks born between November 20th and 23rd, and you should not expect much from social contacts or partners just now. You are under benefic planetary influences if born between October 25th and 29th.

November 21st and December 20th
(Sagittarius ♐)

—you Sagittarians born between November 23rd and 28th should take note of the special article describing the conjunction of Mars and Neptune in the heavens this week, and should guide your lives accordingly. It is a favorable and profitable period in your personal affairs, for travel and in business, especially where new contacts and opportunities are involved, if born between December 8th and 15th.

December 20th and January 19th
(Capricorn ♑)

—the pleasant side of life will be to the fore for you if you were born between December 24th and 28th, although you should not expect unusual developments until the end of 1931. The unpleasant and unhappy angle of life will be with you during the current period if your birthday occurs between January 8th and 15th, and this is not the proper time to try and further your interests along any line; take your life patiently and in small doses.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—all your affairs are in line for progress and improvement, except the love affairs and social interests of you who have birthdays between February 17th and 20th. It is a favorable week for the Aquarians born between February 7th and 12th and between January 21st and 27th. You may feel free to make changes, removals, proceed with new ideas, journeys, and along business channels if born between February 7th and 12th.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♓)

—read and observe the remarks in the special Mars-Neptune article in this week's department if your birthday is between February 20th and 26th; you will have to handle all conditions of your life carefully just now, especially where the emotions and bad judgment are concerned. The present period is most favorable to the Pisceans born between March 8th and 18th, and you have opportunities to be grasped and favorable changes in store if you wish to take advantage of them.

FORCE MEETS LIQUIDATION.

On Tuesday, June 16th, at noon, the force of the planet Mars blends itself with

the powerful rays of Neptune. This conjunction occurs in the zodiacal sign Virgo, and will influence the general trend of affairs and the life of each individual. The most acute influence will fall in the lives of you who were born around August 27th of any year; you Geminians who have birthdays this week and also those born around May 25th of any year, and the Pisceans born near February 23rd. The aspects of this configuration will produce chaos, confusion, nervousness, queer and unusual conditions, emotional reactions, curious fads and enthusiasms, and self-indulgence. This combination of planets will require gentle and intelligent handling. There are only two kinds of planetary influences—positive and negative. This Mars-Neptune combination can be negative to the *n*th degree if the inspirational qualities it confers mentally are not applied toward constructive purposes.

Any strong grouping of planets in the heavens has an effect upon each sign of the zodiac and individuals born under those signs. The effects of this conjunction we are talking about will be felt in the lives of you Geminians born during the current week until your birthday in 1932. You Virgo folks and the Pisceans will have to control all nervous tendencies if you want to protect your digestive processes and your stomachs. Do not indulge in far-fetched illusions and dreams and follow the elusive bubble. This goes for you Sagitarians, too, born around November 27th. Be sure to protect yourself against fraud and deception; watch your diet, and inspect all foods as to freshness and purity. I have no desire to instill fear in your hearts. I am merely suggesting a reasonable amount of caution and the use of common sense.

The Mars-Neptune conjunction will be favorable for the Taureans born near April 25th and the Capricornians born around December 26th. You will have new and inspirational ideas, will enjoy unusual experiences and travels, especially on the water, will meet new friends and form new associations which will add to your enjoyment of life. There will be an increasing interest in metaphysical and occult subjects and investigations.

It is important that all people under the unfavorable influence of this conjunction avoid impractical ideas, indulgence in peculiar associations, too great concentration on the emotional side of life, abnormal living conditions, and any tendency to alleviate pain or nervousness through sedatives

or narcotics. Be careful that your actions do not lead to scandal or public criticism, if such a condition is distasteful to you. The constructive tendency will be toward greater appreciation of art and a higher standard of living, based on idealistic conceptions.

Summing up, it is force meeting liquidation—energy scattered over a wide territory; "off with the old and on with the new"; a lessening of will power in those who live negatively; inspiration and increased knowledge for those who build the plan of life on secure foundations and along constructive lines.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

F. L. P., born March 8, 1890, in Illinois, between seven and eight in the morning: Yes, you have a change coming in your life. There was evidence of this the latter part of May, but the conditions will become more apparent to you in July. November is a favorable month for you. This change will come to you through a man closely associated with your life. This will not be marriage, and you will be foolish to let your heart strings become involved until after the first part of 1933. Stay away from men. They will cause you only heartache in the next two years. Your best bet is business, and if you are offered a new opportunity, take it.

Your influences are not favorable for marriage, Miss E. N., born December 29, 1909; man born August 1, 1906. You are in for an unpleasant emotional time of it this summer, and you are not entirely free from disturbing rays of the planets until January, 1933. There will be delays you have not expected in connection with this marriage, but I believe you will marry the young man in the fall, probably in October or November. Your date gives you a chart that combines well with that of this young man, but you have a year and a half ahead of you when your progress will be slower than you anticipate, but not uneventful. There will be many changes and some difficult problems to be met. Knowing this in advance should enable you to prepare your foundation carefully, and you must not be discouraged over what I am telling you. You will save yourself a lot of grief if you keep your feet on the ground

and plan shrewdly for the future, instead of viewing your coming marriage from a purely emotional angle.

Mrs. L. H. B., born February 13, 1902: You are certainly frank to admit it was your fault in this marital tangle you experienced. I admire any one who will admit it when they have been wrong, and you have probably profited by your distressing experience. After 1931 you will find your life improving generally. The move from the West is a good one, and your influences are favorable for a change this year.

Mrs. M. W., born April 15, 1878, in Germany, between one and four p. m.: I'm afraid you will have to accept this as a year of change and arrange your life to conform to the circumstances. You should be very careful in all financial dealings until the spring of 1932.

Mrs. E. C. J., May 7, 1910, and Mrs. A. D., February 13, 1911, in South Dakota, forgot to send me their husbands' birth data. I cannot answer them until I have complete information. D. M., August 21, 1905, forgot to send me her boy friend's data.

This is no time for you to become discouraged, Mrs. E. R. S., born January 8, 1891, the hour unknown. You have been through a stringent set of circumstances during last winter and the spring months, and you are in line for upsetting conditions the remainder of this year, especially during July and August. Take no chances of any sort, and stop being sorry for yourself. The past is gone; the present is here to be met with courage, and the future lies just ahead, with changes and interesting experiences. The world is moving too fast and holds too many attractive possibilities to regard life pessimistically. You Capricorn folks would be happier if you forced yourselves to consider other interests except those which center around your own personalities and lives.

Mr. G. W., born June 12, 1892 at noon, in Illinois: Your personal letter to the editor of *Love Story* has been answered. Replying to your astrological query, each planet has special and important significance in a chart, and when you make your chart, be sure and include Saturn and Mars. Yes, you are a Gemini man, and will find astrology interesting and helpful, if you will use your concentrative powers in studying

this science constantly and avoid procrastination and scattering your mental forces in various directions. Here are the positions of your planets taken from the Ephemeris (astronomical planetary positions) for the year 1892: Sun in twenty-two degrees of Gemini, Moon in sixteen degrees of Capricorn, Neptune in nine degrees of Gemini trine to Mars in fourteen degrees of Aquarius. The planet Uranus is in Scorpio, Saturn in Virgo, Jupiter in Aries, Venus in Cancer, and Mercury in Gemini. If I can be of further help to you along astrological lines when you have made further progress in your studies, I shall be glad if you will let me know.

Your letter is very constructive and complimentary, L. H. B., born May 23, 1878, time unknown, in Kentucky. Thanks so much for all your good wishes. As far as I can ascertain from the general positions of your chart—not having your time of birth—there isn't any reason why you cannot succeed with your project of lecturing on color psychology and personal success. Your foundation of study and experience will be most advantageous, and your personal chart positions for 1931 are favorable. I would suggest you try to keep your lectures as practical as possible. At this period of human progress, people like to handle facts and tangibilities. The fall months this year will be more favorable for you than this summer.

I am mighty glad to know you like this department and are a regular reader, Miss A. T. P., born April 16, 1911, in Massachusetts, time unknown. Yes, I know you want to get married, but I would not like to see you do it, not this year, anyway. If you can sanely tell me any good reason why you should tie yourself up for life just at this time, I'll be glad to hear it. Marriage limits a woman in realizing her ambitions, and you have very definite ideas about the things you hope to accomplish in the next five years. There isn't anything wrong with this young man whose date you send, but he isn't the man for you, and if you are determined to take on responsibilities, I advise you to look farther for a more suitable partner.

Mrs. M. N., whose son was born April 23, 1923, at five thirty p. m., in Ohio: I suggest you train your boy in art and an appreciation of the rhythm and vibration of music. His leaning for the outdoors will be a valuable asset to him in furthering his

artistic inclinations. He is a child of the earth, and perhaps you have a great potential landscape painter for a son. Who knows? I suggest you encourage his love for beauty.

Miss E. D. Y., born June 6, 1909, one o'clock in the afternoon: I think your attraction for the man born December 31, 1911, is temporary and that you would not find him a congenial life partner. Sorry to hand you the bad news, but it is better for you to know the truth, isn't it?

You should feel happy, more or less, E. N., born February 2, 1909, at two thirty a. m., in Iowa, that the love affair is ended. The date of the young man you send shows he is in line for erratic action and unexpected happenings in his life. He should not be married at this time, and it would have been a bad idea to jump into this marriage. His economic position is too uncertain for the next few years, and there is constructive work for you to do personally. Secretarial work would be a good line for you, or working in a shop that deals with sports apparel.

Comparison of dates of girl born June 16, 1908, in Maryland, at seven a. m., and man born September 5, 1905, in Germany: I do not like this combination of dates, Mary. I would like to see you do something else besides getting married right now. Look for a spiritual understanding, physical compatibility, an enjoyment of similar pleasure, and the same material outlook as yours when you choose the man you hope to live with the greater part of your life. You are restless and ambitious, and I do not think married life will live up to your expectations.

How right you are, J. L. L.! With your birth date—January 12, 1885—everything is indeed "mixed up." You are in the group who were born under the sign Capricorn, and present relations with men must be very unsatisfactory for you. Thank you for all the kind wishes and remarks, and the same to you; but I do not advise re-marriage for you in 1931.

Editor's Note: Questions for this department are answered only through *Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine*. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine.

Mrs. M. B., born August 8, 1892, at nine a. m.: Your influences for this year are favorable personally, but you must safeguard your finances the latter part of December, 1931, in January, 1932, and you will have unexpected expense during July and August, 1932, in May and December, 1933; better prepare for this now. Your general characteristics are temper and a warring tendency between your disposition and your outward personality. You are very critical, too, and you should not allow details to worry you unnecessarily. Other qualities are loyalty, generosity, and a keen interest in your fellow man and hopes for the good things of life to those who surround you. Your dominant idea is "I will," regardless of consequences, and this is apt to lead you into trouble at critical periods of your life.

Yes, ma'am, you are right; the folks born around the middle of October are "in for it" during 1931, as you express it. Well, don't worry; 1932 isn't very far away, and conditions will begin to improve after the turn of the present year. Thank you for your letter with all the kind remarks about my work and your enjoyment of the stories in this magazine. November, 1931, is your best month of this year.

Mrs. A. K., April 5, 1904, at six p. m.; husband, September 19, 1898; and Mrs. E. H. G., August 6, 1896; husband, September 25, 1882, would like a complete horoscope reading for themselves and their husbands. I have explained several times that it is impossible to give a complete reading in these pages, as our space is limited.

K. F. F., October 25, 1909, West Philadelphia, does not tell me what kind of business she is interested in.

Mr. J. R. M., November 1st, Spain, forgot, his year of birth.

C. B. C., December 2, 1869, and Mrs. E. R., July 6, 1904, child September 3, 1925, at Raleigh, both talk about making changes but tell me nothing of the nature of the changes they wish to make.



The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS

Miss Morris will help you to
make friends



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

+ + +

RONNY knows everything. At twenty-two he has seen life for himself. A college boy in the greatest city in the world, he observes people, studies the deepest subject on earth—human nature. Think of the drama he has seen as information clerk in a railway station, the meetings and partings—sons hurrying to a mother's sick bed, boys and girls arriving home from boarding school, traveling salesmen boredly looking up trains, shining-eyed newlyweds starting off on honeymoons. You stay-at-homes who reach for life and never find it, stretch out your hands to Ronny. With his sympathy and understanding he has life at his very finger tips!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find a few Pals for a desperately lonely young man. I'm twenty-two, a student here in this melting pot, New York, although I'm going home to Michigan as soon as my work here is finished. I'm athletic, tall, dark, have been twice to England, where I was born, and have lots of dramatic experiences to relate. I was once an information clerk in a railway station, and lived a lifetime in that year. Boys, you'll find me true and loyal. RONNY.

Out for the unexpected.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-three, and sometimes get desperate for something to do. I'm a housekeeper, and have worked in the same place five years. I love dancing, movies, hiking, and swimming, and crave excitement all the time. I've traveled across the country and am all ready to write of my strange experiences.

MARY SUNSHINE.

The girl with the broken-hearted voice.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: A lonesome girl in southern California would like to have some real Pals. I'm twenty years old, have dancing as my hobby, and occasionally sing blues over the radio. I play the piano, speak Spanish and French, and am lonesome now that my father and mother are in Canada.

EUGENIA.

A daughter of the maple leaf.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an Irish girl with dark hair, twenty-four years old and fond of sports. I live way up North in Canada, and will write in either French or English to my Pals. Girls, hear about our Dominion, and take me for a friend.

STELLA OF CANADA.

Learn about life in high, thrilling places.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here I am in the Rocky Mountains, hoping to find Pals, especially those around Arverne, New York. I can tell interesting stories of mountain life, and hope you girls will give me a chance. I'm married and want to hear from all of you.
IDAHO JEAN.

In the midst of life and death.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Missouri bachelor of thirty-five, a male nurse, living in a hospital, surrounded by the moans of the sick. I have jet-black hair and steel-gray eyes, and I can promise all you boys true friendship.
NURSE ERNEST.

A model farmer's wife.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a married woman of eighteen with a baby son? I live on a large farm, and do everything a farmer's wife should. I'm interested in drawing and music, and can tell all about modern rural life.
FARM-GIRL AUDREY.

Small, vital, and warm-hearted.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room in your Corner for a girl with dancing feet? I'm not very big, but I'm full of pep. Come on, girls; see what a true friend I'll make.
TOOTS OF TORONTO.

High-school days in a hot, stormy country.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl with black eyes and dark wavy hair, seventeen years old, and in my second year of high school. I live in Chihuahua, Mexico, and will try to make my letters interesting to all of you.
MARIE OF MEXICO.

The truth about a famous star.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl living in Brooklyn, unable to go to dances or engage in sports, as I'm a shut-in at present. I'll tell my Pals all about Clara Bow, our flaming red-headed Bay Ridgeite.
EAGER BETTY.

Where cotton grows and cowboys ride.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll hear the call from way down in Texas on the farm? I'm

a woman twenty-nine years old, married, and have three lively boys and a lovely little girl. I'll be watching for the postman.
NONA.

She needs Pals more than the rest of us.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I sure would appreciate Pals, for I have never had any real true fun like other girls in their 'teens, for I can't walk as most girls do. I'm interested in everything, and will be thankful if you girls will write.
HATTY.

Young and disillusioned.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm interested in hearing from young men, especially those of Polish descent. I've tried friendship in my own Massachusetts town, but I've found that it vanishes when your money does. I'm a boy twenty-five years old, and would be glad to have true Pals.
THOMAS.

The winter playground of America.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a dark-haired, blue-eyed German girl, and have not been in this country long. I'm living in Miami Beach now, and love dancing and the movies. Who'd like to be the Pal of a little studio girl?
ERIKA.

In the midst of scenic grandeur.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a poor working woman of forty-five, and don't have time to go out much. I'd enjoy hearing from all who care to send a little cheer to a Rocky Mountain Pal.
BERTHA OF UTAH.

She'll bring life to your doorstep.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm an eighteen-year-old girl, attending college, full of pep, and fond of dancing, airplanes, and anything exciting. I've traveled extensively, and will write all girls who like to hear about thrilling adventures. I've had my share.
MISS ADVENTURE.

She does everything well.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-six, with brown eyes and black hair, read a great deal, and sometimes write—mostly poetry. In the summer I'm usually a counselor at camp, and I dance, swim, play basket ball, love to ride horseback, and, in general, am an all-around girl. Who'll let me be her friend?
JUST EDYTHE.

Seventeen and shut in.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please help a sick girl get some Pals? I'm seventeen and as lonely as can be. I've been bed-ridden for almost a year now, and hope you girls of the Corner will send me a little sunshine.

BLUE VIOLET.

Life on a tropical island.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May a Manila girl step into your Corner? I'm seventeen, with black hair and eyes, fond of sports and movies. I'd love to have friends in the States, and will tell girls all about these lovely Philippine Islands.

ANTONIA.

She feels her loss keenly.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of sixteen, with brown hair and eyes, and I'm very lonely at present, for my dear mother passed away two months ago. I love books and outdoor sports, and hope you girls will be willing to cheer me up.

CLEVELAND BOBBIE.

Interested in the strange and psychic.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of thirty, with brown hair and eyes, the mother of a boy of nine. I'm fond of baseball, bowling, astrology, palmistry, and reading. Girls, let's get together and talk a while.

OCCULT.

Side by side with her husband in business.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Chicago wife, love flowers, birds, and beautiful things, and would like to hear from girls who understand such things and will write about them. I've traveled, am twenty-two, married three years, and am now helping my husband make a go of a little candy store we've opened. Everybody, please write.

CHICAGO DOLLY.

A beauty-loving traveler.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who wants mail? I'm a much-traveled married woman of thirty-two, ready to write about my trips all over the United States. I'm now living in California, but expect to go to Virginia soon. I always try to drink in all the beauty this world offers. Please, girls, write.

VYVETTE.

Life, personality, the excitement of temperament!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen with reddish-brown hair and sea-green eyes. I'm always bubbling over, full of moods, and one of my favorite pastimes is writing a regular news sheet. Who'd like to hear about this wild West? I'll keep things going at a fast rate.

OREGON SUE.

Mother first and last.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young woman twenty-three years old, mother of three adorable babies. I spend every evening at home, when my babies are in bed, and would like a host of Pals. I'm not living with my husband, and have as my hobbies, sewing, cooking, and flower raising. I'm waiting for your letters.

FRANKIE.

A seasoned ocean traveler.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a man twenty-seven years old, Swiss-born, and have been to Europe twice, having seen France, Switzerland, and Germany. I can speak French and German, and love the theater, music, and good times. Boys, don't forget

SWISS ALBERT.

Spending her youth in bed.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl who's very anxious to make friends of any age. Owing to a severe illness, I have been a shut-in for almost four years. I'm now in a hospital, and expect to be there for some time. Who'll brighten my life with letters?

HOSPITAL GIRL.

A true woman of the home.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen, married, and alone a great deal of the time, as my husband is a silk weaver and works nights. I love to cook and take care of my little apartment. I hope to hear from all girls, both married and single.

WENDELL'S WIFE.

Out on the Canadian West coast.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a twenty-one-year-old girl, fond of dancing and sports. I've had interesting experiences as a maid-waitress, and am now a clerk in the quiet town of Prince Rupert, in British Columbia. I'll write to every girl who writes to me.

ALVINA.

Step into the studio.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl eighteen years old, with blue-green eyes and brown curly hair. I play the violin over WGY, and will tell you lots about a broadcasting studio.

RADIO MARY.

She has her career.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room for a middle-aged business woman in your Corner? I live in an apartment all alone, and would like to hear from every one. I'm full of pep, and will answer all of you.

SADIE.

She'll respond to your mood.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Detroit girl, just waiting for every one's letters. I'll shed tears with any one, and I'm ready to laugh at the world with any one, so come in, folks, and let your letters pour in. I'm especially interested in traveling, and hope to swap experiences.

LAUGHTER.

Leading a quiet life in a wild country.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of twenty-two, flat on my back in a hospital bed in a strange city, and I'll be here many months, I'm afraid. I'm interested in everything and everybody, and will make my letters long, if only you'll write.

TEXAS GYPSY.

He's sailed the seven seas.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of twenty-three, very lonely, living at present in

Montreal. I've traveled all over the globe during the last five years, and am fond of all kinds of sports and fun.

ROLLING STONE.

An easy-going lover of life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a blond girl of fourteen, with blue eyes and a mild disposition. I'm not fat—just healthy—and I glory in living. I like to write and read poetry and stories, and I sing. Everybody, from fourteen to a hundred, please write to

GIRL OF SMOKY CITY.

Her vocation is home-making.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-one, and have two adorable children. I love anything connected with the home. Won't somebody write to me, especially brides, brides-to-be, and mothers?

HAPPY WIFE.

The manly art of self-defense.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a twenty-year-old boy and a good boxer. I have been boxing for five years, and know all about the ring. Who wants to hear about it and be my friend besides?

FIGHTER JOE.

Great big beautiful eyes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of sixteen, with jet-black wavy hair and brown eyes which won a prize in a big-eyes contest when I was a baby. I've been abroad a few times, and would like to hear from girls in their 'teens.

PRIZE EYES.



The Friend In Need

Department

CONDUCTED BY

Laura Alston Brown



HERE is another poor child who, due to the improper kind of home life and lack of understanding on her parents' part, got mixed up with the wrong crowd. Now she realizes her mistake and wonders if she can come back.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I wish you would print this letter to show girls what mistakes they make in keeping company with married men. I live in a little town and work in a factory for my living. I live with my mother and father, and I have a brother and sister.

My father was always very strict with us. He would never let us go out with boys and girls of our own age to have a good time. I can truly say that at times I hated him. I said that I would have my own way some day, and I have had it. But what a mistake I have made! And then came the auto accident that ruined my life. I think if it hadn't been for that accident I never would have been going around to-day with a married man. I was only seventeen then when he ran into me with the car. He paid all my doctor bills and we became good friends, and he did everything for me. Took me and my girl friends on long rides. And then we went out alone. I thought that I loved him. And he said he loved me, too. I know he did, and he still does, so he says. He always drank, and many times I have had to drive the car to prevent it from killing us both.

I can truly say for myself that I was a good girl then. But I went from good to bad and from bad to worse. I got in with a lot of girls, and we drank and smoked and stayed out all night and thought it was a joke, but I see now just how foolish it all was. Everybody talked about me and sneered at me. Of course, I don't blame them now, but I would laugh and say I didn't care. I'd give them something to talk about. But now I see what a fool I was. I don't care for him any more. I don't want to drink or

smoke. I don't want to go for rides and stay out all night. I don't want that kind of a good time any more.

I would like to have a good, clean time and some good, clean friends. But that will never be for me. The girls and boys I know won't have anything to do with me.

I hope other girls will read this and think before they let it go too far. Dear Mrs. Brown, I hope that you won't think too hard of me.

DAMAGED GOODS.

No, dear child, I shall not think hard of you at all. You have been foolish and reckless, but you now realize that so-called wild parties and fast friends and drinking, petting, and staying out all night is far from real fun, although it may have seemed so at the time. And because you realize all this, you have much to hope for. You know that self-respect should be held above the price of many good times, and that the wrong kind of friends are undesirable and uninspiring. Youth will not listen to common-sense advice from "old-fashioned" parents, and consequently must sometimes pay a bitter price.

You say that the kind of boys and girls you would like to make friends with will have nothing to do with you. Perhaps if you could arrange to go to another town, one not too far away so that you could come and visit your family, you would be able to build anew. You could live at a girls' club or board with some nice, quiet family. You could gradually join socials and meet young people. You should try to build anew, dear, for it is never too late to try again and live a clean life.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a young girl of twenty and I have been going with a boy of twenty-one for the past eighteen months steadily, and off and on for the past five or six years. I love him, and he says he loves me. Several times, when he has been drinking, he has told my mother he would never let me marry any one else. Yet he goes with boys I don't want him to go with, and stands me up nearly all the time. He has made arrangements on different occasions for us to be married, but when the time comes he either finds an excuse to get mad or puts it off. I have dropped all my old friends for him, and also was forced to leave my home on his account, but he refuses to give up any of his friends. He is so now he doesn't want to come where I stay. If I quit him and go out with other men he makes me quit them and go with him again and threatens me. What should I do? Won't you please advise me?

I have tried everything I know, but it doesn't do any good. I wrote and told him we'd quit seeing each other for a month, and then, if he really loved me, we'd get married. Even that failed. He said he would come over whenever he wanted to and that I couldn't quit him. So please give me your advice. If he doesn't care anything for me, don't you think he should tell me and let me go with other boys?

WORRIED.

What does he mean that you *couldn't* break with him if you thought it best to do so. Have you so little will power that you let him do as he likes, make ready to marry you and then change his mind to suit his mood? Where is your pride, child? Are you going to let love make a doormat out of you? Letting a man play fast and loose with you doesn't further your plans for the matrimonial venture. Either he loves you and wants to marry or doesn't love you and is feeding his vanity with the idea that you're a girl with whom he can do as he pleases.

Make up your mind, Worried. Do you want to marry him? If so, lay down the law for a change. Either he becomes rational and reasonable or gives you up. If he can't straighten up and fit the part of a desirable prospective bridegroom, give him six months' time

to do it in. If he won't listen to reason and persists in being temperamental, give him the air, find another boy friend, and forget him. If you are firm, he will change—if he loves you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: In the year of 1924, in April, I met a girl whom I liked very much. I saw her again, and later we became sweethearts and married. We were both raised in the country, and I had known her for some time before we became acquainted. I always thought she was really good-looking, and after we were married we lived very happily for four years, and I am now the father of two children—two boys.

My wife was always true to me and seemed to love me, but while I was working one day repairing an auto for a man on the pike near my home, she left me, and when I heard of her again she had another man. I have lived all alone ever since, and we have been divorced. But now she has asked me to take her back. What do you think about it?

LACY.

I think that your wife has had a lesson and is eager to return to the husband and babies she left behind. Why not be generous and give her another chance? From your letter, I feel that you still love her. Way down deep she probably loves you and the children, or she would not ask to be taken back. She realizes she has made a mistake and left the things that were worth while for something that glittered with tinsel brightness.

Give her another chance. She will probably make you a better wife. But if you do, and if you are happy, as I have no doubt you could be, don't ever mention the past, because it would take some of the sweetness away from your newly acquired happiness. Life is a riddle; we do not always understand why we act upon the impulses that govern us so strongly sometimes that we plunge headlong into some foolish action we later regret with an aching heart.

Try to understand how you would feel if you wanted another chance very badly, and what it would mean to you if it was granted.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I make a comment on Happy Mickey's letter? She says, "Girls, don't tell your past." Listen, Happy Mickey, how would you like it if, after you were married, some one were to tell you something about your husband's past life, something that you never knew before? It would probably hurt you terribly. Wouldn't you have felt better if he had told you himself, instead of some busybody telling you? If a girl loves a boy enough, she will forgive him for any wrong he may have done. I think a man or woman would wish to know the past of the other. My future husband knows all my past, and if I had done anything I shouldn't have, I would have a guilty conscience if I didn't tell him.

Isn't it a fact that if you didn't tell your past, sooner or later it would get out to your husband—or wife—and that's what causes a lot of divorces nowadays.

When you hear it secondhand it is always exaggerated. Am I right or wrong, Mrs. Brown?

DOT OF STOCKTON.

Discussions are still going strong on the vital point—to tell or not to tell. Women, my dear Dot of Stockton, are much more forgiving than men. Haven't you seen it around you? I think women are more unselfish in their love. An engaged man will be dating some girl and having a grand time, and then his fiancée finds it out. What happens? She forgives him, because she loves him. Another engaged man will be madly in love with his fiancée and then in some way happen on a hint concerning the girl's past. At once he is highly indignant. Did she take him for a fool? A man doesn't marry *that* kind of a girl. And where is his love? It seems to dissolve into injured vanity. He then dates other girls, and nine times out of ten marries and becomes a happy, satisfied family man.

There are men who have understanding of human weaknesses, and are generous in an unselfish manner, and not because it pleases them to appear generous. They forgive and truly forget, but these men are rare. So you see, Dot, it still remains a question of whether to tell or not to tell. What do

our men readers think on the subject? Would you prefer to be told and have your romance spoiled or remain in ignorance and be happy?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am so upset I don't know what to do. It seems, I just must tell my troubles to some one. I am a young married woman of eighteen, and I have the sweetest little nine-month-old son in the world.

There has been so much in your department about not telling of one's past. How I wish my husband had told me before we were married, instead of waiting until now. He was in love with a girl before he met me, but she went away, and his father burned all of his letters to her and all of her letters to him, so that each of them thought the other had forgotten. But about three months before my baby was born she came back to our town. Of course, she is married, too, now; but that doesn't matter. The truth came out then, and my husband is still crazy over her, and he says he can't forget.

Now, Mrs. Brown, I would do anything in the world to make my husband happy, because I am in love with him. But it seems to me that the son, "I don't want your kisses if I can't have your love," is true on my part. I either want to be whole hog or none.

We were talking about it, and we decided to write to her and have her come down here, and then my husband could choose when he saw us together. I feel that if he loves her enough to give up his baby and me for her, he loves her too much for me to try to keep him, although it will break my heart to lose him. I feel that it is better to do so now, while the baby is too young to know and understand. He said that I would find some one whom I could love and who would make a home for me and the baby. But he made me promise to still be friends, so he could see the baby. I think that is all right, but the baby is never going to call him "daddy."

I know I will never love any one else, but I can't keep my husband against his will, either.

From the way she talked when she was here, she still loves my husband. He asked me to be friends with her. I tried, but she snubbed me and wouldn't even speak.

I feel it is better for me to suffer alone with my baby than that all of us should suffer because of one person's misdoing.

I want you to tell me if I am doing right. I feel as though I am half crazy sometimes.

Oh, how I love him! Perhaps God will show me a way out. I hope so.

BROKEN-HEARTED.

It would seem that some men lose their reason, as well as their sense of honor. What good will it do your husband to break up your home and part because of this woman? She is married, you say. Well, then, she isn't free to marry him, even if he were free to do so. Both your husband and this woman are selfish, thoughtless, and most inconsiderate, and both forget their respective duties to the persons they are married to. And they call it love. Maybe, but I like to think of love as unselfish and self-sacrificing.

I like to believe that real love prompts us to do what is right, and not to cause unhappiness to those who do not deserve to suffer; I want to believe that love does not make us forgetful of duties that should be regarded as sacred, such as marriage ties.

I'll admit there is the possibility that they do love each other, but need they break up two homes, rob one child of its father's love, to satisfy their own appetites for greedy happiness? You say you would give up your husband to this woman, even if it breaks your heart to lose him. That's love, unselfish love. But is he worth such a sacrifice on your part if he is willing to leave you and the baby? I would suggest that you make no concession. Much as you might feel you want to for his sake, don't agree so readily to his plans of leaving you and the baby. Perhaps if you will try to stand up and fight for your rights and his affection, he will slowly come to his senses.

He has a good deal of courage to ask you to be friends with the woman who doesn't think of any one's feelings but her own. Since you both love him, are you going to let him go to her without a fight? You have the greater claim; isn't your happiness worth fighting for?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: In reading your magazine I get so much help and pleasure out of your section. My case is rather unusual, and I hope you can assist me. I am the daughter of a wealthy surgeon and a university graduate. I have always had everything I desired and have always been happy, carefree, and tried to do my part to help those less fortunate than myself. I can be as serious as any one when necessary, and I know how to act when with others.

Now to my story. I fell desperately in love, three and one half years ago, with a poor boy, and after six months we were married. We had a quiet home wedding and began housekeeping the next week. I was as happy as one could be in our little home. We bought a home, and my parents furnished it. His people came to visit us, and his father has always been a regular sot; he spends every dime he gets on liquor. His sister-in-law was honey-and-pie the first few months; then she began to tell stories on us—that we did not get along, et cetera. His mother is dead, but his father has remarried, and they fight like cats and dogs, and she sent him to live with us, as we had more room than the rest. He spent four months here and nagged from daylight to dark, and kept us in a heated argument all the time, besides being half drunk and spending more than half my husband's salary.

We moved, and my parents begged us to live near them and maybe the other delegation would stay away. My father put my husband in business, and his brother was also out of work so he gave him an interest. Things went along splendidly for over a year; then the old man came to visit us. He spent four weeks; then I thought it right for the others to take him, as we were saving every dime we could to put into our business. The other sister-in-law was very nice about it and took him. After more than six months we discovered that the brother had swindled three thousand dollars from us, and the old man was in it, too. Then sister-in-law No. 1 started her lies again. Of course, some people are narrow-minded enough to believe anything, and some of the people here added a few words, and we were awful, in their estimation, for putting the brother and father out. The truth is not known outside the family. Every one thinks we made them get out.

After all I have taken, Mrs. Brown, I think my husband should feel more drawn toward me, and we have a precious baby boy, eight months old. My husband thinks the world of him, and I know he really loves me, but he never tells me so. He seldom kisses me

good-by, and I am afraid his love is growing cold. What can I do to keep his love, and how can I attract him as I used to? I keep a lovely home, always have good meals, stay dressed to please him, and go anywhere he wishes, so please suggest what I can do.

MRS. B. C.

We can never put our fingers on what it is that draws people together or makes them grow apart, my dear. But don't stress your imagination that your husband's love is growing cold. He may be preoccupied and busy, worried by business matters, and some men do get over the honeymoon stage and feel it is no longer necessary to keep on declaring their love and continuing with their love-making. If he forgets to kiss you good-by, you call him back and kiss him; don't feel you are too hurt or too proud to remind him.

There is no set formula for keeping another's love. Be your own sweet self, dear. I am sure, from what you say, that you are doing all you can to keep up your side of love. Don't give up being agreeable and do not constantly have the thought in mind that he no longer loves you, or loves you but not as much. You make yourself needlessly miserable. Despite your troubles, you have your husband, baby, and home, so park your fears on the doorstep and don't magnify molehills. As for what others think about your treatment of the in-laws, don't let their opinion worry you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am seventeen and tired of living. Were it not for my parents, I would have taken the coward's way out. I am not living with my parents, as they are not in town.

For the last four years I have been secretary to the president of a company. I have my fair-weather—the only kind there are—friends, but they do not know me very well—the real me.

Men get tired of listening to me, for the simple reason that I don't believe anything they say. No man is faithful to any woman, be she his wife, sweetheart, or what have you. They seem to be able to fool girls into marrying them, though. But you have the an-

swer in your column. One out of every fifteen is happy.

Is there any way for me to get a nice outlook on life and at least a decent one with regard to men? ONE OUT OF MANY.

My dear child, have you ever looked up the word "optimism" in the dictionary? Anyway, it is something that you seem to need very, very badly. You are perhaps blue and discontented and bored with the monotony of things, including your job and the friends you have, and you become terribly pessimistic and see no good in the world or the human race.

What you need is a vacation—not merely a vacation away from your job, but a vacation away from yourself. It does sound a little complicated, doesn't it? What I mean is getting away from your thoughts, at least the thoughts you are now thinking, stopping to see only the weak spots in others, and view for a change the good points.

Men get tired of listening to you because you believe in nothing they tell you. What can you expect? Would you like them to agree with you? How do you know no man is faithful to any woman? I think if I were to receive a letter from every man who is faithful to his wife, or any woman he happens to love, I am sure I'd never finish answering them in one lifetime. There is lasting love, but we cannot command love. We cannot be happy all the time, perhaps; but we can be happy some of the time. Marriage is a gamble, a job. A well-done job lasts longer than a job that is merely skimmed over.

Yes, dear, there is a way for you to get a better outlook on life and everything else. And that is, stop being a pessimist and become an optimist! I don't mean you must go around with a grin on your face and be a Pollyanna. I mean that you get out of life exactly as much as you put into it. You put in faith and it will flow back to you. You put in a cheery word here, a smile there,

and you will receive two in return. Give the other fellow the benefit of the doubt sometimes. Of course, if you will look for faults, you will find them. If you will look for beauty, you will find that, too. Whether it is beauty of flowers or landscape or beauty in human nature, and unless you meet life with insight and courage and as much understanding as you can cram into it, it will always seem monotonous and people will bore you. Check up on yourself, dear girl, and try to face the real things in life with hope.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a young man of twenty-five, and have four different girl friends. Three reside within a fourteen-mile radius, and the fourth lives in my town. When dating these girls I am always very cautious, and am careful not to conflict my dates. I have never stung a girl yet, remembered birthdays, made reservations for any large entertainment, and never forgot any of the holidays, including Christmas, which comes only once a year, thank heavens!

Mrs. Brown, I wish I could marry them all! Of course, I know it can't be done, unless I want to become a bigamist. Here are some of the reasons why I would like to marry all four:

Ruth: School-teacher. Brown hair and eyes; slender, impulsive, quick-tempered; likes indoor and outdoor sports. Very dominating, imperious, and inclined to command rather than ask.

Dolores: Black hair, brown eyes, and plump. True blue, never refuses a dare, and has a passion for motor cycles and speeding. Always trying to reform me.

Ida: A blonde with brown eyes; dresses like a model; drinks, smokes, necks, and is the life of every party we attend. Makes me a wee bit jealous sometimes, but is a real pal.

Hazel—last but not least—has brown hair and gray eyes; is home-loving, and had the nerve to slap my face the first night I tried to kiss her, and cried like a baby after it happened. Imagine, Mrs. Brown, a big girl of eighteen making a scene like that!

Having outlined to you these girls' characteristics, perhaps I ought to tell you something about myself. I'm going to college, crave sports, have a motor cycle and a motor boat; but my weakness is girls and more girls. I seem to have been a sort of Santa Claus. I can't deny it, but I hate to admit it.

Now, which one of these girls, Mrs. Brown, do you think I could grow old with? All at some time or other have hinted about marriage, and each and every one is a sport in her own way.

The main point I like about Ruth is that she would make a wonderful mother for my children. Dolores, with her adventuresome spirit, would help me advance. Ida, with her devil-may-care attitude, is a pal in a million. Hazel is the old-fashioned type, demure, shy, and sweet without a doubt; but marriage—nay, nay!

Dear Mrs. Brown, I hate myself for getting in this jam to a certain extent, but I feel confident that with your square dealing and honest opinion you can help me.

AN ACE OF CADS.

You may not at all like that honest opinion of mine, my boy, for I think you are not in love with any of these girls. Or, if you are in love with one, no one can tell you better which one it is, for surely you can't love four girls at the same time and in the same way.

From what you write, I am inclined to think that either Ruth or Hazel would do as a life partner for you, unless some other girl came along and you changed your mind altogether.

I hardly think you are fair to those girls, giving them to understand that each one is a possible prospect for the rôle of your wife. If your weakness is girls, then why not try to curb that weakness. If you don't, you're liable to find yourself in a nucleus of trouble.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a girl nineteen years of age. My problem is just another love affair, and I want you to please help me. I've been in love with a coal miner in my home town. I loved him for over three years. He never asked me out often, but I understood he didn't have much money. I've written to him several times, but he never answered my letter. Since then I met a few nice boys, but they didn't interest me; it was always Johnny, my coal miner. I cried many times; it helped me to forget him, but not entirely.

I still care. I've been going with another boy, Stanley, for eight months now. He is very jealous, but is very good to me, always brings me gifts, takes me out, and never forgets to call me on the phone. He asked me

to marry him, and he's well able to give me a beautiful home, clothes, and love; but I don't love him. I told him I'd try to learn to love him, but I'm afraid it will always be hard for me to play up and smile when I wish it were Johnny. Stanley is so good to me. A very good sport, but jealous.

Lately I had a letter from home. My sister wrote and said Johnny started to drink and said, "What's the use?" He always told me he loved me, yet he didn't ask me to marry him. This chap I go with now, Stanley, wants to meet my folks; but he is afraid my parents won't like him, as he is twenty-eight years of age. I can't say I'll marry him until I really hear from you. I'm ashamed to take such pretty gifts from him, knowing I don't love him; but he says nothing is too good for me. I'm desperate; please advise.

ANNA.

Don't you think that if you tried very hard to forget Johnny, you would like Stanley better, and perhaps learn to love him later on? I wouldn't suggest that you give up Stanley altogether, but postpone the marriage at least six months. In the meantime, why not remain engaged to him and try your very best to drive all thought of Johnny out of your mind. Evidently Johnny does not love you as you think you love him, or he would have asked you to marry him long ago, dear. A man doesn't easily give up the girl of his dreams. It is action that counts and not mere talk.

Of course, there is the possibility that Johnny had a reason for my asking you to marry him. But then, if he couldn't ask you to be his wife, he had no business telling you he loved you. I think you would do well to try and forget him entirely. I know it will be difficult, but it can be done.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: For some time I have stumbled along with my own troubles, but at last this is getting the best of me.

I have been a model for five years. I work in the same shop six months out of every year, then the other six months I work elsewhere.

My manager is giving me more attention than he had ever before. I am named as correspondent in his wife's divorce suit. She called me everything under the sun.

As for me, I have never been out with him at any time. One night I had to stay and model a gown for a customer. As I was going into the back room, he caught me in his arms and started to make love to me. Just then his wife came into the shop the back way and saw both of us. Of course, she would not let us explain, and is now suing him for a divorce.

Mrs. Brown, I have been going with a boy for eight months. He heard and read about this in the papers. He just stopped coming to see me. You don't know what he means to me. Before I met him, life was just a blank, day after day, as I have no parents.

When I met him, we both fell in love, and, oh, how I do love him!

I make good money, so I thought I'd take a trip. I did, but it just made me feel worse. I could not forget him if I had to.

Please tell me what I can do to get him back, as he won't let me explain. You would be doing me a favor that only a mother could do. I've often thought of you as a mother, ever since I have read your department.

Will be waiting for your answer, so please don't throw this away as just another troublesome letter.

AN UNHAPPY GIRL.

Do you mean that you are going to let this woman get away with her accusations and spoil your reputation? How can she prove anything without a witness? I would advise you to get a lawyer, dear, and fight a case like this, when your good name is concerned. Surely you are not going to stand back and let a suspicious and jealous woman injure you to the extent of always having an unpleasant incident in your life bobbing up every now and then?

As for that boy you are wasting your love on, let me tell you that I don't think he loved you very much, if at all, if he vanished from your life without giving you a chance to explain. He couldn't have been as devoted to you as he should have been if he ran away as he did. Forget him, and try again to live your life as though he had never happened. He can't be worth your heartache and tears, or he would have stood by you just when you needed a friend to believe in you. Forgetting some one we love isn't an easy job, but if you will give

yourself a little time and use some will power and determination, it can be done.

Make new friends and go out, and don't fret. Or, rather, fret as little as you possibly can.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I would like to have some advice. I do not live at home, as I work. This is what I want to know:

I am dearly in love with a boy. He is twenty-three and I am nineteen. We are engaged. My mother wants us to wait a year before we get married, but I can't wait that long. Do you think it would be fair to my folks if we ran away and got married and never told them about it? Please tell me what to do.

WAITING FLOSSY.

I'm quite sure, dear, that if your family were present when you were being married, it would make things much more agreeable all around. There is no real reason why you should not let your folks in on it, and they would resent your getting married without giving them any hint about it.

Surely, if you were to wait a year, if you and your boy friend love each other, it would not spoil the romance and sweetness of your engagement. Both of you are very young and can well afford to wait a while. Take your mother's advice, child. Mothers usually know what they are talking about.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I read your answers every week, and decided to write to you, as I have quite a problem.

I am a widow of twenty-nine. I have two boys, one ten years and one eight years. My husband has been dead almost nine years, so you can see my marriage took place when I was very young. I have been working very hard, trying to do my best for my boys. I have been through some pretty hard knocks. I am alone in the world, except for my grandfather and, of course, my children. My father and mother are dead, and I am the only child. But that's getting away from what I really want to ask you.

About four years ago I met a man through a friend, and we used to go around together once in a while. Then I moved away for about a year and a half; then I came back and my friends had a party for me, and who should be there but this man. I had forgot-

ten about him. He seemed very glad that we met again, and danced with me and asked me for a date.

As I wasn't going around with anybody much, we got to spending every Sunday and almost every evening together. He played the banjo and I played the guitar, and we used to spend hours together. One night he asked me if I would like to be his wife. I had learned to like him very much, so I agreed, and he used to talk and say what we would do if I were his wife. Well, we went together a long time. Finally he used to get tired early and want to go home, and didn't come to see me so much. I didn't think anything of that, but one night we had a talk, and he said we could be friends, that he didn't want to settle down, and that life, to him, was just a row of good times.

Well, it almost broke me up entirely. I could hardly work. I told him the only way I could hope to forget him was not to see him at all. It hurt me to say this, but it was true, for I loved him. I went on working and grinning, but I knew the only way I could forget was to go out and have plenty of friends. So I changed my job and moved. I went out, but he was first in my mind.

One night, at a dance, I met a man about my age. We had quite a few dances, and he asked to take me home, and as I had no other way I consented. Well, that date led to others, and now we have been going together for a few months, and he has asked me to marry him. I told him I couldn't marry anybody with my boys, and he said he wants them. I said I would, and we are engaged now, but I am afraid when I think of it. I am afraid because I don't love him as I did the other one. I am just over an attack of pneumonia, and he has been so faithful and loyal to me while I've been sick.

He makes so many plans for our future happiness, and I can tell he really means what he says; but it's myself I am afraid of. I have the highest respect for him, but there is something missing. Sometimes I think now my love was killed and that I'll never love again.

Should I marry this man, knowing he would make my children and me a good home?

Oh, please tell me what to do! I don't want to do the wrong thing.

Thanking you, I am ON THE FENCE.

Life is full of disappointments, and our faith is sometimes stretched to the limit. We love, are cruelly hurt, and feel we can never again love. But we

can, and many of us do. It may not be the same love, because it concerns a different person. But if respect and liking are there, love often blossoms from these when real friendship is added.

Whether or not you should marry this man, my dear, is something that no one but you can actually decide. However, I think that you have a good chance to have a home for yourself and your children, a desirable husband who will be devoted to you, and the security that every woman wants. In time, you will be so busy with your home, your boys and your husband, trying to make them all happy, that you would have little time to worry about your feeling for this other man. I am sure you would never regret forgetting him entirely and starting life anew.

Some of our readers could, no doubt, tell us that they have been in similar situations, have married, and found that they *could* love again. Isn't it so?

Downhearted: Marry the boy, dear, if he loves you. His parents may change their unfair attitude after you are married. After all, both of you are old enough to know what you want to do, and shouldn't permit others to wreck your happiness. Jeanette: I'm afraid it would be harder on you to live without your husband than to live with him. If you have no money, and no one to go to, you would be quite lost. Stick it out a while longer, and don't do anything to make him jealous. Terribly in Love: He proposed marriage to you and you refused him. Why should you expect him to hang around you if you apparently do not love him? You say

you do; then there was no sense in making him believe you don't by refusing to accept him. Write a friendly note and ask him to drop in and say hello some time. Perhaps, if he is still interested, you can win him back.

Seventeen and Blue: There's nothing you can do, my dear, but wait until you are older. Perhaps when you are eighteen your father won't be so strict. Flora: I would advise you to go out with other boys. Lonesome Lass: Don't worry so much. One of these days some of the boys will wake up and date you. Try to interest yourself in other things. Read, go out with your girl friends, and attend socials. Babe: Better listen to your parents, dear. They know best. Waiting: Evidently your trust in this boy was misplaced. Go out with other boys and forget him. I hardly think he really cared if he treated you as he did. Just Anxious: It was not fair to break without an explanation, but I think you ought not wait for him. Make other friends and show him you are not pining for his company. That may wake him up.

A Disgusted Wife: Don't lose hope, my dear, and try to be patient and tolerant. I am sure your troubles will straighten out if you remain loyal and sweet, friendly and cheerful. Mrs. O. E. P.: If your husband is willing, you ought not give the baby away. I am sure you will love it after it arrives. You want to get out of your responsibility the easiest way possible, but how about the child? What chances are you giving it? Keep your baby, dear; you will never regret it.

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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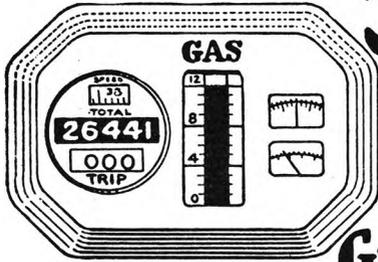
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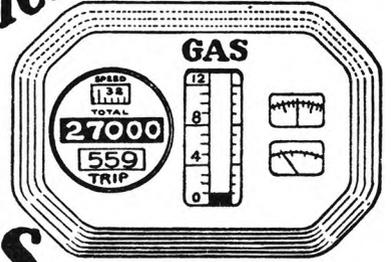
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on 11



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THE WHIRLWIND SAVES MOTORISTS MILLIONS OF DOLLARS YEARLY

Whirlwind users, reporting the results of their tests, are amazed at the results they are getting. Letters keep streaming into the office telling of mileages all the way from 22 to 59 miles on a gallon, resulting in a saving of from 25% to 50% in gas bills alone.

Mark H. Estes writes: "I was making 17 miles to the gallon on my Pontiac Coupe. Today, with the Whirlwind, I am making 35 5-10 miles to the gallon. Am I glad I put it on? I'll say so!"

P. P. Goerzen writes: "I made an actual test both with and without a Whirlwind, getting 13½ miles without and 34 6-10 miles with the Whirlwind, or a gain of 21 miles to the gallon. The longer the Whirlwind is in use on the machine the better the engine runs, has more pep and quicker starting. It makes a new engine out of an old one, and starts at the touch of the starter button."

R. J. Tulp: "The Whirlwind increased the mileage on our Ford truck from 12 to 26 miles to gallon and 25% in speed. We placed another on a Willys-Knight and increased from 12 to 17 miles per gallon."

Arthur Grant: "I have an Oakland touring car that has been giving me 15 miles to the gallon average, but I can see a great difference with the Whirlwind, as it climbs the big hills on high and gives me better than 23 miles to the gallon of gas, which is better than 50% saving in gas."

W. A. Scott: "I had my Whirlwind for three years. Winter and summer it gives the same perfect service. Instant starting, smoother running, and what I have saved in gasoline these last few years has brought other luxuries which I could not have afforded previously."

Car owners all over the world are saving money every day with the Whirlwind, besides having better operating motors. Think what this means on your own car. Figure up your savings—enough for a radio—a bank account—added pleasures. Why let the Oil Companies profit by your waste? Find out about this amazing little device that will pay for itself every few weeks in gas saving alone.

FITS ALL CARS

In just a few minutes the Whirlwind can be installed on any make of car, truck or tractor. It's actually less work than changing your oil or putting water in the battery. No drilling, tapping or changes of any kind necessary. It is guaranteed to work perfectly on any make of car, truck or tractor, large or small, new model or old model. The more you drive the more you will save.

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Whirlwind men are making big profits supplying this fast-selling device that car owners can not afford to be without. Good territory is still open. Free sample offer to workers. Full particulars sent on request. Just check the coupon.

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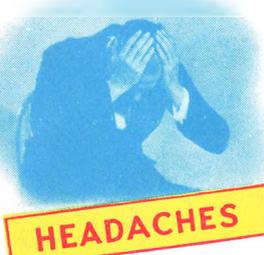
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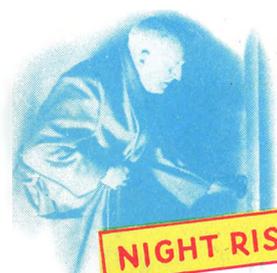
This Little Gland Robbed Me of Sleep and Health



HEADACHES



SCIATICA



NIGHT RISING



EXHAUSTION

Until I Discovered a New Hygiene for Men Past 40

IT had been coming on for years—this devilish thing called "Prostate Trouble!" I gave it little thought at first, because I figured that all men experience a certain change about my time in life. That was my big mistake. I thought it was just the breakdown of oncoming age and that I would have to put up with it. I did for a while, but a year later, my condition went from bad to worse at an alarming rate.

These Common Symptoms

My sleep was broken a dozen times every night. In fact, one hour's fitful sleep was a luxury. Pains had developed in my back and legs, and I was chronically constipated. I was run down in body and almost broken in mind—practically an invalid at 58. I talked to scores of men. In fact, I talked to practically every man I met or could get to listen. As I look back now I think I was practically insane on the subject.

Faces Surgery

It has been my experience that a majority of men past 60—and a surprising number even at 40—had one of these distressing symptoms, but few men had it as bad as I did. I had seen my doctor, of course. But he could offer me but little re-

lief. I spent hundreds of dollars in an effort to avoid an operation, for I had learned that gland surgery was usually dangerous. This insidious little gland that robbed me of sleep and health now threatened my very life.

The Turning Point

Then I read one of your advertisements. I admit I mailed the coupon without the slightest hope. There probably never was a more skeptical mind than mine. But this simple little act turned out to be the biggest thing in my life.

I can never thank you enough. I am now sixty. I can go to bed at ten o'clock and sleep straight through. My doctor has pronounced me in normal health. My entire body is toned up, and I feel almost like a youngster. I have had no return of the trouble, and now use your pleasant treatment just fifteen minutes a day, over one or two months, just to make sure that I keep my perfect health.

Millions Make This Mistake

When I was at my lowest ebb, I encountered so many prostate sufferers that I know there must be millions of men doctoring for sciatica, pains in the back and legs, bladder and kidney weakness, chronic constipation, loss of physical and mental capacity and a host of supposed old age symptoms, who should probably be treating the prostate gland! In fact, I learned not long ago that certain medical authorities claim that 65% of men at or past

middle age suffer from disorders of this vital gland.

My advice to these men is, not to make the mistake that I made. Send the coupon for that little book, "The Destroyer Of Male Health." Find out the facts about this little gland, which the book contains. It explains a prominent scientist's discovery of a new home hygiene—explains how, without drugs or surgery, without massage, diet, or exercise, this method acts to reduce the congestion and combat the dangerous symptoms.

Scientist's Book Sent Free

See if these facts apply to you. Learn the true meaning of these common complaints and see why these ailments in men past 40 are so often directly traceable to a swollen prostate. The book, "The Destroyer Of Male Health" is sent without cost and without obligation.

Simply mail the coupon to W. J. Kirk, President, 7642 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio.

If you live West of the Rockies, address The Electro Thermal Co., 303 Van Nuys Building, Dept. 76-V, Los Angeles, Calif. In Canada, address The Electro Thermal Co., Desk 76-V, 53 Yonge St., Toronto, Can.

W. J. Kirk, President,
7642 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio

Please mail me at once your Free booklet, "The Destroyer Of Male Health," and full details about the new home treatment. I am not obligated in any way.

Name

Address

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