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MAGAZINE

NOV. 28, 1936

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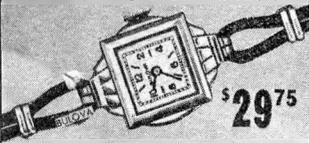
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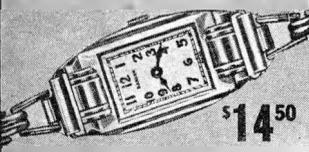
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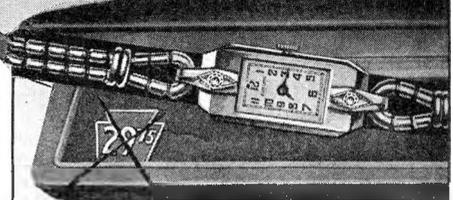
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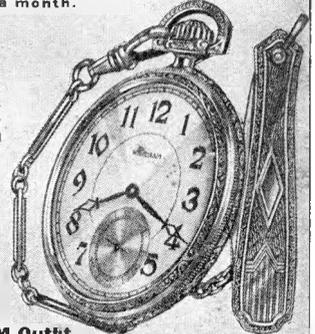
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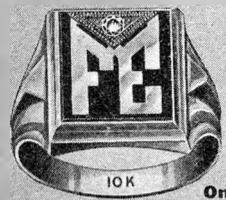
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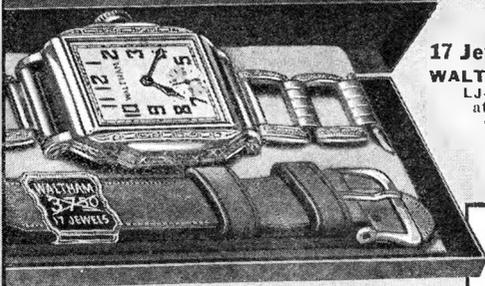
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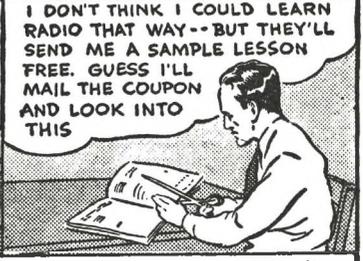
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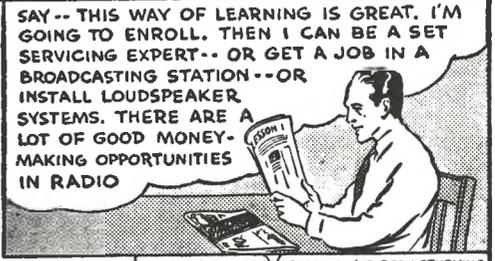
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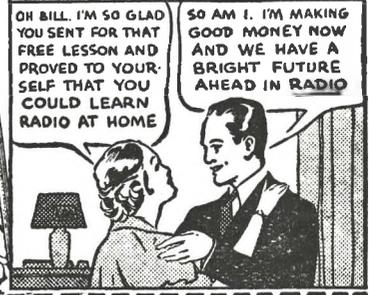
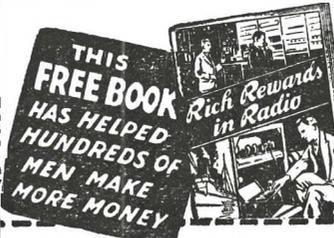
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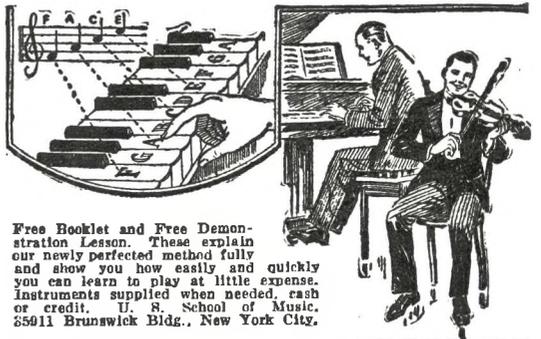
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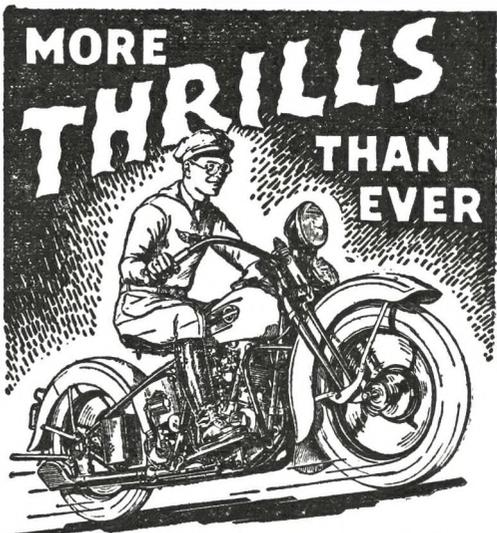
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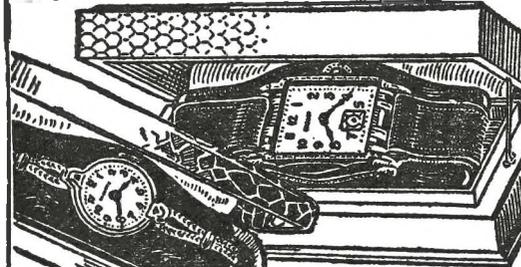
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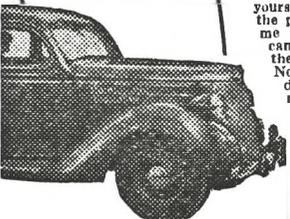


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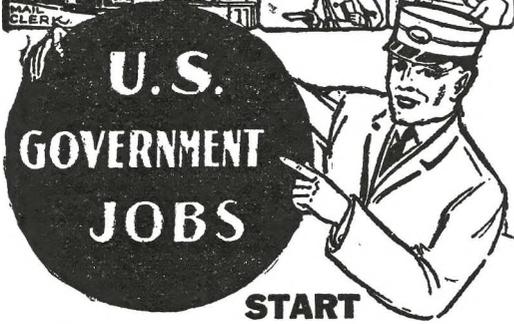
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Solo Flight

By Edna Gorman

AND so, because I happen to be the only white woman within a thousand miles, you're going to keep me here against my will. Is that it?"

Arden's voice was deliberately challenging, edged with contempt. She was trying to sting this tall, immovable young man at whose door her plane had fallen, into helping her on through the jungle.

She looked at him, and had to admit he was dangerously good-looking. Unruly red hair swept back

from his lean, intelligent, alive face. He had dancing gray eyes, a warm, generous mouth, and the dominant chin of a man who is accustomed to getting what he goes after.

Her hot words failed to move him. He folded his arms across a bronzed, muscular chest, and grinned at her impudently, with a flash of white teeth against his brown skin.

"Oh, come now, be reasonable," he said. "You wouldn't really expect me to give up the company of such a charming young lady, would you?"

"What I expect appears to have nothing to do with it," she retorted frostily. "I expected, when I landed here, to be given guides to take me up the Amazon to my fiancé. And I also expected that a man like you, who owns one of the largest rubber plantations in Brazil, would be a gentleman!"

"I suppose you think a gentleman would allow you to perish in the jungle, rather than hurt your reputation by keeping you here all night. Isn't that carrying things a little too far in this modern day and age?"

Her smoky-blue eyes regarded him with exasperation. There was arrogance in the lift of her straight nose, in the curve of her lovely, crimson mouth. There was also a strangely wistful appeal about her, as if she had known heartaches in her life, sleepless nights and dreams that had died.

She had taken off her flying helmet, and shining waves of dusky hair fell around cheeks that had gone a little white.

"It's silly of you to try to tell me no one in South America ever goes anywhere after dark," she cried passionately. "What do you do with yourselves?"

"Read," he told her, "sit out under the stars and just dream. Sometimes an angel drops in on us, out of the skies," he said softly.

She ignored this.

"I suppose I would be allowed to use your phone?" she asked with studied sarcasm.

"With pleasure," was the suave reply. "Only, it isn't working.

That storm this morning seems to have put it out of order.

"I don't believe you," she said flatly. "You're just saying that, as you're doing all the rest of this, to keep me from Donald!"

"Have you forgotten that once, back there in the States, I swore that you would come to me some day?" he asked, with an unfathomable look in his gray eyes. "It was a boyish bit of melodrama at the time, but here you are. Strange what fate does to us sometimes, isn't it?"

Arden bit her lips. She remembered only too well. And turning her slim back to him, she addressed herself to the native servant who stood watching her woodenly.

"*Hay que llanad el Señor Stratton, inmediatamente!*" she commanded in a voice used to giving orders, for all its delicate inflection. The man was plainly impressed. He bobbed his black head but did not move. Arden repeated the command.

"Too bad," the tall young man said with a grin. "Juan doesn't understand Spanish—not even good Spanish, which I am afraid yours isn't. The lingo around here is an odd mixture of Portuguese and Inca Indian. Why don't you just confine your conversation to me?"

"You haven't a very high opinion of my intelligence, have you?" she demanded, and wished she could be as angry at him as he deserved.

"Not very," he replied pleasantly. "I don't call it intelligent for a girl like you to come dashing off on a solo flight to the wilds of South



America. And certainly not without letting your fiancé know you were coming. Suppose he'd been eaten up by a boa constrictor or something?"

She jerked erect, and signals of panic flew in her blue eyes.

"Is that why you're keeping me here?" she asked in a smothered voice. "Has something happened to Donald?"

He was instantly all remorse.

"I was a brute to say that," he told her. "Please forgive me. I was only trying to make you see this isn't New York. You've got to be careful. And you can't go on to-night. So relax, why don't you? Enjoy the hospitality of my humble abode."

Her small red mouth tightened. She had recovered her poise and with it, her defiance.

"I shall most certainly report you to the police!" she said, five feet two of outraged dignity.

"Will you?" he sighed. "What a pity! But that will be to-morrow," he added.

She drew back a little from the admiration in his eyes.

"I'll walk there," she threatened rebelliously, turning toward the door.

"Oh, no, you won't!" he retorted, and he was no longer smiling.

"I will! And if you tell me just once more that you are keeping me here for my own good, I'll scream!"

He opened the screened door that led out into the patio.

"Come outside," he invited. "It's a perfect night for screaming!"

He stood aside, and bowed to her to precede him. Arden hesitated. She hated doing anything he suggested, but after all, antagonizing him would get her nowhere. She looked around her, and the throbbing, tropic beauty of the night drew her on.

The scene seemed unreal. A full moon rode high in the cloudless sky, casting a dramatic brilliance over the patio. There were bright-purple and crimson shrubs, and yellow flowers, a foot across. In the center, a fountain splashed softly, sending its spray over a white monkey who peered at her with impish eyes.

For a long moment Arden stood motionless. The magic enchantment of the tropics enfolded her like a cloak.

"It gets you, doesn't it?" she murmured.

"It got me," he told her. "I've been down here two years—two pretty lonely years, but busy and worth-while ones. It's a man's job, going out into the jungle and conquering it with your bare hands!"

He lighted a cigarette, and was silent.

"How strange to hear Tex Landon talking like this," she mused aloud.

"Because I once spent my life playing polo and burning up Broadway?" he asked. "You get fed up with that sort of thing after a while. Same old night clubs, same old hangovers, same old blondes!" His voice sobered. "I woke up when dad died," he said. "Came down here to carry on the work he started."

Unconsciously, her slim white hand rested on his arm. And quite unconsciously, it seemed, his fingers closed over it.

"I know," she said softly. "Every one back home thinks it's wonderful how you saved the Landon business. It had a great deal to do with Donald's father sending him down here."

She stiffened abruptly and drew away, as if the mention of that name was a barrier between them, as indeed it was. He flung his cigarette to the ground.



"Why are you marrying Donald Stratton, Arden?" he asked.

"I'm marrying him because I love him!" she cried passionately.

"May I be pardoned for asking why?" he persisted.

She whirled upon him furiously.

"You're just like all the rest of them," she flared. "Everybody's been so hateful about it. My father's spending a fortune to keep us apart. He had every steamer watched. That's why I flew."

He gathered her up against him and cradled her tenderly. A warm, sweet contentment, such as she had never known, flowed through her.

"Hurrah for father," Tex Landon said. "You didn't expect him to sit quietly and let you ruin your life, did you?"

The girl's lips set stubbornly.

"I love him, terribly," she told him. "And my love isn't just an ordinary emotion. It's big, noble. He needs me. I'm the only one who understands him."

"Oh, yeah?" Tex's tone was skeptical. "And what about the bubble dancer who sued him for breach of promise, and the girl who tried to commit suicide when he deserted her, and all the others?"

"I think it's mean of you to bring that up," she cried. "Donald isn't like you, big and self-reliant. He needs some one like me to take care of him. His father and mother have been separated since he was a baby, and all his life he's been lonely. He got into those entanglements because he was starved for love and a home. That's what I mean to him."

"I see," Tex said. His good-looking face was white in the moonlight. "You're sweet, *querida*," he told her, and his voice was husky.

"*Querida* means 'dear,' doesn't it?" she murmured. "I loved your calling me that, Tex."

"Did you, dear?"

There was a silence that was almost deafening. He bent his head above her, holding her with his brilliant, intense gaze.

"We parted bitter enemies because you thought I started that story about you and Donald," he reminded her. "You know differently now."

"It's too late, Tex," she told him faintly. "I belong to Donald. You don't know how he depends on me. He'll be a different man when we're married, you'll see! He's promised to give up drinking, and you know yourself, he's making this orchid farm pay. It is paying, isn't it?" she asked, when he said nothing.

Before he could reply, they were interrupted by the entrance of a

dark young Brazilian, wearing the uniform of a chauffeur.

"I'm sorry, master," he said in perfect English, "but I am forced to return with the car. The storm has uprooted a huge tree, which lies across the road, about thirty miles out."

This information seemed to disturb Tex very much. He lighted a fresh cigarette and walked up and down the patio, looking at Arden and scowling.

"Send Pedro, the runner," he ordered at last. "Tell him to take the trail over the mountain. And tell him to get the girl out of there, even if he has to drag her out by the hair. Wait a moment, I'll send a note."

He strode into the room they had left, and through the open door, Arden saw him sit down at a desk in one corner and begin to write. She had a strange, smothering feeling that all this had something to do with Donald. Turning toward the chauffeur, she found him regarding her with glittering black eyes. Once more, she was unpleasantly reminded that she was the only white woman within a thousand miles.

The Brazilian took a step toward her. "If the señorita needs help, she has only to call on me," he said in a low tone. "I was educated in the States and I am a North American in my feelings for women. Nothing can happen to you while I am here, beautiful señorita."

In spite of the friendliness of his words, there was something ominous about them, and about the man himself. But he was once more the trained, correct servant as Tex appeared in the doorway and, saluting, he took the note and went away. Arden was vaguely disturbed. She faced Tex whitely.

"You have a car, a chauffeur, and they are out to-night," she cried

accusingly. "Yet you refuse to take me to my fiancé. What do you hope to gain by this outrage?"

A slow red spread across the man's tanned face. Anger gleamed in his eyes. But it was gone as quickly as it came, and he was smiling again boyishly, as before.

"Have you forgotten the anacondas and jaguars waiting out there in the jungle to pounce upon you?" he reminded her.

"Don't be ridiculous. You know very well they couldn't get in the car," Arden snapped. It was hard to be furious with him when he looked at her like that.

"That shows how little you know about the tropics," he retorted. "Things down here swing from the trees, and mine's an open car."

She shivered a little, and the white monkey took this moment to run chattering up a giant hibiscus, then drop on her shoulder. With a moan of fright, she shrank away, straight into the outstretched arms of Tex Landon. They closed around her protectingly, and she clung to him, small and trembling.

"Arden darling, please," he whispered anxiously. "It's all right, sweet." And to the monkey, "Tongo, you little devil, I'll kill you for this!"

He looked down at the dusky, silken head snuggled against his heart, and he added softly, "No, I won't, Tongo. I'll give you chocolate bars, three times a day."

He lifted her quivering figure in his strong arms and carried her to a big cushioned chair at one end of the patio. Sinking into it, he gathered her up against him and cradled her tenderly.

She was shaking with nerves she couldn't control. Tex didn't speak, only held her close, with his cheek against hers. Presently, she ceased

to tremble and was still. A warm, sweet contentment, such as she had never known, flowed through her.

Tex looked down at her, and there was something close to anguish in his gray eyes. Arden felt the hard racing of his heart against hers, and as she stirred in his arms, she saw that his lips were white. She drew away with a feeling of breathlessness.

"How silly of me to make such a fuss over that little monkey," she said, not looking at him. "I'm so sorry."

"I'm not," he replied meaningly.

Arden flushed painfully.

"I don't understand you at all," she told him, making an effort to sound casual. "You're so wonderful one minute, and so—so unbearable the next."

"Perhaps I don't understand myself," he answered with a crooked smile. "I've always been a man who knew what he wanted, and who didn't hesitate to go after it. And now, all at once, I'm not so sure."

Her heart hammered against her side.

"Not so sure of what?" she repeated in a tight voice. There was only one thing he could mean. The air hung tense and electric between them.

"Of myself—of you," he replied. "Of the square thing to do."

They were on their feet now, and he leaned toward her, cupping her heart-shaped chin in his brown hand. His gray eyes burned into hers, as if he would probe their depths.

"You don't love Donald Stratton," he said slowly. "Not the way I could make you love me. There's sorcery in a night like this, Arden. There's madness in this tropic moonlight. I could take you in my arms and kiss you into forgetting, but I

don't want a girl on those terms," he finished huskily.

White-lipped, she looked up at him.

"No, no!" she cried sharply, stirred to the very depths of her being. "I could never forget Donald!"

"It was fate that brought your plane crashing here at my door, my darling," he whispered. "I can't let you go to him."

"You cannot keep me from going," Arden said faintly. "I love him. I'm going to marry him!"

"Oh, why won't you trust me?" he pleaded. "Won't you let me teach you what real love means?" he murmured softly.

"You haven't any right to say such things to me," she cried, desperately trying to fight down the emotion that was sweeping over her. "I do love Donald. He needs me. I'm the only person he has ever really loved."

Tex Landon didn't answer. He was tall and white in the moonlight, and his jaw was grim. Arden waited for him to speak, because they both knew how untrue this was. Donald Stratton had loved too many girls. Only this time, she told herself fiercely, it was different.

"Tex," she breathed, and couldn't go on.

They were very close. She could

feel the power and charm of him. He caught her two hands roughly up against his heart, and his warm lips were very near her own. The fragrance of wild flowers filled the patio. The spell of the tropics was upon them.

"Kiss me," he whispered thickly.

"No, no!" Her voice broke on a sob and she turned her head away.

She really wanted his kisses terribly, the feel of his arms around her. Her heart was singing in her ears.

"Donald," Arden murmured very faintly. But Donald was very far away at that instant—a phantasy in another world.

"He'll only break your heart, my darling," Tex seemed to speak more to himself than to her. "Forget him, sweetheart. Think only of you and me and of to-night."

But she could no longer think. She could only feel, in waves of flaming emotion that left her powerless to resist, as his arms tightened around her.

"Oh, let me go," she breathed. "This is utter madness."

"I'll never let you go—never!" he cried exultantly. "Not while we both live!"

At that moment, from somewhere inside the house, came the sound of a wild scream—a woman's scream, it seemed to the frightened girl.



Tex's arms fell away, and he dashed away in the direction of the cry.

"Señorita!" a soft voice behind Arden called, and she whirled to see the chauffeur coming toward her from the other end of the patio.

"This way, come quickly," he cried, as he grasped her arm and urged her toward an opening in the vines, which she could see led into a dimly lighted passage.

"Where are you taking me?" she asked sharply, pulling herself free. "What has happened, and where is Señor Landon?"

"He will never take you to your fiancé," replied the man. "He has told me so. He intends to keep you here. But I, Ramon, am your friend. I will take you to Señor Stratton."

Arden's knees turned to water. She stood there looking at him.

"You do not trust me perhaps, señorita?" he asked. "You need have no fear. See, my sister is coming with us, your chaperon, as you call it."

Arden looked in the direction he had indicated, and saw a dark-skinned native girl waiting at the end of the passage. Unnerved by that horrible scream, by the strangeness all around her, she allowed herself to be led away, barely aware of what she was doing.

It wasn't until she had been hastily lifted into the car, and they were dashing up the road, with the girl standing, looking sullenly after them, that Arden realized how utterly foolish she had been.

Her uneasiness deepened into panic as Ramon suddenly swerved the car into a side road, and stopped. Before she could speak or move, he had thrown both arms around her and was pouring out words of adoration.

LS—2C

"You are mine now," he cried. "From the first moment I saw you, I have burned with a desire to hold you in my arms."

"Ramon, you are crazy!" she gasped, struggling against the grip of those viselike arms. "Let me go this instant!"

He only laughed at her. "I love your white skin," he said thickly. "I despise these dark-skinned native girls. And I am clever, yes. It was my sister who screamed, when I hired Juan to lash her with the whip, so Señor Landon would go inside to investigate and leave the way free for me."

Horrified, Arden kicked him with her small brown oxfords, but he did not seem to feel it. She tried to bury her teeth in his hand, but his mouth crushed her lips, bruising them with repulsive kisses.

"I like girls with spirit," he cried. "It fires the blood. It draws men on. You are divine, my white angel."

He had thrown one leg over her knees, holding her almost immovable. She beat against him with her two fists, futilely.

Arden felt that she had no strength left with which to fight. It seemed to her that she would faint from terror when suddenly, there was the sound of a car roaring up the road behind them.

Ramon jerked upright.

"Señor Landon!" he cried wildly. "He will kill me!"

"I hope he does," sobbed Arden.

The chauffeur stepped on the gas and leaned forward to turn the ignition switch. But quick as he was, Arden was quicker. She snatched the key and flung it far out into the night. With an oath, Ramon snatched open the door and leaped out, making a mad dash across the fields.

But the other car was close upon them now, and there was no escape. Tex caught him before he had gone a dozen yards. Arden's heart stopped beating and she covered back against the seat, as the two men came together.

There was the sickening thud of blows, and the Brazilian's animal snarl. Tex struck once, and again, landing on the man's jaw with an impact that sent him reeling to the ground. He lay there, whimpering, pleading for mercy.

Only then did Tex look at her, and his gaze was entirely impersonal. He might have been any polite host, inquiring after the comfort of his guest.

"I regret that this had to happen while you were in my home," he said formally. "I came as soon as I got the truth out of the girl."

His face was haggard. There were tired lines etched deep beside his mouth, and Arden had a sudden fierce longing to hold him close.

"Oh, Tex," she choked, "I—I'm so sorry."

"Not at all," he replied evenly. "I needed this to make me understand just where I stand. You prefer the protection of a native chauffeur to me. Since I do not wish you to be forced to such dangerous extremes again, I shall take you to your fiancé, as soon as we have dined."

"You are very kind," stammered Arden.

He made a disparaging gesture. He seemed to be telling her that he would do as much for any one.

"Dining down here in South America is somewhat of a ceremony," he told her, as they reached the house once more. "Do you mind dressing? Juan will bring your bags in from the plane."

It was rather an odd request, she

thought, and as he bowed her into a large, attractively furnished bedroom, she had a vivid feeling that he was doing it for some reason. Did he mean to keep her here, after all? No, he had promised to take her to Donald, and she would stake her life that Tex Landon would not break his word.

She took a refreshing shower in the black-and-jade bathroom, and applied fresh make-up with meticulous care. She ran a comb through her lustrous dark hair, and selected her most becoming gown. It was a filmy chiffon of primrose-yellow that made her look like a swaying, exquisite flower.

But if she expected a compliment, or even a look of admiration from Tex Landon, she was doomed to disappointment. He was waiting for her as she came out, tall and distinguished in his white linen dinner suit, with a red carnation in his buttonhole. His face was as impassive as if she were an utter stranger.

Juan, in uniform, served sherry in slim crystal glasses, and Tex drew out her chair with as much ceremony as if they weren't three hundred miles from the nearest village.

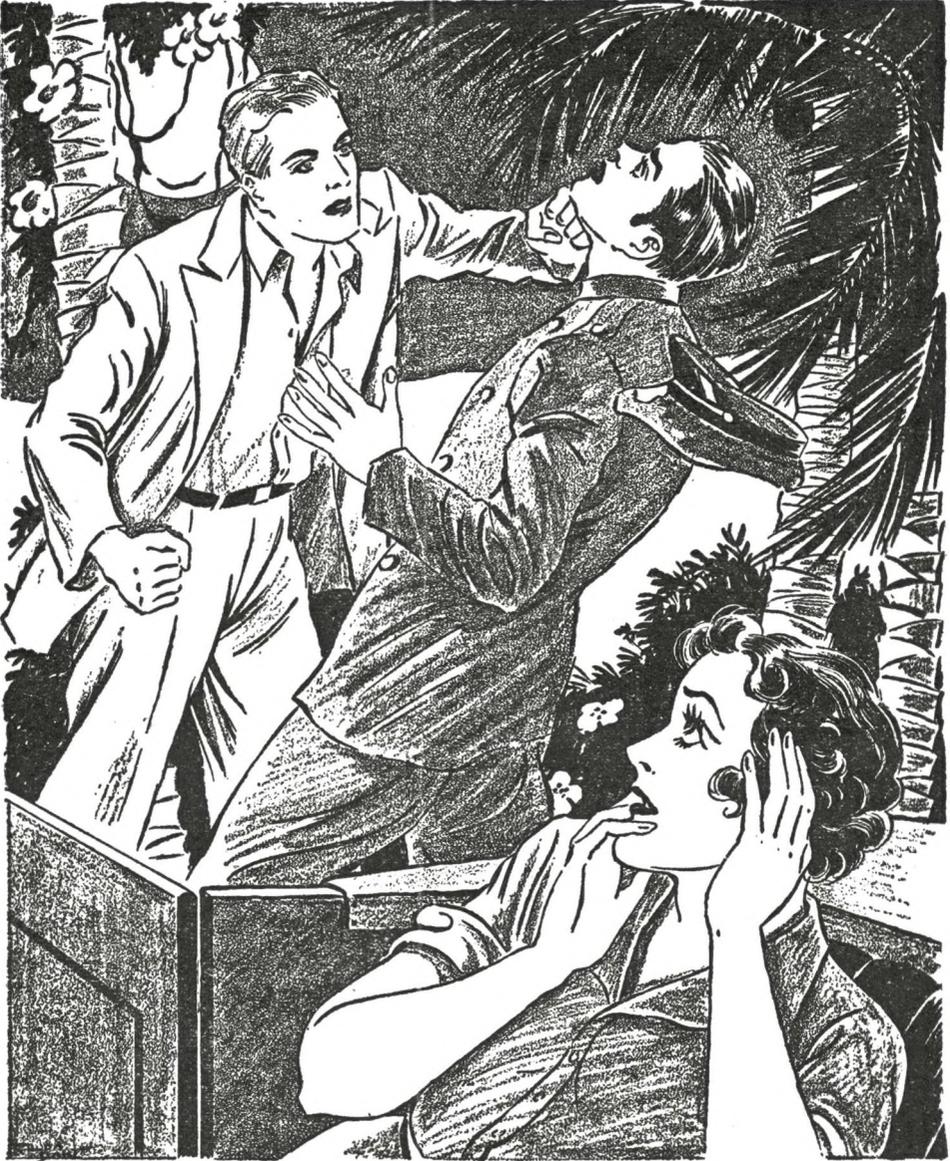
"I'm sorry to be so much trouble," Arden said, feeling more and more dejected.

"A pleasure, really," he returned suavely.

They sat down. There was chicken cooked in a thick wine sauce, pork tenderloins with pimentos, platters of strange sweet vegetables and delicious fruits, a salad of avocado pears, the centers filled with a pungent nut paste.

Arden ate ravenously. She hadn't realized she was so hungry. A sense of well-being swept over her. She searched Tex's face for some sign of friendliness.

"I want you to know how very



Arden's heart stopped beating and she cowered back against the seat, as Tex struck Ramon a blow that sent him reeling. What a fool she had been to go with this suave native!

much I appreciate what you are doing," she said timidly.

"Couldn't we omit the flowers?" he asked evenly.

"Please, Tex," she persisted. "I think you're being wonderful, really."

"Except when I'm trying to make love to you." Utter bitterness rasped in his voice. She winced. She had not meant to hurt him like this.

"Don't hate me, Tex. I couldn't bear it if you did," she faltered.

"Hate you?" He raised his eyebrows in apparent surprise. "Why should I? I'm merely angry with myself for butting in, that's all. You love this Donald person. And what's that to me?"

"Nothing, of course," she acknowledged bleakly. "Only, I thought —" She broke off in confusion.

"Don't," he advised with a mocking grin. "It doesn't pay to think, down here in the tropics. There's an unreal slant to things. You get carried away with a pretty face. Any girl looks good to you, like a sailor who has just come off ship!"

Arden's face burned painfully. He couldn't have told her any more plainly that he hadn't been really interested, that he had only been engaged in the usual masculine pastime.

But at that, she reflected, she owed him something. They had been alone here, cut off from the world, and he had been clean, decent. There were many men who wouldn't have been so chivalrous.

"Listen, Tex," she said softly, "I'm not so old, but I understand about a lot of things. And I shan't ever forget how fine you've been tonight."

"Sure, I'm a great guy," he said gruffly. "Only unbearable," he reminded her.

She looked down at the table, cleared now of everything except a dessert of cooked cinnamon bananas and coffee in hand-hammered silver cups. It wasn't any use. He was determined to be an enemy.

"Marvelous coffee," she said, to make conversation.

"We raise it," he told her, "and the silver is from my own mines. You people in the States haven't any idea what a tremendously rich country Brazil is. Sometimes I feel like a king"—a sudden flame leaped into

his eyes—"a king without a queen," he added, looking at her.

Arden tried to speak, but no words would come. A moment later, Tex was his nonchalant, suave, smiling self once more. He glanced at his wrist watch.

"It's getting late," he remarked. "Shall we go?"

She left the table lingeringly. It had been pleasant dining here with Tex, even though they had come so close to fighting. She liked the way the candlelight fell on his red hair, on his strong, good-looking face.

As she followed Tex to the door, Arden had a feeling that she was leaving home.

She was going to Donald at last—Donald, the man she loved and was going to marry. She should be wildly happy. Only, somehow, she wasn't.

"But I thought you said the road had been closed by a fallen tree," she observed, as he assisted her into his long, gleaming car.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I've had a corps of men working there for the past hour," he told her casually.

Arden sat very still against the luxurious leather cushions. Tex Landon had held her in his arms tonight. He wanted her, and yet he was going to no end of trouble to take her to Donald. Her pulses beat so heavily that she could hear them.

"How resourceful he is," she thought. "How safe a girl would feel who belonged to Tex." Aloud, she said, "So that was why you insisted on that long dinner?"

He looked at her inscrutably. "That, and other reasons."

She thought she understood. "I still think you're wonderful," she breathed, and put her hand gently on his arm.

"Don't!" he cried out sharply. He

was very white. She saw his hand tighten on the wheel. After a moment he added, as if in explanation, "I don't like crumbs!"

"Crumbs?" she faltered.

"Little pats on the arm that don't mean anything!" he gritted. "You showed me where I got off, didn't you? We said good-by, didn't we? Then let's not start things all over again."

"Start things?" Arden repeated faintly. "I don't know what you mean."

He turned to glare at her.

"Look here, Arden," he said. "You say you understand about a lot of things. Well, use your head, can't you? You're a beautiful girl—the loveliest thing I've ever seen. And after all, I'm only human, you know!"

Vivid crimson swept to her eyes, touched her dusky hair. She stiffened, and some of her former hauteur came back.

"I think you're being quite, quite horrible," she flamed.

"That's O. K. with me," he retorted smoothly.

"Meaning that it doesn't matter what I think of you!" Her lovely mouth quivered. "Are you deliberately trying to make me hate you, Tex?" she went on in a small, tight voice.

"Doesn't it occur to you it might be a very good idea if you did?" he returned brutally.

His gaze was fixed on the road ahead. The blackness of the jungle seemed to be creeping out to meet them. Tall cocoa-palms were etched against the sky. Arden wanted to move close to him, to tuck her arm in his.

"I couldn't ever hate you, Tex," she whispered. "I couldn't ever forget you, either."

The car slowed down, almost stopped.

"Listen, Arden," he said grimly, "I am doing what you wanted me to do. I am delivering you to the man you love. In a little while you're going to marry him. The less you think about me, or I about you, the better it will be for all of us!"

There wasn't much she could say to that. A thick silence settled down upon them as the car shot ahead. Tex Landon's face was set in hard lines. His mouth made her think of her father's, the last time they had quarreled about Donald, when she had flung herself out of the house and into her plane.

Suppose they were right, and she was wrong? She could hear her father saying harshly, "He's only a weakling—always has been! He'll break your heart, my child!"

Oh, but if that were true, he needed her all the more. She couldn't let him down. He had called her his guardian angel, the only person in the world who understood him. Poor, dear, sensitive Donald! Her eyes were wet. She choked back a sob.

Tex turned toward her swiftly. "For Pete's sake," he exploded, "don't do that!"

A big tear trickled down her cheek. "I can't help it," she said. "I'm tired, I guess. And everything seems so mixed up."

He moved a little, so that his shoulder touched hers. The chance contact thrilled her. In spite of everything she could do, her hand went out once more to rest pleadingly on his arm. This time he didn't draw away. Instead, he covered her cold fingers with his own brown ones.

His face was no longer remote or cold. It was warm and tender as he looked at her.

"I'm sorry, *querida*," he murmured. "I've been a brute. If you love this man, stick to him, and forget everybody else. Love's the only thing that counts, Arden, and when you've got that, you've got everything!"

His voice, the touch of his hand, his tenderness, gave her back her courage once more. Twenty-four hours ago she had never expected to see him again, and now he could make the sun shine with a few chance words.

"It is tough, Arden, bucking the whole wide world," he continued, "but a real love is worth it. Keep your chin up. And if ever you need a friend, you can count on me," he finished tenderly.

His gray eyes were tortured, but she didn't see. She nestled against him contentedly, and presently, they were at the huge mahogany tree that had fallen across the road. The men Tex had sent had done a good job, and only a few branches remained.

The talk, as they waited, was in Portuguese—something about the runner, Pedro. It seemed to worry Tex. He looked at his watch anxiously, a gesture he repeated as they drove on once more.

"Something wrong, Tex?" she asked. "I'm being so much trouble to you."

"Oh, no, nothing's wrong," he hastened to assure her. "Everything's fine. We're only twenty miles from Donald's place—less than a half hour."

Less than a half hour, and then she would be saying good-by to Tex forever, and Donald would be taking her in his arms! She remembered the kisses of the man she was to

marry—possessive, lingering. She stirred restlessly.

"There's just one thing I want to warn you against," Tex broke in upon her thoughts. "A lot of gossip gets around in a place like this. You may hear things. Don't pay any attention to them."

She turned shining blue eyes on him. The throbbing, pulsing tropic night beat across her senses like the slow beat of a drum.

"You are wonderful, Tex," she said huskily. "You know something and you're trying to shield him for my sake." She gave a shaky laugh. "I'm used to it, Tex. There has always been gossip about Donald."

She moved her dusky head against his shoulder in a caressing little motion.

"It's sweet of you to want to keep me from being hurt," she whispered. "Do you want to kiss me good-by, Tex?"

"No!" The word jerked from stiff lips. "If I kissed you, Arden, it wouldn't be good-by."

Quivering, she sank back against the soft cushions. The remainder of the ride was in silence.

Tex lifted her from the car. He caught her to him fiercely, and held her for a long moment against his heart. She felt his lips against her hair. And then they were walking up the path to Donald's door. There was no one in sight. Her head was whirling. She had a feeling that she was some one else, or that this was some strange dream.

How could she marry Donald, when with all her heart she loved Tex? She knew that now, knew that in all the years to come, she would





"Don't leave me, Arden," he cried. "I'll kill myself if you don't marry me." Tears of self-pity were streaming down his face.

go on loving him, thinking of his warm, eager lips upon her own, of his arms around her.

And yet something stronger than herself drove her on. She had given

her promise. Donald needed her. It would kill him to lose her.

They were at the door now. Tex knocked. There was a sound of loud swearing inside. Something

slammed, and Donald Stratton lurched drunkenly to the door. He peered at them with bloodshot eyes, and it was a full moment before he recognized Arden.

"Baby!" he cried. "I was just thinking of you, wishing you were here!"

Numbly, she let him take her in his arms and kiss her. Only then did she seem to come alive. She took a quick step backward, and drew her hand across her lips. His kiss was sickening, disgusting.

"Aw, don't be like that, baby," he pleaded. "Come on in. We'll have a little drink."

He drew her inside, telling her how much he loved her, how terribly he had missed her. Tex carried her bags in, but he refused the drink Donald offered him.

The room was dirty and disordered. A low table was drawn up beside a couch, piled with soiled pillows, and on it was a messy array of bottles, unwashed glasses and cigarette butts.

"It's terrible down here in the tropics," Donald went on. "My father hasn't any right to keep me here. But we'll fool him, Arden. You've got money of your own, and after we're married, we'll scam out of this!"

"No!" Arden said sharply, in a voice that did not seem like her own. "I'm not going to marry you, Donald. I've changed my mind. I can't go through with it!"

He went down on his knees, clinging to her, begging her to keep her promise.

"Don't leave me, Arden," he cried. "I can't live in this awful place any longer. Take me away. I'll kill myself if you don't marry me!"

He meant it, she knew. It was no idle boast with him. Once he had

slashed his wrists with a razor, and she had rushed him to the hospital, just in time. And again she had knocked the revolver from his hand and saved his life.

He was so weak, so lost without her. He was crying now, tears of self-pity streaming down his face. Arden felt physically ill. She seemed caught in a trap from which there was no escape. Her blue eyes were haunted as she looked down at him.

Suddenly, she stiffened. Her head jerked up. In the heavy air of the room, stale with whisky and cigarette smoke, she became aware of another odor—the sensuous, exotic fragrance of gardenia perfume!

Her delicate nostrils quivered as she studied the scene around her. There was no mistaking that perfume, and it could mean only one thing. Another woman was here, or had been here within a short time!

Swiftly, she flung herself across the room and threw open the door that led out into the patio. Donald caught her arm, but she wrenched herself free. The two men were close behind her now, but they were too late.

A blond girl with disheveled hair and a hard, red mouth sat huddled in a wicker chair, holding an empty whisky glass in her hand. She sprang up and faced them defiantly.

"Florry!" Tex exclaimed angrily. "I thought I sent word for you to get out!"

"I hate you, Tex Landon!" shrilled the girl. "Sending that runner Pedro up here, when your chauffeur couldn't get through! You don't want me yourself, and now you want to take Donald away from me!"

Tex caught her sternly by the shoulders and put a hand of steel over her mouth.

"I'm sorry, Arden," he said, "but this doesn't mean anything, really. I knew she was here, and I tried to keep you until I had time to get Donald word, so that he could send her away. You see, you aren't the only white woman within a thousand miles after all," he stumbled on, trying to erase that frozen look from her face.

Donald had hold of her again, sobbing, pleading with her not to be angry. It was all a hideous mistake which he could explain if she would only listen.

"Take him!" screamed the blond girl. "But I'll have him, anyway! He can't stay away from me!"

"Now don't get excited, Florry," Donald muttered drunkenly. "Arden's a good sport. She knows how it is with men down here in the tropics."

Yes, Arden thought with sudden clarity, she knew how it was with men like Donald and Ramon—weaklings! She knew now why Donald's kisses had always made her shiver a little. They were like Ramon's—hot, greedy and smothering. But she had needed that scene with Ramon to show her the truth.

All at once, her heart was singing. She was free! She didn't have to marry him!

"Say you forgive me," Donald cried frantically. "I'll kill myself without you, Arden."

She had nothing to say to him. She had been a fool, thinking that she could save a man from himself—a silly, deluded fool. But it was over at last.

"Will you take me back, please, Tex?" she asked.

He smiled at her joyously. "You didn't think I would leave you here, did you?" he reproached.

He held out his arms, and without a word, Arden went into them. He picked her up and strode with her out to the car.

She clung to him, her eyes like stars.

"Don't look at me like that," he said unsteadily, "unless you want me to kiss the life out of you!"

She lifted her lips, soft and fragrant, eager for his love.

"Love me?" he whispered huskily.

"Love you, love you," she answered dreamily. "Oh, so much, Tex darling!"

His arms tightened around her. He bent his head and pressed his lips on hers in a kiss that went through her like a scarlet flame. There was no yesterday and no tomorrow—nothing in all the world but these two and their love.

TOO MUCH TO EAT—NO EXERCISE!

THAT'S JUST THE TIME TO ALKALIZE!

IT'S SILLY, DEAR, TO SUFFER SO.

I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS LONG AGO.

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Innocent Darling

By Patty Smith

WHEN Sue, her eyes widening in eagerness, leaned forward to look over Jon Kennedy's shoulder, she was completely unaware that her face almost touched his. Her whole attention was concentrated on the brush in his long, brown fingers. Watching its edge draggle carelessly into a splotch of raw, unblended blue, her breath caught in her throat and she barely resisted snatching at his arm. Then, as the masterly stroke swept across the canvas, she released her breath in an ecstatic sigh.

"Oh, Jon," she cried, "you did that on purpose. You knew all the

time what that blue edge would do to the shadow." The eagerness in her eyes became faintly wistful. "It's knowing things like that that makes you a genius, and it's not knowing them that makes me just a dumb art student."

Jon Kennedy stared through the hot midday haze at a distant hill, then turned to quirk a quizzical eyebrow at her.

"Sue, my innocent darling," he grinned, "that was just a trick acquired after years and years of painting." He slipped a friendly arm around her. "You think everything I do is swell because I happen

to be the only well-advertised painter you've come across." He laughed, and dropping his arm from her waist, picked up his brushes again.

"No"—she smiled, shaking her head—"you were a hero to me before you were famous. At seven years old I discarded paper dolls, and started, instead, to cut out reproductions of your paintings. I have a scrapbook of everything of yours I could find in newspapers and magazines. So you see, you are really responsible for my trying to become a painter."

The honest young worship in her eyes embarrassed him, even hurt him a little.

"Don't look at me like that or I shall cry," he said, trying to laugh. "Your nose is so young—I mean, innocent and defenseless, like a puppy's."

Instantly, as though to prove him right, her nose crinkled up exactly like a protesting puppy's, but after wavering on the brink of tears, she suddenly giggled delightedly.

"Oh, Jon, this has been such a wonderful morning—just to be alone with you like this, watching you paint, I mean."

He laughed with her in light-hearted relief. "Sue, you are a nice infant. I think we'd better call it a day." He shifted the easel to his right arm, slipping his left through hers. "Now then, if I don't break my leg stumbling over this easel, we may get home before your sister and her husband have me arrested for kidnaping."

Sue grinned. "You know," she said, "Tom and Maisie are so mad about you that they won't even scold you for being late for luncheon. You are one guest who can do no wrong."

"They're a great pair," he remarked soberly. "They've been closer to me than any one else for most of my life."

"Well," laughed Sue, "I think it's perfectly disgusting of them to have known you longer than I have."

The faces around the table were just pink or brownish spots, and the gleaming glass and silver, the glittering crystal decorations were only flashes of unimportant lights to Sue's blankly wandering gaze. A faint flicker of expression did just touch her eyes as they rested on a bowl of white roses—a brief recognition of them as the source of an odor she found sickening. They made the room smell like a funeral, appropriately enough, she thought dimly, since this evening was the funeral of everything she had hoped for.

At last, her eyes strayed back to the couple opposite—Jon and Julia Tappin! She would have been jealous, she knew now, of any woman at whom Jon looked like that. But that Jon should fall for Julia—discerning, fastidious Jon—not to see her insensitiveness, her innate cruelty! Didn't he know she was cold and hard and—yes, stupid about everything that counted? What was it that attracted him? For he was obviously attracted. It was impossible to miss the eagerness in his eyes, not to hear his quick, delighted laughter, to remain unaware of the exhilaration expressed by his slightest gesture. Sue felt her heart sink. There was a sort of high arrogance in Julia's sharply cut face—something flaunting, hard but challenging, especially to a man like Jon, who was doubtless surrounded by adoring females—foolish, fawning females like herself, Sue thought bitterly. She contrasted her face

with Julia's—her childish face with eyes and mouth too large and a freckled nose too small. She looked at the sleek curves of Julia's figure, and felt like a scrawny little girl. She blinked rapidly several times. What was it Jon had called her this morning? Defenseless! Well, that was just what she was—absolutely defenseless against a siren like Julia. The only possible advantage she held over Julia was her love and understanding of Jon's work. But she knew that talking to him constantly of his work might very well be the surest way of boring him. What Jon really enjoyed was the gay sparring match, the challenging flirtation, the game at which Julia was unrivaled.

Would Maisie never give the signal to rise, or were they to have coffee here instead of in the library as usual? She sent a despairing glance at her sister, and at once wished she hadn't, for Maisie, interpreting her glance only too well, stared at her with startled eyes. Then she murmured something to the man on her right, and they both rose. In another minute every one, including Sue, streamed out of the room.

Some shift in grouping brought her close to Jon and Julia as they reached the living room.

Jon hailed her cheerfully. "Sue, you rascal, where have you been hiding yourself?"

Julia laughed. "She's been hiding herself right under your nose, darling, or at least six feet in front of it, all through dinner."

"That's right. You were sitting just across the way," said Jon easily. Grinning, he turned to Julia. "You see what you did to me, you and your wiles, making me neglect my first love?"

He patted Sue's arm affectionately, but his careless jesting hurt

abominably until she caught the look of startled annoyance that flashed across Julia's face.

"Oh, well," Julia was saying, "you may have neglected your first love, but I can assure you she didn't neglect you. She never took her eyes off you for an hour and a half."

Sue flushed deeply, but she achieved a wide-eyed innocence as she answered sweetly, "Oh, no, Julia, you're mistaken. It was you, not Jon, I was looking at. It was such fun watching you turn on the glamour."

"Sue, you bad——" Jon reached for her, but she slipped neatly past him in ignominious retreat. She was simply too afraid to stay and match wits with Julia. Julia had guessed that she was in love with Jon. Desperately, her glance swept the room, searching for Maisie.

When she found her, Maisie said, "Come up to my room with me, Sue. I need fresh make-up."

She did not speak again until she had closed the door of her room and lighted a cigarette. Then, after staring at Sue for a full minute, she commanded, "Come clean, Sue. How long has this been going on?"

"How long has what been going on?" asked Sue, engulfed by an unexpected shyness.

"This——" Maisie gestured vaguely with her cigarette. Then, extinguishing it with a nervous jab at the ash tray, she said firmly, "Jon."

"Oh!" Sue's voice was small. "Jon—you mean Jon!" She didn't look at Maisie. "Well, practically always."

Maisie frowned. "But you hadn't seen him for years, until a week ago—not since you were a child."

"I know, but I've seen pictures of his paintings and pictures of him,



"So you've liked me for years and years," he mocked. "Ever since you were twelve—and I was thirty-one. Oh, Sue! Don't you know it's bad taste for middle-aged men to chase young girls?"

and you and Tom were always raving about him, and——"

"And so you had to nourish a secret, sentimental attachment for him? Good heavens, Sue, you're not that romantic?"

"Yes, I am," replied Sue flatly.

"I think you're crazy," Maisie told her helplessly. "In this day and

age! Does—does he know how you feel about him?"

"Not yet, but"—grimly—"he will, just as soon as Julia Tappin gets around to it. She's all set to picture me as a silly, lovesick moron bent on making him ridiculous. She had a crack at it to-night."

"She would!" said Maisie briefly.

"She doesn't like us much, does she?" Sue asked curiously.

"I'll say she doesn't!" Maisie returned emphatically. "It's quite a story, Sue. You wouldn't remember, but after one of old Tappin's raids on public funds, father's newspaper got after him and forced him to disgorge, or else! The scandal broke about the time they came here and that, combined with the fact that he'd taken some of our resident merchant princes for a ride as well, slammed the social gates in their faces. It was hard on Julia."

"But Julia wasn't responsible," cried Sue heatedly.

"That's how I felt about it," said Maisie quietly. "So I gave a big party for her, thinking that if, in spite of father's articles, I entertained her, the rest would follow suit."

"That was sweet, Maisie. Didn't she love you for it?"

"She did not! You see, Julia is an opportunist but proud, and the two don't mix. She knew her one chance to make this set was to accept my invitation, but to be obligated to the daughter of the man who had exposed her father was revolting to her pride. Oh, she accepted, all right, and she pretends to be fond of me, but it's wearing pretty thin in spots."

"I don't get her at all!" Sue sighed.

"You wouldn't," Maisie replied. "Wild horses couldn't have dragged you to the house of your enemies, unless perhaps you'd have been so touched by their magnanimity that you'd have loved them forever after. You see"—grinning—"you're romantic. Julia isn't. She's shrewd enough, though, to gather what you're like, and the difference in your standards would be enough to repel her, even if you weren't father's daughter and my sister. And so, Sue darling, I don't know what she'll try

to do to you. First off, I'm afraid she's persuaded Jon to paint her portrait."

"What? Oh, Maisie!" Sue sank into the nearest chair, a crumpled heap of despair.

"Listen, honey, don't take it so hard. I can fix that, I think, by bluffing Jon into believing our feelings will be hurt if he runs off every day to paint Julia while he's our guest. A bit crude, but it will work with Jon. He's that sort. He wouldn't hurt Tom or me for the world." She sighed, arose, and wandered to the mirror to apply a few deft touches of powder and lipstick. "Sue, I'll have to go down now. You can stay on up here if you like."

"I daren't," said Sue. "Julia would tell Jon I was sulking because I was jealous of her. I'll go down with you."

They descended the stairway hand in hand.

Jon and Julia were surrounded by additional guests who had motored over from near-by estates for the dancing. Maisie, still holding Sue's hand, unconsciously pulled Sue along with her as she hurried forward to greet the new group.

When Sue found herself close to Jon, he touched her arm, asking, "Shall we dance?"

Julia turned her head quickly, sending him a startled, reproachful glance, and his eyes, aided by a quizzical eyebrow, answered hers as plainly as though he had spoken aloud, "Nonsense; you know it's only for a moment. You know I'll return to you."

That swift, secret interchange of glances was so significant of the understanding between them, that Sue felt a sickening conviction that it was already too late for any successful intervention on Maisie's part.

Dancing was as simple and natural to Sue as breathing, but when the music stopped, she stood inert, her arms dangling at her sides in the awkward lifelessness of a mechanical toy that has run down.

At first she did not hear what Jon was saying.

He was frowning a little, and there was a queer brightness in his eyes. "Do you know you dance better than any one I've ever danced with?" Abruptly, he took her arm. "Let's go outside."

"Won't Julia mind?"

"Why should Julia mind?"

"I don't know," she faltered. "I mean, she likes you so much, and I don't think she likes me."

"Oh, rot!" he exclaimed shortly. "Who cares whether or not Julia likes you? I like you."

"Do you?" she asked wistfully. "But, of course, you think I'm just a nice kid. You aren't really interested in me. I mean"—she couldn't help saying it—"I mean the way you are in Julia."

"Sue darling, be your age, which, by the way, is ten years less than Julia's."

"I don't want to be my age. I hate being treated like a baby. I know what I like and what I want, just as well as Julia does—better, because I've known so much longer."

He stared at her for a second, then looking away from her, he said quietly, "But what do you want, Sue?"

"I want you to act as if I were grown up. I want you to take me as seriously as you take Julia. I want you to like me the way you like her."

"But why? You don't like me that way."

"I do—I always have, for years and years, ever since I was twelve."

He took a swift stride toward her,

and grasping her shoulders, stared again into her eyes, his face intent and rather white. Almost instantly though, he freed her and stepped back abruptly.

"For years and years," he mocked. "Ever since you were twelve—six years ago! Six years ago I was thirty-one, and it seems like yesterday! Oh, Sue!"

"What of it?" demanded Sue. "What's age got to do with it?"

"This," he said deliberately. "I think it's pretty bad taste for middle-aged men to chase young girls."

"You, middle-aged?"

"Yes, middle-aged. I may look a bit younger because I'm thin and I've still got my hair. But that can't last long now. I'm due to get fat and become completely bald, almost any day."

"I don't care," she cried obstinately. "You'll still be able to paint, won't you? Or do you expect your hands to become crippled some day next week?"

His laugh was partly relief, but partly something else. "I get it now," he said. "It's the painter you're interested in. That simplifies things. You shall be chief critic and sympathizer. Besides, as soon as I begin to do portraits down here, I'm going to need a fellow painter to keep up my morale."

Sue had listened in sullen silence, but at his last words, a sudden sparkle appeared in her eyes, and her voice was almost cheerful as she answered, grinning, "All right, pal. Shall we go in now?"

A shade of something that might have been disappointment darkened his eyes before he turned to follow her into the house.

Maisie and Julia were obviously waiting for them at the door.

"Jon," called Maisie, hurriedly forestalling Julia, "you aren't really

planning to paint Julia's portrait, are you? When you promised Tom and me not to paint while you are here? You know you said you'd come just to play around with us and forget your work entirely. Tom's going to be awfully disappointed if you spend all your mornings shut up in the studio."

"Well"—Jon seemed at a loss—"of course, I want to do what you and Tom want me to while I am here, but you see I do want to paint Julia. I suppose," he said awkwardly, "I can put it off until another time if Julia doesn't mind waiting."

"I do mind," snapped Julia, her eyes blazing. "You're returning to Europe next month, and if you think I'm going to wait another year——" She whirled furiously on Maisie. "Do you realize, I wonder, just what your selfishness is going to cost Jon? I was to pay him five thousand dollars for my portrait."

Jon glared at her, his face deep red, but he forced himself to say lightly, "Excuse it, please, Maisie. Julia wouldn't understand about you and Tom and me. Naturally, I shan't enter into any engagement which would cut into our time together," he finished graciously.

It was Sue who leaped into the breach. "Jon," she ordered impatiently, "stop being high-hat. Julia is quite right. Of course you must do her portrait. Don't let Maisie work on you. She's trying to make a sentimental fool of you just to show us that she can."

They all stared at her, Jon reproachfully, Julia suspiciously, and Maisie as though she couldn't believe her ears.

"Sue!" And then Maisie closed her mouth, swallowed, stared at Sue, and said carefully, "Sue is right, Jon. I didn't realize my own motives—vanity mostly, and a little jealousy, I guess. Anyhow, I really want you to paint Julia. I'm all apologies, Julia. Come along, Sue."

She smiled pleasantly, but the hand with which she propelled Sue across the room, along the hall, and into Tom's empty study, left blue marks on Sue's arm.

"Now then," she began, closing the door, "what have you to say for yourself, you little double-crosser?"

Sue rubbed her released arm gingerly. "I'm awfully sorry, Maisie, but you just about had Jon stopped, so I had to say something drastic."

"But didn't you want him stopped?"

"No," answered Sue slowly. "I think our only chance is to let him paint Julia."

"Are you crazy? To turn her loose on him for hours every day? Don't you know she is beautiful?"

"I do know how beautiful she is, better than you do, probably. You see, Maisie, I have one advantage over Julia where Jon is concerned. I'm an artist myself, or sort of one, and I'm going to gamble on what I know of that side of Jon."

"You're just a crazy kid," said Maisie wearily. "But have it your own way. After all, it's your funeral."



The next two weeks were intolerable for Sue. Julia had insisted, not unreasonably, that her portrait be painted against her own background, so Jon passed most of his mornings at the Tappin estate. For the past week he had also been remaining there for luncheons, even lingering on into the afternoons as well.

Maisie offered Sue scant sympathy. She refrained from saying, "I told you so," but upon Jon's first dereliction, she had glanced across the luncheon table at Sue, remarking, "Clever child, Sue!" in a voice that dripped sarcasm. Sue could scarcely blame her, since she had deliberately thwarted Maisie's plan in order to substitute a high-flown scheme of her own. She had thought—oh, so fatuously—that a protracted study of Julia's face would force Jon to a correct diagnosis of the real Julia. And it hadn't at all. Instead, their mutual interest in the portrait had drawn them closer, just as Maisie had known it would.

Then, too, he had denied Sue the rôle of critic he had promised her. In fact, she had never seen the portrait, his excuse being that he never let any one look at unfinished work.

"Do you mean that Julia hasn't seen it, either?" she had exclaimed.

"Certainly not. I never let my subjects see what I am doing to them unless, of course, they happen to be artists themselves, in which case they have a doubtful nuisance value. Yes, I know, Sue dear, that that should apply to you, too, but in this particular case there'd be no holding Julia if you were to see it first."

"I don't see why," she protested.

He frowned, and again there was that strange bright light in his eyes, but he only said rather dryly, "You see all right. You understand per-

fectly that it wouldn't be fair to Julia."

He interrupted her embarrassed apologies. "Skip it. You're not any more unfair to Julia than she is to you." Grinning maliciously, he continued, "I'm going to have you see it for the first time together, pretty soon. It will be finished in about two more sittings."

And so now it was finished, and she was driving over to Broadmore with Jon for a preview, as he called it. "Though nothing you or Julia can say will persuade me to change one brush stroke," he had added.

"Then you are quite satisfied with it?"

"Satisfied?" he said scornfully. "No, of course not! When I become satisfied, I'll be through, except for mechanical efforts to repeat my past successes. But, Sue, I'm telling you"—he laughed triumphantly, his voice rising on a note of boyish exuberance—"I've got something this time. I think this is my masterpiece up to now."

All at once, Sue's mood rose to meet his. After all, she did have a sincere, even a passionate, love of painting. True, his success meant her failure, for if his portrait of Julia was truly great, it must be good in character. Since he still admired Julia, it proved that Sue was wrong about her—that there must be some hidden fineness in Julia that his experienced artist's eyes had discovered and transferred to his canvas. If this were true, then Sue's own judgment of her was the result of cheap, vulgar jealousy. And so, when Julia appeared in the doorway, Sue prepared to meet her with propitiatory meekness.

Julia's opening remark changed all that.

"Oh, hello, Sue. Nice of you to drive Jon over. I could have sent

for him if I'd known Tom wanted his car returned."

"Tom doesn't want his car," replied Jon, cheerfully. "I've brought Sue along to criticize the portrait."

Julia smiled scornfully. "And just what value does the famous Jon Kennedy attach to the criticism of a half-baked art student?"

Sue was furious, yet delighted—furious at Julia's rudeness and delighted at Jon's reaction to it.

But his reaction, she saw, was not lost on Julia, for she added at once with a disarming smile, "Forgive me, Sue. It's just that I feel an outsider when you two get arty together."

"All right, let's get going," said Jon, partially mollified.

They followed Julia through a gloomy, walnut-paneled library, across a stiff gilt-and-brocade drawing-room, into an art gallery filled with suits of armor, antique weapons and exactly the sort of paintings the rest of the house led one to expect.

Julia waved an indifferent hand at them. "Jon says father got stung on his pictures, but I just don't believe it. I'll bet he knows more about what pictures are worth than Jon does. Anything father pays money for has got to be good."

Did she really believe this vulgar stuff had any value? Sue glanced swiftly at Jon, but he merely raised one eyebrow and chuckled. "Julia's utter lack of taste doesn't bother him at all," thought Sue, dumfounded. "He just thinks it's funny—this awful house, these awful pictures, and Julia's not knowing how awful they are!"

Because of the skylight the art gallery did well enough as a studio, and at the far end Sue saw Jon's empty easel. He went to a large, ornate cabinet, and unlocking it with a key from his pocket, took out

a canvas which he held so that the painted side remained concealed from Julia and Sue.

"Now then," he said, backing them against the wall, "I think this will be about the right distance." He placed the canvas on the easel, adjusting it to the light.

Then, as he turned to rejoin them, Sue got her first full view of the painting. She was so overcome that she could only cry, "Oh, Jon!" in a quivering gasp of ecstasy.

It was truly a breath-taking affair. He had painted Julia in a jade-green gown, from which an evening wrap of gold tissue jutted out from her arms with the effect of lowering wings. Her body, like some gorgeous tropical bird, swayed forward as though alighting from the sky-blue background.

But the face chilled Sue's heart. Was it possible that he was unaware of what he had done to Julia's face? Or was it that having caught the birdlike suggestion of her pose, he had been unable to resist the temptation to carry it almost to a point of exaggeration? Her black hair was made to appear blacker by high lights only a shade less blue than the background, and her skin was made unnaturally vivid by splashes of scarlet on her mouth and cheek bones. On either side of an exaggerated arched nose, her eyes glittered with the greed of a predatory bird. The beautiful rhythm of line and the brilliant colors made it the most unique, though perhaps the cruelest portrait Sue had ever seen.

And yet, when at last she dared to drag her hypnotized gaze from it to look at Julia, she no longer thought the portrait exaggerated. Contrasted with the almost insane rage that distorted Julia's features, the face in the portrait faded to a mere unpleasant arrogance.



Sue screamed as Julia ripped the portrait from brow to chin, completely ruining Jon's masterpiece.

Frightened, she turned to Jon, but he was leaning lazily against the wall, squinting at his painting with admiring but professionally critical eyes.

Instinctively, she moved closer to him, still watching Julia. She already had placed herself between them when Julia reached carefully

behind her to take from the wall a small fifteenth-century dagger. For a second, Sue had a sensation of screaming without sound, until after a moment of breathless agony, she realized that Julia was moving, not toward Jon, but toward the portrait. Her instant recognition of Julia's purpose released the terror that

paralyzed her throat, but still she uttered no sound.

She must, she told herself, call out now or it would be too late. But she was being torn in two. The latent artist in her was in arms, trying to scream a warning, determined to prevent the destruction of a truly great painting. But the woman in her knew that if Julia succeeded in destroying it, then Jon was hers, Sue's, forever.

When at last she screamed, it was too late. The dagger had ripped through the canvas from brow to chin, completely ruining Jon's masterpiece. Sue turned to Jon, feeling as she saw his sick, shocked face as though she, instead of Julia, had plunged the knife, not into his painting, but into Jon himself.

Through these waves of futile remorse, she became conscious of Julia's raucous tirade.

"So you thought you could show me up to all your highbrow friends, and"—pointing at Sue—"give this scheming little sneak a laugh, too! Well, she's seen it all right, but the rest of your crowd of stuffed shirts never will." She burst into shrill, hysterical laughter. "And you actually thought you could get away with making me look like a cross between a parrot and a buzzard! You thought I'd stand for it because I was crazy about you. Well, you listen to me. I never was crazy about you! It was only that I hated Maisie and Sue. I'd even have married a spying snake like you to spite them. Do you hear me?"

"I hear you," he said quietly. "Have you finished?"

"I've finished—with you and your caricature. To think that people dare call the painter of that"—motioning to the mutilated portrait—"that rotten cartoon, a genius. What a laugh!"

Jon walked slowly to his easel. Sue could have cried at the expression in his eyes. Reverently, he removed it from the easel, and holding it in his hands, faced Julia. For a second, the pain in his eyes was replaced by a gleam of sardonic triumph. "How like you it is, isn't it? And how ironical that I hadn't the remotest idea of its truth when I did it!" He carried the canvas down the long gallery. When he reached the door, he paused to look back, smiling slightly. "My dear Julia," he said mockingly, "you almost convince me that I am, after all, a genius."

He opened the door and was gone.

Julia sprang after him, but suddenly whirled, and with her back against the closed door, confronted Sue. "You—you"—she seemed to be choking—"you are at the bottom of this. You urged him to paint me. I might have guessed you had some trick up your sleeve." She shook the dagger threateningly at Sue. "I ought to kill you!" she cried.

Sue knew well enough that Julia had no intention of resorting to physical violence. Nevertheless, she felt weak, shattered and guilty. She wanted more than anything in the world to escape, but she did not quite dare to thrust Julia away from the door. A physical struggle might snap what was left of Julia's self-control, and she still held that knife.

Then the door opened quietly, and Jon was saying, "Coming, Sue?"

Neither of them spoke until they were nearly home. Then Sue, unable to endure his silence, moved closer to him.

"Jon," she said softly, "I'm so sorry about that wonderful, glorious painting!" She leaned against his shoulder. "And for you to remember me at a time like that, to return

for me——” She stopped to blink back her tears before continuing bravely, “Jon, now that you really know Julia, as she really is, don’t you—— Oh, Jon, don’t you begin to like me a little better? I mean—you know what I mean.”

He did not answer until he had turned the car into a narrow tree-shaded lane and stopped. “You mean, do I love you?” he asked gently, and gathered her into his arms. “Silly little Sue, not to know I love you!” She thought he was going to kiss her, but he released her and moved away, saying, “It’s only that it seems so unfair to you. You’re so young, and I’m afraid that without knowing it, you’ve confused me with my work. Honestly, Sue, isn’t it my painting, not me, that really attracts you?”

A guilty flush spread over her face. If he should ever suspect her part, however passive, in the destruction of his painting! She answered him a little sadly, “Oh, no, Jon. I don’t believe women ever place art above love. We just aren’t made that way. Jon”—she grasped him closer—“Jon, are you sure you love me?”

He took her in his arms again, smiling down into her eyes. “Aren’t you sure—haven’t you been sure for quite some time that it was really you I loved?”

“No,” she answered honestly. “Sometimes I hoped so, but I was never certain, until you came back for me just now. I knew then that you needed me.”

“My darling girl,” he said, laughing, “I came back because I thought you needed me. I came because I loved you, yes; but not even the most heartless brute would have left you there alone, defenseless against that devilish woman.”

“Jon”—she shivered a little in his arms—“Jon, if you don’t mind, please don’t harp on my defenselessness. I’m not as defenseless as you think I am. No woman is.”

But she was defenseless against the surge of rapture that flooded her entire being as his lips pressed down on hers. This was different, she told herself, as the world spun dizzily around her. She wanted to be defenseless against the chaos of his kisses. With eyes closed, she lifted her lips to his again.

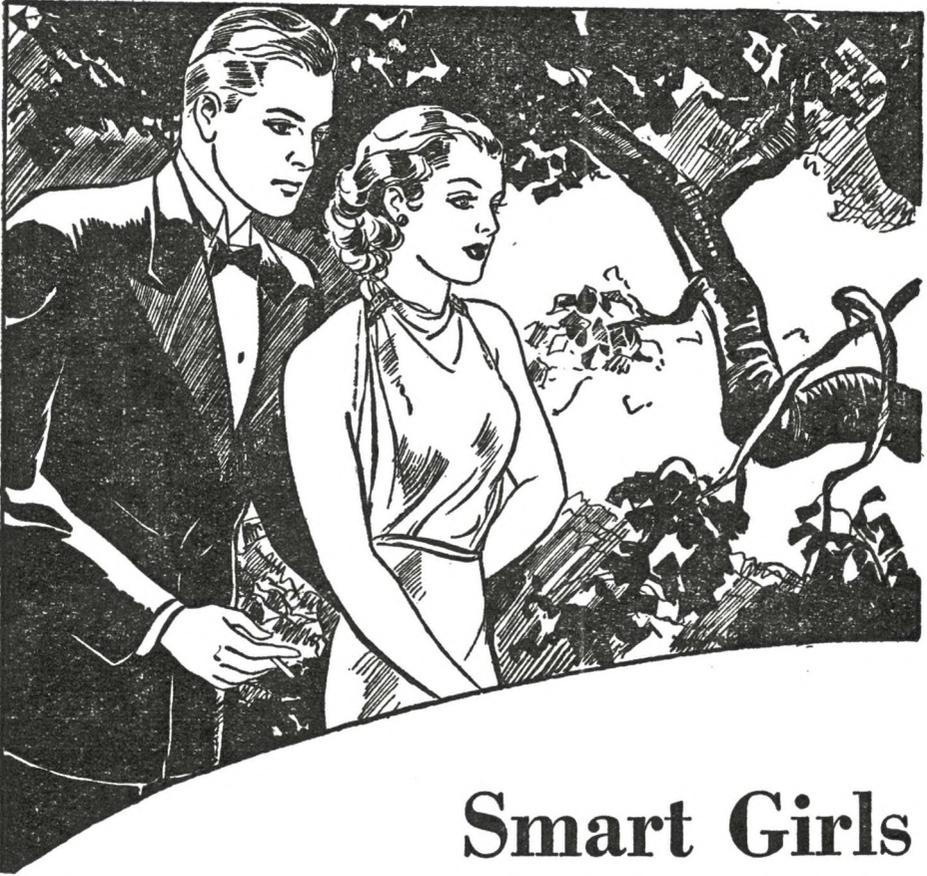
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REUNION

YOU whom I loved those many years ago
 Are deeply framed within my memory;
 You live in every beauty that I see,
 In throbbing, deep-voiced songs you used to know.
 The lonely, empty years go slowly, slow,
 Yet they, too, pass, and I am left still free
 To go my little way indifferently.
 It does not matter; I would have it so.

Though many came who trod the path you made,
 Longing to clear the way and break the stone,
 They lingered, hesitated, but, afraid,
 Went on, and I am still alone, alone;
 But I am sure the glad day will come when,
 Beloved, you and I shall meet again.

ANNE ROBINSON



Smart Girls

THERE was no one at the station to meet Judy Faverson. It was quite dark and the rain came down in sheets. The one lantern above the waiting-room door was the only light anywhere in the tree-enshrouded night. At first, she didn't even see old Cliff's taxi.

There was no sign of Ned's big blue coupé, though she had wired him that she was coming. For a moment Judy stood shivering in the rainy darkness, wondering again what had happened to make Ned wire her to come home immediately, and then not be there to meet her.

She still carried his telegram in a crumpled yellow wad inside her gray

glove. He was having a party at which he wanted her to be present, he had said, and the command had been so strange that she had returned from her short stay in the city with hardly half of her trousseau shopping done.

She knew that she dared not anger Ned. She had hated him from the first time she had seen him, loathed his kisses, but she was going to marry him. Nothing could stop her, now that she had made up her mind.

She moved down the platform, holding her umbrella low, so that the driving rain wouldn't ruin her new red hat. She was thinking that



Marry Money

By Thelmar Cox

she'd find old Cliff and make him take her out to Bellaire, Ned's plantation home, at once. She didn't know that any one else was there until she had run squarely into a man, jabbing him in the face with the tip of her umbrella.

"Why don't you look where you're going, you little nitwit?" he groaned. "It's against the law to go around poking out people's eyes with dangerous weapons."

He loomed there before her in the dim light, a tall man in a wet over-

coat, with water pouring off the brim of his turned-down hat, so that it spattered his scowling face. He had apparently descended from the parlor car, for he was carrying a suitcase too, and he hadn't been on the Pullman coming down from the city.

He was just another workingman sent down by the Eastern company that now owned her grandfather's factory, Judy decided. There had been a steady stream of them since that day soon after her grandfather's

death, when her grandmother had signed away their rights to the factory and to Grande Coe, the beautiful old Faveron home, in order to pay the debts her grandfather had left.

"You don't have to be so rude," Judy snapped. "You must have been working at it a long time to develop such a nice technique. Will you get out of my way and let me find a taxi?"

She had her face toward the light. The man stood staring at her, not moving at all. Suddenly, he laughed.

"I suppose you're one of those proud Southern beauties I've heard about," he drawled. "You live in a house with tall white columns, and a lowly engineer would just be dust beneath your feet. I ought to consider myself honored that you deigned to punch me in the eye with your umbrella. It's nothing that you would dream of apologizing for, is it?"

"You're the rudest man I ever met," Judy said angrily. "And I'm only sorry I didn't hurt you worse. Now, will you get out of my way and let me find a taxi, or do you expect me to stand here and drown in this rain?"

"With a temper like that, you should have red hair," he decided. "But it is brown, isn't it? And your nose tilts. You've no idea of how frightened I am of girls whose noses tilt. I always fall in love with them. But even if it is raining, you're not going until you apologize. Come on now, I'm waiting!"

"Just try to make me," Judy gritted.

She knew, even as she said it, that she had gone too far. She couldn't see his face, but there was steel in his voice.

"You're a spoiled little brat," he growled, "and too grown-up for the

spanking you deserve. But let this be a lesson to you!"

He pulled her to him and tilted her head. Hard, firm lips came down in a savage, mocking kiss that seemed to sear her mouth with flame. Then Judy jerked free of his grasp and was running blindly down the platform toward old Cliff's taxi.

"I'll pay you back for that!" she flung over her shoulder in answer to his ringing laugh. She threw in her bag beside the huddled, sleeping form of the old darky, and commanded him to take her out to Bellaire.

All the way out to Bellaire, Judy's sense of foreboding grew. She tried to tell herself that it was foolish to let herself be so disturbed by Ned's telegram and the encounter with the stranger at the station.

It wasn't likely that Grayson had told Ned about the bargain she had made with him, she reassured herself. Her grandfather's former secretary knew as well as she did that he'd never get the ten thousand dollars unless she married Ned, and that if Ned thought it was his money she was after, he'd never marry her.

Ned's popularity with the girls had grown unbelievably since the Eastern company had sent him down to be her grandfather's business manager two years ago. Then inherited money had enabled him to retire and establish himself in Bellaire as a real Southern gentleman. But none of the girls who had tried to marry Ned had been quite as desperate as she.

For leaving the home that had sheltered Faverons for generations to live in a small factory cottage had almost broken old Cynthia Faveron's heart, Judy knew. Her grandmother had aged terribly on leaving Grande Coe, but she'd held

her proud white head high, and had stoutly maintained that, but for his unexpected death, her husband would have been successful in his experiments, and the Faverson home would have been saved.

She would never learn the truth, Judy vowed. She'd marry Ned Wheeler, so that there'd be money to buy that incriminating ledger from Grayson. Frail little Cynthia would never know that the man she had loved for a lifetime had played the stock market with money belonging to stockholders, and fixed his account to make it legitimate loss.

The stockholders' losses had been repaid, for old Cynthia had sold Grande Coe to cover them. She had endured that gallantly, but dishonor would kill her.

Ned's party was already in progress as they went up the driveway. There were a number of cars parked before the door, and the house blazed with light. She should have gone home and changed to evening dress, Judy thought as she waited for old Ben to open the door, but Ned's not meeting her after she'd wired him had frightened her.

She knew, as soon as she walked into the living room, that something was wrong. For at sight of her, the hum of voices died abruptly to a stunned silence, while her brown eyes searched the group and found

Ned beside beautiful, blond Gloria Meadows.

"Why, hello, Judy," Ned said coolly, his dark gaze traveling from the red hat down to her wet slippers, and coming back to smile icily into Judy's bewildered eyes. "So nice of you to come home in time for my party. We were just going in to dinner."

Mary Marston put her hand to her mouth to cover a gasp of dismay, and Fern Childress was trying to tell her something with her eyes. Some of the men reddened and turned away, and others were careful not to look at her. It wasn't that she had broken in on a formal dinner party clad in a damp, travel-worn suit, either. There was something dreadfully wrong that none of them dared tell her—something that made Ned look at her with amused scorn that chilled her blood.

Then Jim Gaines offered Judy his arm and, somehow, they were moving into the dining room.

"Glad you're back, Judy. But, my stars, why did you come to this party?"

Jim's lips had hardly moved, but the whispered words sent a shiver up Judy's spine. She was so sick with fright that she clung to Jim's arm to steady herself, for the room was whirling around her. And it was surely pity in the faces of her friends! But why?

Not even when she saw the table



did she understand. It was most certainly an announcement party, for there was a huge bridal bouquet on the silver platter, and the place cards were little doll brides. Then all the laughing voices in the room blurred into a roaring sound that shook Judy's world to pieces about her head.

"Gloria and Ned," some one had written in slanting backhand.

Gloria and Ned! It was surely a mistake! But Judy knew it wasn't. It didn't matter that she still had Ned's diamond on her finger, that she had been in the city buying her trousseau. Ned was announcing his engagement to Gloria, and it had amused him to invite her to the party!

Judy realized dimly that every eye there was turned on her instead of the beautiful girl in the green satin dress, and she forced herself to smile. Down the long table her eyes found Ned, but he wasn't looking at her. He smiled at Gloria, making the incredible thing true. For some reason she didn't know, Ned was jilting her, when she simply had to marry him!

"But aren't you going to wish us happiness, my dear Judy?" some one was saying, and Judy lifted tortured eyes to meet Ned's taunting smile, while her friends sat in horrified silence.

"I'm sure that I wish you all the happiness in the world," Judy choked. "It's—it's nice that you've found a bride so beautiful."

Ned smiled. He was like a lean panther poised to spring, Judy felt. There was cruelty about his thin lips, his eyes were dark with contempt when he looked at her, and she hated him more than ever.

Under the edge of the lace cloth, Judy's fingers dug into her palms. She longed to get out of this suffo-

cating room and run as far away as she could go, but her Faveron pride made her sit there. Ned stood up. He took something from his pocket, and Judy's heart thudded painfully when she saw that he held a scrap of gray paper in his hand.

Far off, the doorbell tinkled and old Ben spoke to some one in the hall, but Judy was only vaguely conscious of it.

"No man wants his friends to think him a cad," Ned drawled. "And I believe it is customary to break your engagement to one girl before marrying another one. So I want to read you this scrap of a note that seems to be in Judy's own handwriting. There's no address or signature, but I think it speaks for itself!"

He unfolded the torn bit of paper, and Judy sat still as death, knowing what was coming. For Ned, somehow, had obtained the note that she had written Grayson from the city.

"Don't worry about my running away," Ned read, his mouth a thin white line of anger. "For I'm coming back to marry Ned. I'm not the least bit in love with him, but he has money——"

Ned's voice broke off abruptly, and Gloria laughed. It had been Gloria who had found that scrap in Grayson's wastebasket and had given it to Ned, Judy guessed. Grayson had a room at the Meadows's home, and Gloria had had no scruples about betraying Judy, for she'd been determined to marry Ned herself.

"Smart girls marry money, my dear Judy," Ned jeered. "But at least they're careful enough not to put their intentions down on paper!"

"But Judy can explain," some one said hotly, and Judy's tear-dimmed eyes saw that it was Fern Childress

who had come to her rescue. Down the table, her friends were expecting her to defend herself, and there was nothing she could say. She rose slowly to her feet, perceiving that she had to get out of that awful room and away from the frozen, staring faces before the tears trickled down her white cheeks. It wasn't until then that she saw the man in the doorway, and her fierce Faveron pride came to her rescue.

He still wore the wet raincoat, and now that he had removed his hat, she saw that his hair was dark above a lean, handsome face in which amused gray eyes must have witnessed that dreadful scene from the beginning. The mouth that had kissed her so mockingly was twisted into a taunting smile that made Judy's anger overcome her shame.

"And smart girls can change their minds," Judy said clearly. "Go ahead and marry Gloria, if you like. It doesn't matter to me!"

She pushed back her chair. Flinging Ned's ring down on the table, she turned to go, when the man at the door halted her by the astonishing thing he was saying.

"A smart girl changes her mind about marrying money when she falls in love with somebody else, my dear Ned," drawled the newcomer. "Judy and I loved each other at first sight, and she was coming home to tell you so. You couldn't jilt Judy if you wanted to, because she was giving you up to marry me!"

The room was washed of all sound. No one seemed to breathe while the gray-eyed man shrugged off the wet raincoat and threw it to old Ben. The brown tweed suit he wore was old and rumpled, and he didn't look like a man with money. He looked like what he had said he was—a wandering engineer. But for some reason or other, his calm

assertion that she was his fiancée was making Ned furious.

"I don't believe it, Dennis Lane," he rasped. "You hated me when we were children together at grandfather's and I was his favorite. Then when I had a much better position with the company than you did, you disliked me for that, and now since I've inherited the family money — You always did fancy yourself a knight-errant rushing to the aid of a lady in distress. I don't think you ever saw Judy before in your life!"

Dennis Lane walked slowly across the room to Judy. The smile on his lean face had deepened, but even when he placed his arm about her, Judy saw that his cold glance never wavered from Ned's face. He was the cousin Ned had seemed to despise with a peculiar hatred, for he had been quite vehement when she'd suggested inviting him, as Ned's only relative, down for the wedding. Now she realized that Dennis Lane returned the enmity, and it was because of that, and not for any feeling toward her that he had come to her rescue.

"Of course it's true," Judy said through dry lips. "And now, you can take me home, Dennis!"

But Dennis Lane had no idea of going. He forced Judy down at the dinner table and seated himself beside her. Somehow, the dinner dragged on. When it was over, Judy resolved that at last she would get away, but Dennis Lane again prevented her.

"Oh, no, you don't, my dear Judy," he declared. "There's a dance, and we're going to stay for it. We'll be the gayest people here, and I'll be so devoted, Ned will be sick of his own medicine. If you want Ned back, you'd better convince him that you are my girl. He

hates me worse than poison, and he'll forgive you anything to get you away from me. You do want him, even after the way he's treated you?" It was more a statement of fact than a question.

Judy looked at him and knew that he was speaking the truth. He was the one person in the world who could help her marry the Wheeler money, in spite of that betraying letter. But when he stood there with his honest gray eyes searching her face, it was strangely hard to confess it.

"I—I do want him back," Judy was forced to admit.

The scorn in his gray eyes burned deep into her, and she felt herself trembling. She told herself that she didn't care what he thought, if only he'd help her to get Ned back, so that there'd be money for those papers Grayson had.

"Then that bit of letter I heard him reading when I came in was actually yours, and it's true," he said coldly. "I thought you might be different. You're not in love with Ned. You even dislike him. I can see it in your eyes. Just another girl who looks at price tags, and pays out her heart's money for tinsel when she should have gold! What are you going to do when love comes along?"

"I'm in love with Ned," Judy answered sharply. But she couldn't meet the gray eyes. There was something so disturbing in his gaze that it set little flutes singing in her heart.

"I've always known I was going to fall in love some day with a girl who had brown eyes," he told her slowly. "When I saw you there in the rain, my silly heart said you might be the girl. But I see you aren't. I wouldn't let myself love a girl who'd marry money. So you'd

better remember that I'm helping you because I despise Ned; and not because I love you."

The orchestra began to play on the side porch, and a couple came up, so there was no chance of answering him. They moved toward the dance floor, and he took her in his arms. Dancing with him was sheer joy, and as the evening wore on, Judy discovered Ned's glance turned more and more frequently in her direction, with anger growing on his face like a dark cloud.

"My beloved cousin is deciding that perhaps it is true you came home just to tell him that you love me," Dennis mocked. "The rain has stopped, and now we'll walk in the garden. Come along!"

Her pulses beat a warning signal, but Judy knew she dared not disobey. She walked down the lilac-bordered path in the moonlight with him. Suddenly, he turned and caught her in his arms, and his warm, compelling lips found hers in a kiss that swept away her will to fight, filling her with a heady sweetness that was like the glow of a rare old wine in her blood.

Even while her lips yielded, Judy knew she had made a mistake to be alone with him. For now that he had kissed her again, there was no denying what she hadn't wanted to admit back there in the rain.

She was in love with Dennis. She had been in love with him since that first moment—had given her heart to a man who hated her. And he had to keep on hating her, for she could never tell him the truth.

"I hate you!" Judy choked, pulling away from him. "You kiss me again, and I'll—I'll——"

"You'll return it again? Don't think I kissed you because I wanted to. I despise you for the scheming little gold digger you are. That was



strictly for Ned's benefit!"

Over his shoulder, she saw Ned and Gloria in the path behind them, and knew that was why Dennis had kissed her. In that quick glance, it seemed to her that Ned was furious to find her in Dennis's arms. Yes, she told herself, it might be possible to get Ned back.

But pretending to love Dennis was as dangerous as playing with dynamite. How could she go on, when her lips hungered for more of his kisses, and she couldn't keep the glow out of her eyes when she looked at him? How could she make Den-

"You needn't even be polite to me when there's no one around," she snapped. "Remember, my one aim in announcing my engagement to you, is to get Ned back!"

nis hate her, when her heart longed so passionately for the love she had no right to?

Tom Grayson phoned the next morning and ordered Judy to come over to the factory immediately. She slipped

into a lavender linen dress and went off without her breakfast, leaving Cynthia and old Mandy Lou fuming about it.

She found him alone in his office, staring out the open window at the sun-baked landscape. At sight of the greed in his pale eyes and in the set of his thick lips, Judy couldn't

help flinching. There was no mercy in the man, she felt, and seeing him made her frightened that she would not be able to get the money he demanded.

"I've heard about last night," he began harshly. "That little blond devil took that piece of letter out of my wastebasket and gave it to Wheeler. But if you think you're going to put me off, you're mistaken. That engineer who's down to inspect the factory machinery hasn't any money. So I might as well hand that ledger over to the authorities!"

The room wavered before Judy's eyes, and she gripped the edge of the desk to keep from falling. There was a movement beyond the window, as if some one had walked by it, but Judy didn't think of it then. For she was glaring at Tom Grayson, aching for something solid in her hand to bring down across that leering face.

"Of course, the stockholders got their money through the sale of Grande Coe," he went on smoothly. "But that ledger will create quite a scandal in this country, if I show it."

"You must wait!" Judy said feverishly. "You must give me time! I'll try to get Ned back, and then you'll have your money."

"Well, you'd better," he growled. "I'm in love with Gloria myself, but she can't see me as long as she thinks she can get Ned Wheeler. So, you see, I have a double reason for wanting you to get him."

Judy met Dennis Lane before her own gate, though she didn't see him until he spoke her name. He was standing there, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his khaki breeches, his stubborn hair tousled. His gaze went to the shabby cottage and came back to her.

She wanted to cry out against the contempt she saw in his eyes, but knew she mustn't. Even if Dennis loved her, she couldn't marry him. For Dennis didn't have ten thousand dollars to spare. But how could she make herself remember that, when her foolish heart cried out for his arms around her again?

"I brought you my mother's ring," Dennis said gruffly. "It's the one thing that can convince Ned I mean to marry you. No other girl has ever worn it. But it's worth letting you have it for a while to see that Ned marries a girl with an adding machine where her heart should be." He paused, stared at her for a moment, then burst out:

"But why do your eyes have to be so big and brown? Why do you have to look so exactly like the girl I've always known I'd meet some day? Your nose even tilts, in the most enchanting way."

Judy took the ring. But she couldn't see the sapphire for the mist of tears in her eyes. He might love her if he knew the truth—if he knew that it made her sick with dread to think of marrying Ned, and that only the happiness of old Cynthia kept her from begging him to love her.

"The color of my eyes doesn't concern you!" she snapped. "Nor how much you admire my nose. You needn't even be polite to me when there's no one around. I don't want you making love to me. I suppose you'll have to take me to Fern's picnic to-night down on the river. But remember, my one aim is to get Ned back!"

"And you remember I despise you," he retorted. "It's going to be a pleasure to leave you with Ned. But you'd better work fast! I'm going in a day or so, and I hope I never see you again!"

The crowd had already gathered on the sand bar by the river when Dennis and Judy drove up that night. A bonfire was going, and some of the group were unpacking picnic baskets and putting their contents on a red-and-white tablecloth on the ground. Couples in canoes paddled up and down the river, and Sammy Johnson's banjo was twanging a song.

There was a sudden hush of voices around the fire, and Judy knew that they had been discussing her.

"You'd think she'd have some pride and stay home, after last night," Gloria's low voice said tartly. "As if we didn't know that she's just claiming to be engaged to him to save her face! I know the game she's playing, but if she thinks she's going to get Ned now——"

Gloria's tones were threatening in the silence. Across the cloth, her eyes darkened with insolence as she met Judy's gaze. Ned had come up with a bucket of water, and seeing him, Judy wanted to turn and run. But she knew she had to stay and fight.

"You haven't seen my ring, have you, Fern?" Judy asked, holding out her hand. Dennis's arm dropped lightly about her quivering shoulders, and the girls crowded up to see.

Ned's mouth was grim, and he said little during the supper. Judy began to hope again. As much as he could love any one, Ned loved her, she reasoned. That letter had humiliated him, and it would drive him to marry Gloria, unless she could make him forget it completely.

It was then that her eyes fell on the canoes, and a daring plan entered her head. It was so desperate that it made her catch her breath. If she overturned a canoe, and Ned

thought she was drowning, in his fear for her safety he'd become frantic, and she could make him declare his love again.

Dennis went along graciously when she asked him to take her canoeing. Most of the crowd sat around the camp fire crooning a cowboy song to the tinkle of Sammy's banjo, Ned among them. Since the moon was coming up, there'd be no chance of his missing what was going to happen.

The big cypress stump in the river before the bonfire would serve as an excuse for the canoe's turning over, she decided, and Dennis had said that he could swim. He would be in no danger.

There was a tight feeling around her throat as they neared the stump and she casually picked up the extra paddle, dipping it lightly in the water. Then the stump loomed up beside the canoe, and Judy drove her paddle against it savagely, flinging her body with the dangerously tilting canoe, so that the next instant she and Dennis were both thrown into the water.

Judy shot back to the surface, meaning to call for help. But she hadn't counted on striking her head on the edge of the overturned canoe. Everything went black. She felt herself sinking again, and she knew no more until she half opened her eyes to find herself lying on warm sand, with some one holding her head.

"Oh, darling, darling, open your eyes!" It was Dennis Lane's voice. "I love you! I only knew just now, when I couldn't find you in that dark water, how tightly you hold my heart in your two hands. Open your eyes, sweet, and tell me that you love me, too!"

Through her lashes Judy saw his tense, anguished features, and real-

ized that, even though there was an interested ring of faces about her in the moonlight, Dennis didn't know they were there.

There was a movement in the crowd, and harsh hands seized Judy, pulling her from Dennis's arms. Her eyes flew wide open, and she sat up abruptly. For Ned Wheeler had dropped on his knees beside her, and at sight of him, Judy knew that the game had worked. She had won.

Ned's clothing was wet, too, and his eyes were hot with jealousy.

"Take your hands off Judy," Ned commanded. "I saved her! But for my finding her under that canoe, she'd have been gone! She's not going to marry you, because I love her. She belongs to me!"

"Ned," Gloria cried sharply. "Ned, hadn't you better remember that we're engaged? If you think I'm going to allow you to make a fool of me——"

But Ned Wheeler ignored Gloria. His arm tightened around Judy's shoulders, and his strained voice was fierce with passion.

"I must have you back, Judy," he cried. "When I thought you were drowning, I knew you were the girl I loved. You've always been such a high and mighty Faveron, Judy, that when I saw that scrap of letter, it made me wild. I couldn't rest until I'd punished you! But now I don't care even if you do want the money—I've got to have you! I can't let you marry Dennis!"

They were all as still as statues, waiting for Judy's answer. Her eyes moved away from Dennis's level

gaze, because it was like a dull blade driven bluntly into her heart. Her eyes found Gloria's angry face and moved on to meet the triumphant gloating in Grayson's greedy face.

"Oh, Ned darling," said Judy, "I was so afraid you wouldn't come back to me! I—I thought I could marry Dennis, but it was only because you'd hurt me so. You—you do still want me, in spite of everything?"

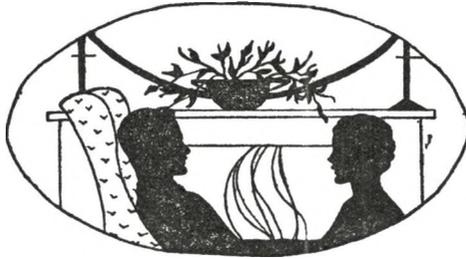
Judy knew that, back of her shoulder, Ned was grinning at Dennis Lane, but she did not turn her head.

Once she had thought she could marry Ned and be a patient, dutiful wife, but that had been before Dennis had come along to take her heart and keep it. Now—— Dennis's voice broke in on her thoughts.

"But I'm not going until you tell me that you don't love me, Judy," he insisted stubbornly. "I don't believe you are in love with Ned. You couldn't have kissed me as you did if you hadn't meant it! And you wouldn't shudder when Ned puts his arms around you, as you did just now." As she stared at him in white-faced silence, he commanded:

"Look at me and tell me that you love him! Oh, Judy, I won't let you throw away your life for money. It isn't true that smart girls marry money. Smart girls marry because they've found the ones they love, because love is a precious treasure you can't buy in a shop. I warn you, I've no intention of walking away and leaving you, unless you can convince me that Ned's the one you really love!"

Judy's fingers were digging red





Judy held out her hand, and the girls crowded up to see her ring. Unreasonably, there was a queer, tight feeling about her heart as she received their good wishes.

half moons of despair into her palms. There were moist beads of torture on her upper lip, but she forced herself to glance up into the gray eyes and laugh. At the sound of that

laughter, Dennis stepped back a pace as if he had been struck a physical blow.

"Oh, go away, Dennis," she said harshly. "Isn't your hatred of Ned

appeased just by knowing that you are leaving me to marry him? I've paid you back for that kiss at the station, and now we're even! Didn't I tell you that I would? You were so sure you hated me, that I couldn't resist trying to make you fall in love with me! You called me a rude little Southern beauty, but didn't you know that flirting comes as easy as breathing to Southern girls? As if I've ever loved any man but Ned!"

Dennis turned without a word and started for his car. Judy sat on the sand, staring after him. Then she rose to her feet, reaching down blindly to shake the sand from her wet dress. And in that moment, Gloria's shrill voice cut into the stillness.

"Stick around a minute, big boy," she called after Dennis. "You don't want to miss this. I'd never have said anything if she'd stayed out of my way with Ned. But I don't think Ned will have her as a precious gift when he knows the truth. And I'm still willing to go on with our plans, Ned."

Judy's blood ran cold. For suddenly she knew that there had been some one at Tom Grayson's window that morning, and it had been Gloria! If that were true, Gloria knew about the ledger and meant to tell. Within twenty-four hours, everybody for miles would know that the Faverson honor had been smirched, and there'd be no keeping it from her grandmother.

"Oh, no, Gloria," Judy choked. "Oh, please——"

But Gloria's blue eyes were blazing with fury, and Judy knew miserably that there was no stopping her.

"I knew there was something funny about that letter I gave you, Ned," Gloria began. "So I've been

trying to find out what Tom was up to. Well, Tom has discovered a nice skeleton in the Faverson closet, and he's been trying to get money out of Judy. I heard her promise to make a special attempt to get you back, Ned, so that she could pay him. But I don't think you're going to enjoy having the granddaughter of a thief for a bride, my dear Ned!"

Gloria's rasping voice went on, giving the details she had heard that morning. Before she had finished, Judy felt Ned's hand drop from her arm, and saw him step back from her. She didn't have to look at his face to know the disgust that was written there. The harm was done, but she was free of Tom Grayson's threat! She didn't have to marry Ned. She was free to marry Dennis!

She drew in her breath with a painful sob, realizing that she couldn't ask him to take her back into his heart—not after he had stood there on the fringe of that crowd, listening to the shameful story Gloria had told.

"It's all quite true, Ned," Judy said bitterly. "But it was to save Cynthia from knowing! There wasn't anything in the world I wouldn't have done to keep the knowledge from her. Now it's too late! I don't love you. I told myself that in time I might learn to, but even when I knew I couldn't ever, I meant to marry you just the same for the money Grayson demanded."

Ned moved over beside Gloria. His face was blazing with righteous indignation as he looked back at Judy.

"A fine mess you were trying to get me into," he fumed, but even in the pale light, there was something queer and frightened about his sharp

features. "Thank Heaven, Gloria loved me enough to tell the truth, before I'd made a fool of myself by marrying you!"

Judy turned, her feet stumbling across the sand. She didn't stop until the man in damp clothing stood there in her path, blocking her way. He held out his arms, and his unsteady fingers gripped her so hard that her shoulders ached with pain.

"You sweet, gallant little fool!" said Dennis Lane. "I love you. Now, do you think you can stand right here for about two minutes while I give Mr. Ned Wheeler a couple of black eyes?"

He did not wait for her answer. With a bound, he was across the sandy beach and had Ned by the collar.

It was only a matter of moments before Ned was sprawled on the sand, his face bleeding, and Gloria bending anxiously over him.

"I don't know who stole the money and fixed the books," Dennis Lane told the silent group. "Perhaps Judy's grandfather did, but I don't think so. And I've been watching you, Grayson. You haven't told all you know. Do you want a thrashing too, or will you talk?"

"Oh, I'll talk," Grayson said sullenly. "I wasn't going to let him marry Gloria, not even if I had to send him to prison. I thought at

first that the old man took it, even if I had always found him honest. But lately, I've been thinking maybe Wheeler didn't inherit all that money he seems to have. And he did have a swell chance of stealing from the old man. Let me go, Lane, and I'll give you the proof of his guilt!"

Ned Wheeler struggled to his feet, protesting his innocence. Angry voices shouted him down, and eager hands seized him to prevent escape. But Judy did not see. For Dennis was coming toward her. He picked her up as tenderly as if she had been a child, and carried her to his car.

"You've got to say you love me, Judy," he said softly, as he put her on the seat. "Oh, it is true, isn't it, darling? I'm just a poor engineer, but the courts will reclaim Grande Coe for your grandmother from Ned's estate. And if you think you could love me enough to live in a small apartment for a while, I'd work so hard for you, darling."

"Idiot!" Judy blurted out. "As if I cared about the money! Oh, my dearest dear, don't you think you can kiss me? We have all the years of our life to talk!"

But Dennis Lane needed no urging. He took her in his arms, his lips finding hers in a kiss that erased the misery of the last few days, and was a promise of all the happiness to come.





Leap Year Lady

By Vivian Grey

A SERIAL—Part II.

CHAPTER III.

THE gleaming steel of the surgical instrument held Corliss's gaze and seemed in some strange way to hypnotize her. She was quite powerless to either speak or move. Norry moved closer still, until his coat sleeve all but touched that of Cartwright. Corliss watched his hand lift—his strong surgeon's hand with the scalpel gripped in it.

It was then that Corliss screamed—a sharp, high sound issued from her lips that seemed to cut through the night air like a knife.

Cartwright started. Norry stood staring and grinning a little bit foolishly.

"Say, Farson"—Tony had turned to the other man almost angrily—"what's the idea of walking around with a thing like that in your hands!"

Corliss made a mental note of the fact that it was much to his credit that he did not flinch or move back away from it when her scream had called his attention to the scalpel. He did not even make a gesture to take it from the other man.

"Oh, this!" Farson looked down

at the blade with a surgeon's appreciation of something fine in the way of instruments. "I'd forgotten I'd picked it up. New. I'd been admiring it. Guess it would look pretty deadly to a layman like you or Corliss. Sorry! Hate to make people uncomfortable."

Meanwhile a thousand things had flashed through the mind of the watching girl, chief among them, a wish that Flame might have wished to stay with her brood a bit longer

instead of going to seek new ventures in the ever-alluring-to-her field of romance. Flame would have known exactly what move to make to have robbed such a moment of its dreadful intent and threat. While she—Corliss—stood helpless watching the wicked gleam of steel tempered to the fineness of dealing with human flesh, and flashing in her brother's hands at a time when he was almost sure to be emotionally unbalanced.

"Came up," Farson was going on almost carelessly, "for a drink. Corliss always has some left. She's clever that way. Never lets us quite drink her out!"

"Norry," Corliss finally found a strained, nervous voice, "for goodness' sake don't ever walk around with a thing like that in your hand again! You take ten years off the far end of my life doing that. I'm—I'm shattered. Tony, if your hands are steady enough, pour him a drink!"

Cartwright poured the drink. Farson downed it with no ceremony, then turned to the door.

"Thanks, sis," he said. "You're always a life saver. I'll toddle along now. Sorry to have interrupted you."

"Norry," Corliss hesitated to speak, yet she had to ask the question, "you're not alone down there?"

"Oh, no! Vida's down there. At least bodily. Whether her thoughts are or not"—with a touch of irony. And then the door closed behind him.

Corliss stood taut for a moment after he had gone.

"You are all unnerved," Tony observed.

"Can you blame me?" Her voice was not quite steady yet. "And I thought he had that knife out for you."

His hand reached out and claimed hers and held it for a moment before he replied.

"Don't ever mind a thing like that—that is, if it should happen again. I hope it won't in front of you, anyhow. But otherwise, I really don't mind and so you mustn't, either."

The girl stared at him a moment. So many people regarded him as the average male flirt or rounder, lacking in courage and a great many of the more manly virtues. But Tony had more than those, he had an amazing and courageous disregard for consequences. He was quite fearless in opposition to all theory about men of his type. There was much about him besides his natural charm and fascination, to admire, Corliss thought.

"You frighten me when you talk like that," she said finally. "Frighten me and fascinate me and make me

THE STORY SO FAR: Corliss Landry, one of three wealthy children who occupy an old house on Washington Square, New York, is in love with Tony Cartwright. Tony, however, is a hopeless flirt and at a dance she sees him kissing her brother's wife, Vida. When Tony takes her home that evening Vida's husband, Norry, appears in the living room where they are having a drink, with a surgeon's scalpel in his hand, and a strange, not quite sane look in his eyes.

more hopelessly than ever your admiring slave!" But she shivered slightly as she spoke. The spell that Norry had cast over her had not yet been quite broken.

"Don't shiver," Tony said. "It's all over now."

"But I'm not so sure. I'm not sure yet of what Norry had in his mind when he came up here. It may not have been quite so guileless as he would have had us think. It may not have been as accidental—his having that scalpel in his hand. And things he said had a double meaning."

"Forget it, lovely, and let's go on with our party! Come drink to me, that I still live!" He put a glass in her hand. Corliss lifted it.

"To us," said Corliss, "and the evening, whatever it may bring."

They drank. Cartwright put down his glass first. He took Corliss's then and put that down also.

Corliss waited pliantly and as she knew he would, Tony took her in his arms.

"You're very tempting, Corliss," he said after a little space of holding her close. "And you make it so confounded difficult to be decent. After all, you're just a baby compared with me. Why don't you have some of the sharp corners of the young things of your set; things that either frighten or bore anything but flaming youth away from them? I mean, do as some of these young kids do, make it too utterly a game of wits and elbows, so that a man feels he'd rather go to a gymnasium and be done with it. You're smooth and sophisticated—too much so for your own good."

Corliss only smiled for reply. She thought gratefully of Flame. Tony was seeing some of Flame's qualities in her. Flame had had all the things that make men want to

linger, had them and knew how to use them.

"You're all lure," Tony was continuing. "And soft, friendly, inviting curves of attitude. You're dangerous. A man's good resolutions are like mist in the wind with you around. Come! Get away from me and bring on some food. Let me get my mind on something else. Give me that cold chop! Let me get my teeth into it. A little action is required!"

"You prefer a cold chop to me"—in mocking sadness as she handed the chop to him.

"The preference isn't mine, young lady. It's a choice I made or a decision rather, years ago—never to be caught being caddish to a young girl."

"But who'd catch you?" she asked impishly. She grinned up at him over a hard-boiled egg she was munching.

"Myself"—suddenly serious. "I have just the littlest bit of a code left, Corliss."

"I didn't know there was such a thing any more."

"That's a dirty one, but perhaps I deserve it."

"No, Tony, I wasn't even thinking of that. It really doesn't make much difference what people deserve and what they don't, and I'm surprisingly uninterested in that about you. I don't care what you've been. I could even fail to see a lot that you will be and do." She paused for a moment. When she went on, her words were deliberate: "I want you. No matter what you are, were or will be, I want you. That's putting the thing into the simplest English. And I'll always be that way."

Cartwright looked into his almost empty glass.

"It will be a satisfaction to you some day, when you're married to



Corliss screamed as Norry moved toward them, a surgeon's scalpel in his hand. He grinned foolishly, as though he did not realize what he was doing.

some other fellow, to know that I forget easily and completely."

Corliss only smiled. There was no gayety in the gesture. Instead,

there was a peculiarly calm, resigned determination.

They finished their food with hot coffee. Corliss sensed as they faced

each other, a sort of strain and unnaturalness. She had hoped the quietness of her apartment would have some effect on him, that it might make him see hitherto unnoticed and desirable qualities about her, that it might in some way bring them closer. But it seemed to produce in the man only a wariness. The four walls of a woman's home seemed to impress him as a trap.

Corliss felt his caution as an actually concrete thing, as a weight.

"You've never really taken me out, Tony," she said. "I think tonight's the time. Take me dancing somewhere."

"It's never been my custom to take babies out late at night but perhaps in this one instance——"

"Fine!" she cut in brightly. "I won't dress. We'll slum."

Corliss was a bit bright and hard the rest of the evening. No use, she thought, to let softness frighten Tony away. She sparkled with the sharp clarity of a diamond. It was well into the morning when Cartwright said:

"I'm going to take you home now, baby thing."

Corliss smiled up at him gayly.

"I've had a swell time, Tony," she said.

Cartwright was careful in helping her on with her wrap to make no false moves. Corliss smiled inwardly at his caution and wondered vaguely how much it would avail him after all. She had made up her mind to one thing. She was going to be pretty hard to stop.

Tony called a taxi and they started south. There was an air of conscious strain about them as they rode. It amused the girl slightly. Tony was trying so hard to be quite unconscious of her as a woman and that, she knew, was extremely diffi-

cult for Tony because he was always conscious of women as women.

As she stepped out of the taxi and looked up at him she smiled oddly.

"Good night, Tony," she said gently. "I love you."

"Good night, foolish child."

She ran up the steps of the fine old stone house. Tony stood below at the taxi door watching her. Not that he needed to. She was one of those rare and fearless girls. Corliss knew that Tony was aware of that—that she had no fear of the dark. She wondered vaguely why he stayed to watch her disappearing figure.

As Corliss moved swiftly to her apartment she heard voices from Norry's suite—Vida's and Norry's voices, raised in anger. Corliss hurried on. She didn't want to hear what they were quarreling about. She could guess. And Norry's voice was thick with liquor. Too bad he believed difficulties could be drowned. Strange combination of strength and weakness—Norry. Mental strength and temperamental weakness. She shuddered slightly as she recalled the event of earlier in the evening.

Corliss was sipping her orange juice alone toward noon of the next day when Vida appeared. Her thin, big-eyed face that somehow achieved an air of ultra-smartness and sophistication was a trace more drawn than usual.

"Don't look at me that way," she said as Corliss glanced at her and nodded good morning. "I'm in no mood for your Landry mealy-mouthed goodness this morning."

"Don't try to start something with me because you scrapped with Norry last night." Corliss's voice was as cool and level as her eyes. "You're the woman he's foolish enough to love, so you can get away

with things with him but to me, you know, you're just another female!"

"Norry! That insect. Don't mention his name to me! I was a fool ever to have married him. I should have waited for some one more my type."

Corliss said nothing, merely sipped her drink staring coldly at her sister-in-law.

"I should have waited and married a real man. I could have! And with money, too." Her bitterness at what seemed to her like her own stupidity was mounting. "Men like me. I just hadn't enough sense to know it before it was too late. I could have married any one I wanted."

"Yeah, there are always a lot of men ready to play around with a safely married woman. They have a peculiar attraction for a certain type of two-legged male."

Vida smiled as if she had a pleasant secret.

"There are men and men," she said smugly. "I know the kind who are chivalrous to women—men are always that way to me, anyhow, especially those I like and am nice to."

"Tony Cartwright, for instance," came dryly from Corliss, who regretted it the moment the words were out. After all, there was really nothing to be gained by quarreling with Vida. She might make it only more difficult for Norry.

"Yes, Tony Cartwright!"—with a venomous enthusiasm. "And there would have been a man! A woman could live her life with a man like Tony Cartwright."

"You're not kidding yourself into believing he wants to live his life with any one woman?" Corliss's smile was a studiedly casual thing. It was difficult to even talk of Tony without feeling a speeding heart

beat that she feared might become evident in her appearance to another woman. Women had more than a second sight that way.

"He would with me! Norry's all that's stopping us."

"Vida"—a note of sudden earnestness in her voice—"you don't really believe that Tony means his attitudes with women? You don't really believe he loves you?"

"I certainly do," she replied with crystalline clarity. "I know he loves me."

"Tony Cartwright doesn't love you, Vida. He doesn't love any woman. You're a convenient toy for him. You're safely married. He likes that. Translated into Tony's language that means accessibility with no responsibility."

"You're jealous." Vida smiled cruelly.

"I could be, but it just happens that I'm not. I'm not denying that I more than like Tony Cartwright. He's the only man I know who interests me in the least, but I'm not jealous of you because I know how little he really cares for any woman—any one woman. Women as a whole intrigue him and entertain him. That's all. They add an interest to his life that he likes."

And Corliss believed deeply within her as she spoke the truth of the words. She doubted that there could be any one woman of whom she might be jealous.

"You're being catty," Vida said crisply. "Women are always catty to me but I've learned to laugh it off."

"I know. You can laugh off so many things. For instance, Norry and what you've done to him, and are doing to him. Since you wanted his money, and now you've got it, you could be a good enough sport to play fairly with him. He adores you

so. He's the kind of man who can't stand such a thing as a false wife."



"Life is too short to bother about what other people can stand. If Norry doesn't like what I do, it's just too bad for Norry." Each word was like a little cube of ice dispensed from an animated refrigerator.

"You're poisonous, Vida." Corliss looked at the other woman intently, as if to read beneath the surface and see what strange manner of human she really was.

Vida smiled in malicious self-satisfaction.



Illustration by Carson
 "Don't try to start something with me because you scrapped with Norry," Corliss said coolly. "You're the woman he's foolish enough to love, so you can get away with things with him, but to me you're just another female!"

"Absolutely poison." Corliss was still looking at the other girl and spoke as if thinking aloud. "You'd put unbreakable glass in a fire alarm box."

Vida shrugged.

"I might, if it suited my purposes." She was rising. It was not until then that Corliss realized that she was smartly tailored and ready for the street. "I'm on my way," she said.

"Any word about when you'll be back?" Corliss asked, thinking about her brother.

Vida smiled icily as she poised a smart hat on her platinum hair and turned critically to be sure that she had achieved the most becoming angle.

"Tell any one who asks," she said finally, "to expect me when they see me."

And then she was gone and Corliss was alone and thoughtful over her cup of coffee. She sensed rather than heard the trailing of Serille's draperies as she entered the breakfast room.

Serille, the older of the two sisters, was languidly lovely in a dark, richly colorful, full blown way, almost as lovely in her way as Corliss in hers. Serille sniffed as she stood at her chair.

"I seem to sniff the scent of the ever active Vi. She's apparently already about her intrigues. Where she gets all the enthusiasm!" Her rich, warm voice was a trace bored.

"Oh, that's easy. It's new to her. She'd never known things before, that is, things like this." Corliss's eloquent hands gestured inclusively. "She'd never had much, you know, clothes and leisure to pop out any time she wanted to. Life had been pretty niggardly with her until Norry fell for her glacial beauty." Corliss paused a moment. "It isn't

nice to speak of it but you remember when Norry brought her home the heaviest part of her baggage was her evil intention."

Serille looked across at her sister and smiled in amusement. It was an easy smile.

"You seem to be worked up this morning," she said.

"I am"—with heightened feeling. "I get furious at the way Vi treats Norry. If Norry weren't such a fine sensitive sort to whom it does make a difference, I wouldn't care."

Serille yawned gracefully.

"All this family loyalty," she said with no especial emotion. "I suppose I have something to be grateful to Flame for—giving me her absolute lack of concern for anything that doesn't actually personally touch me. It's a comfortable way to be."

"I suppose I am being foolish, childish, unsophisticated, rustic to you. But I'm just made that way. Things do mean something to me. I wish I'd been born like you, smoothed off and refined to a point where nothing really mattered. It would be so much less wearing."

Serille smiled across at her.

"Poor Corliss, you should have been a missionary. Hair shirts don't really belong in the sort of life we live. And you will wear one!"

"Well, after all, Serille, Norry is our brother and if we don't care what happens to him, it's just too bad."

"I know"—with a graceful shrug from the older girl—"but he made his bed, now let him put the roses in it. After all, you know you really can't blame Vi for nabbing him. I suppose you or I might have done the same thing if our two different and very thoughtful papas hadn't been gracious enough to accumulate

a fortune and then leave most of it to us."

"Do you think that's all there is to it?" Corliss asked thoughtfully. "Not principle at all—just the circumstances of our having money?"

"It is with me, I know. You see, I have no illusions about myself."

"I know, but it seems to me that Vi is particularly odious about it. She's like a cat that opened its mouth to yawn and then found that a nice golden canary had flown in. She's so smug and well pleased with her accomplishment. She's so obvious about it."

"And all I can say to that is—lucky cat! I haven't any virtues and I don't expect other people to have them, either."

The soft sound of the telephone buzzer interrupted their conversation.

"I'll get it, Thomas," said Corliss as she moved toward the instrument. She started a little at the sound of the voice that spoke to her—a familiar voice.

"Morning, Corliss! It really was Vi I wanted. I suppose she's not there?"

"No, Tony, she's already on her way. Vi's an ambitious girl."

"Yes," was Tony Cartwright's reply. "Quite too much so. It puts me in a hole. We had a date for luncheon and I called to tell her I can't keep it and I suppose she's practically there and ready to begin to fume because I haven't shown up."

"You use poor judgment, Tony. Vi isn't a girl to trifle with that way. An eager lady is never a safe playmate for a man whose intentions are not serious!"

"Wise girl. Why didn't you warn me before?"

"I thought things could safely be left to your excellent judgment."

"I haven't any judgment, Corliss. Never pretended to have. I just happen along."

"Well, you'd better be on your way to meet Vi."

"Can't. Have a must date. Make it up for me with her, will you, like a sweet thing? I'll do something for you some day."

"Better pull your own chestnuts out of the fire, Tony. I'm not good at pinch hitting for that sort of thing."

"Well"—and Corliss could all but see his charmingly careless gesture—"I called. Nothing else I can do, since she insists upon being prompt."

"You're vile, Tony." But there was little use chiding Tony. It made no difference to him. Nothing did. "There'll be the devil to pay for this."

"I know. Fix it up for me, sweet."

And Corliss heard the sound of a closing wire. She turned back to Serille who had caught the drift of things from Corliss's replies.

"If only Vida hadn't been such a stickler for promptness just because the date was with Tony," Corliss said. "No woman ever should be prompt in keeping appointments with a man, anyhow—and Tony's sort of man!"

"I know," came from the lazily smiling Serille. "Vida is nothing, if not correct, when it suits her to be. She does the right and considerate thing when it profits her. You know the old bit of doggerel:

"If formal habits ever come,
That Boston lady has 'em;
She never says chrysanthemum,
She says chrysanthe—madam!"

"That's Vi all over. Always doing the right thing at the wrong time, such as being on time for a date with Tony."

"Yeah. She'd keep Norry waiting

hours for her. Tony, who doesn't give a hang about her, she rushes to. She'll be biting her nails about now because he isn't showing up."

"Do her——" But whatever Serille would have said was interrupted by the appearance of Norry, pale and still a little wild-eyed.

"Who was that called?" he asked sharply. "Don't tell me. I know. Cartwright. What was he talking to you about?"

"They were telling riddles, darling!"—with soft laughter from Serille. "Here's one! Swell, too. And riddles are the newest party stunt. That is, after you get too wet to talk straight anyhow! This is a good one to pull at your next party, Norry—what object is it has six legs, two heads and one tail? Quick! Quick boy!"

"Shut up, Serille," her brother ordered. "What did Cartwright want?" He turned to Corliss.

Corliss was slow about speaking. It was hard for her to resort to subterfuge, something foreign to her nature. Serille, quite different in temperament, broke in and saved her:

"But, Norry darling, aren't you the least bit curious about my riddle? You'll never be a debbie's delight until you know the answers, darling! Don't you even want to know? It's a lady, mind you a lady"—accent on the last word as her voice rose in a peak of gay laughter—"on horseback!" Her frivolity rippled about them like a gaudy fabric fluttered by a breeze.

"Shut up, Serille," Norry growled. "You're a fool like the rest of us. Corliss is the only one with an ounce of brain and strange to say, she uses it occasionally—strange coming from such a family. What did that *Don Juan* want?"

"He just asked me for tea with him, darling."

"Don't go," he said, a trace of suspicion about his manner. "Isn't fit company for you."

"Poof!" Serille was still laughing. "Tony's just a slightly worn tallow candle, dear—harmless as such—every debbie's old flame, if you know what I mean. Why, he was even mine. I once had a terrible crush on him. Could have yet, only it's too much trouble. A crush is such a cluttery sort of thing. Messes up your time so, keeping yourself absolutely at your most tempting every minute. Requires too much effort."

Norry went on out then and Corliss looked at Serille dryly.

"Thanks for the patter. You certainly helped me out. You gave me time to think before I lied. I never can think of light things to ease a moment like that."

"Because you're too honest and serious, Corliss. I'm neither, thank goodness. It's convenient to have no morals and no principles. Makes living so much simpler. You do exactly as you want to and pay no attention to results. Certainly simplifies things. Sometimes it's very nice, indeed, to be able to lie easily and quickly and often." She was smiling. Serille, like Flame, had always been able to face her own faults, admit them quite shamelessly and amusedly.

Corliss grinned at her sister. Much of the time they failed to reach any common ground of understanding, they were miles apart, there was little that was close or sisterly between them but Corliss always felt a certain admiration for Serille's mocking philosophy and complete frankness. Serille would stoop to any deception or trick to serve her purpose and make no

bones of it. That to her was simply living—the survival of the fittest.

"We'd better make ourselves scarce," she went on. "Vi won't be quite all sweetness and light when she comes back, by any means. Tony's breaking his date with her won't help her disposition any. It'll wound her vanity and pride and that condition never helped any woman's disposition."

"I know," came slowly from Corliss. "I'm sort of at a loose end. Plenty I should do but nothing I want to. What are you doing?"

"Louis's coming to do me up." At the look of disgust on Corliss's face she went on, her words etched with light laughter: "Oh, you needn't look that way. He's good. He's got what it takes. And when Louis does you up you look done—your hair and skin are perfect. I wouldn't have some silly girl working over me. They never do the finished work a man does. Besides, I like him, and I like men. They flatter you, when they're not your husband, of course. Husbands excepted—that's always understood in a conversation of this sort! And flattery peps you up. I admit frankly I like it. I suppose if I ever stopped to think of it that's why men can demand more money as beauty operators than women. Women are willing to pay for what they want and take it where they can get it. I am, anyhow."

"That sounds sort of lousy," came matter-of-factly from Corliss. "But I do like your frankness."

"Oh, I know." Serille was still laughing softly and mockingly. "I have a habit of saying things right out. Perhaps I shouldn't, but I like to see the shocked look on people's faces. Anyhow, I have no use for sugar coatings."

Serille drew her trailing draperies

around her and moved toward the stairs. Louis always did her in her own sitting room, and under the magic of his fingers she became even a more striking and distinctive beauty.

Corliss stood looking out at the chill, gray winter day.

Her thought moved to Tony Cartwright. He'd done a mean and unworthy thing in breaking his date with Vi, just standing her up. Not that Corliss wanted Vi and Tony to keep dates, but Tony really needed a lesson.

As she stood there thoughtfully, a florist's car stopped in front of the house and a delivery man got out with a box. Probably Tony's peace offering to Vi, Corliss thought. And that would only make Norry the more angry because Vi would flaunt them in his face. She loved to flaunt other men's attentions before her husband. Corliss hurried to the door herself so that if they were from Tony to Vi she could make some change about it before any of the help really knew it and could talk about it and so let it get around to Norry.

She might even say they had been sent to her.

But the box really was addressed to Corliss, with Bob Baird's card attached. She smiled not ungently over the line he had written on his card:

"Lest you forget."

Bob was a dear, after all. Of course she never could love him, but it was rather nice to know that there was some one somewhere, as constant and faithful as he. She'd call him immediately. He deserved that.

"That was sweet of you, Bob," Corliss said as she heard Baird's voice on the wire. "I love violets."

"I hope you know what they stand for," Bob said. He was laughing a



Bob was a dear, she thought, as she read his card. Of course, she could never love him, but it was nice to know that there was some one as constant and faithful as he.

little but there was something serious under the lightness of his voice.

"I'm not sure I do."

"Well, isn't it love and constancy or something like that?"

"I thought that was pansies."

"Well, violets look as if they should mean that, too."

"Bob"—gentle protest—"you're in your office, aren't you?"

"Sure, but I don't care if the whole world knows that."

That was like Bob, Corliss thought as she turned from the telephone. Straightforward, honest.

There wouldn't be any girls in his office he was trying to fool and flirt with, not when he talked that way over the telephone to a woman. Not many men like that. Why, she wondered vaguely, couldn't she like him? One of life's little ironies. She couldn't see a man who wanted her and was ready to do her slightest bidding, but she was ready to make a fool of herself over a man who didn't want her.

At that her thought reverted again to Tony Cartwright. He really deserved some sort of payment for the rumpus he would raise in their family by standing Vi up. She'd come home in a vile temper and Norry and all the rest of them would have to pay for it. Not that she cared for herself. She was equal to Vida's tantrums any time, and in the particular mood of the moment she would have welcomed the opportunity to quarrel wholesomely and thoroughly with her. But Norry wasn't like her. Quarrels tore him to pieces so. And then he was at a complete disadvantage because he loved the girl. Strange how completely love disarmed one. Like herself with Tony.

Only she would not be soft with Tony, not quite. She would glove the iron of her touch with velvet but she would make him pay, pay plenty for his lack of consideration. She knew where he indulged his cocktail habit. And he was pretty regular about that. Unless his luncheon date overlapped the cocktail hour he'd be leaning against the bar at a certain time. She'd take a chance on it and then politely browbeat him into taking her to dinner. She glanced into the hall mirror, studied her own face critically. She was never good enough looking to suit herself when she thought she might meet Tony.

Louis was upstairs. She wondered vaguely if Serille would spare him long enough for a quick facial. She paused for a moment at Serille's door, then spoke softly.

Louis, slim and very elegant and smelling of a thousand lotions and ointments, came to the door with a noiseless grace and gallantry of manner peculiar to him.

"Yes, Miss Corliss?"

"Louis, I wonder if Serille would spare you long enough to give me a quick facial?"

Louis's rather too delicate face was eloquent of heart-rending regret and disappointment and his fluent hands added to his distress.

"Oh, Miss Corliss, it is I who am so sorry. Such a pleasure to work on the beautiful Miss Corliss but madame is just at the middle of her treatment. I could not leave her"—touchingly, as if the very core of his affections was being reached. "It will take me most of the afternoon." And Corliss could see through the partially open door Serille's slim figure stretched under a blanket that she knew had been warmed and that was cleverly cut for the operator's manipulation. Serille would not countenance a quarter of a pound added to her slim longish hips. And yet she would eat what she wished and when, and drink when the desire came. And it was Louis who was entrusted with seeing to it that her indulgences made no bulges on her physical person; Louis with his hot oils, his brisk slapping, and his tricks with ice and cream.

"To-morrow, Miss Corliss?" Louis was asking. "I could do you to-morrow and would be so happy."

"Wouldn't do any good then, Louis. This is one of those things that won't wait. I wanted it now. All right! Thanks, anyhow."

And then she went to her own quarters and selected the hat and suit she would wear.

There was a little time for a nap before she must start out. That would help a little. She had been up so late, was always up so late that she always needed sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

The house was very quiet when Corliss awakened and started to dress. Too quiet. There was something ominous about it. She wondered vaguely as she slipped into her garments if Vi had come home and what she was doing about Tony's stand-up. Vi would do something. There was no question about that. Vida never let an opportunity to exercise her emotions escape her. That was how she kept them so ready to snap into telling action.

But as Corliss reached the lower floor she found it quite deserted. On the table was a scrawl from Vida telling Norry to meet her at a friend's for cocktails. She had been back then, Corliss thought. Back and no dynamite discharge. Back and the house was still intact. That spoke well for Vida's control or else she was planning something even more diabolical than her tantrums could be.

Corliss waited at the curb for a moment for a taxi. Her sheer stockings would stand very little walking. She had as a matter of fact, put on the best of everything for this date that she was keeping with Tony against his own wish. He would at least have to admit that she was a credit to him.

Silver fox framing her face, her figure a silhouette of smart black, eyes lifted and followed as Corliss moved along the bar searching for the familiar and sophisticated Tony.

She saw him and reached his side just as he ordered. She smiled at the bartender and said easily:

"Make it two."

Tony turned sharply.

"Corliss! I thought for a second my imagination was running away with me!"

"Then you do have a conscience"—smiling up at him. "And a little fear of the lovely Vida."

"Think she'll be very sore?" he asked, but not anxiously.

Corliss lifted her glass.

"Here's hoping she is! That every woman in the world but me gets terribly sore at you." She sipped the drink and then went on: "But no such luck. I don't suppose any woman ever gets sore at you and stays that way after you've spoken to her, smiled at her or touched her hand. That's what it means to have so much sex appeal."

"You flatter me," he murmured smoothly.

"No, I don't, and you know it, Tony. There's something fatal for women about you."

"Let's have another," Tony suggested as Corliss emptied her glass.

"Not now," she said. "And now where are we going for dinner?" She smiled at the little start Tony evidenced before he said:

"But I have a dinner date, sweet."

"I know. With me."

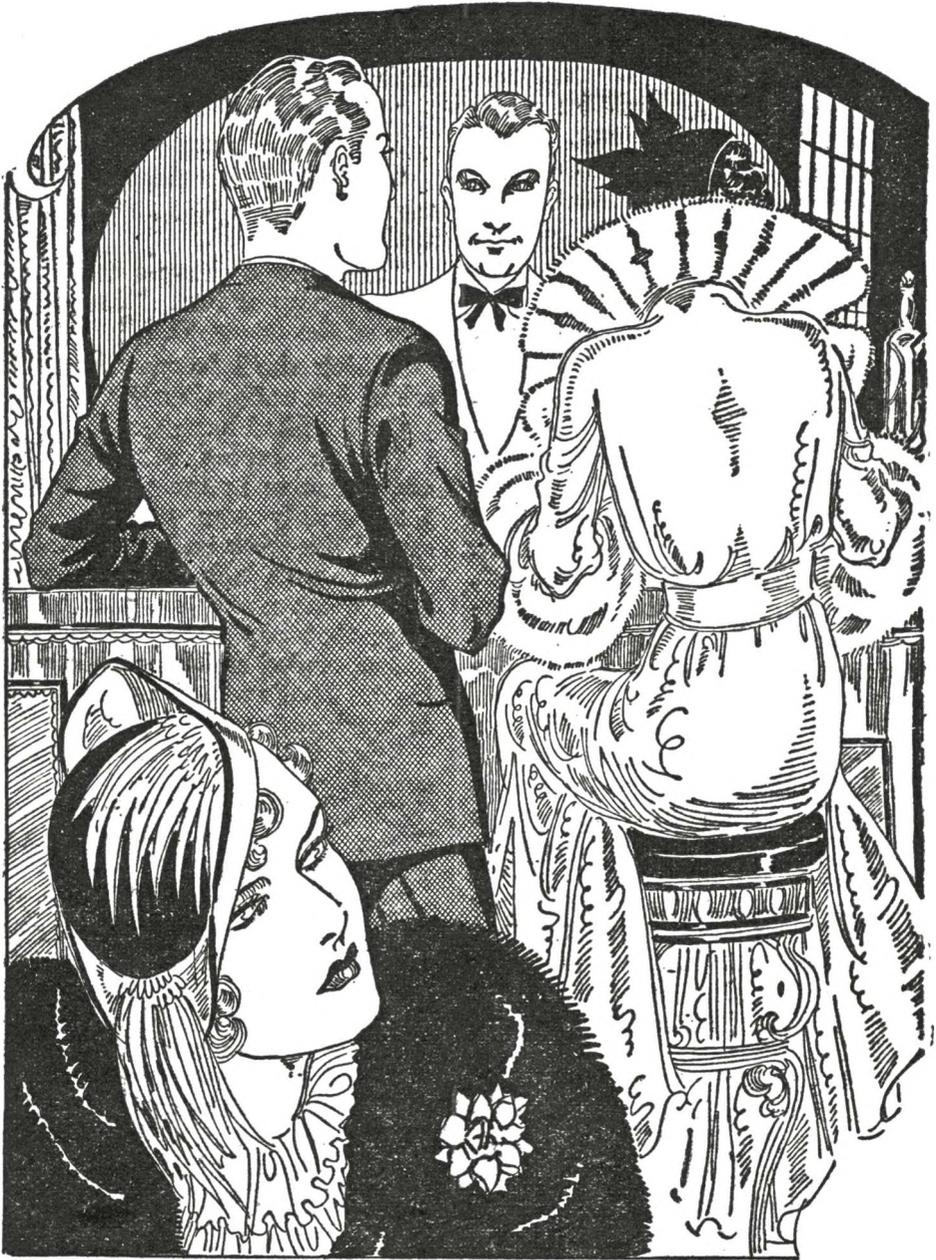
"No, dear. Not with you. With the redhead, third from the end, in the front row."

"Tony, I'd love meeting a chorus girl!" she exclaimed enthusiastically. "I'll go along."

"Not while I'm conscious."

"Then get unconscious in a hurry. I'm going along. I want to study the technique of those sure-fire red-headed sirens."

"Over my dead body you'll do



that! I never believe in mixing drinks or women."

"And I'll mix anything I can lay my hands on; that's no argument."

"Come on, we're having another drink"—as he ordered. "I see that I have some persuading to do."

"Darling, don't waste your gifts. I'm unpersuadable when it comes to you. I promised myself a date with you to-night and I refuse to disappoint myself. There, that's my story and you're sort of stuck with it, if you know what I mean."



"Corliss, what's happening to you?" he asked. "I've always thought of you as a nice girl. Not a man chaser. And here you are meeting me at a bar and trying to date me in the most brazen and shameless way."

"How women do clutter my life! I should have kept my interests purely to a man's world."

Corliss smiled sweetly under the brim of her smart hat.

"That wouldn't have done you

any good with me, darling, because a man's world is exactly the kind of world I like best. I'd have invaded it anyhow, you see, to drag you along with me."

"Such a woman as you're turning out to be!"

"You don't know the half of it!"

"Well, be that as it may, here's another row of houses! And now let's say adios, beautiful!"

"I don't mind so much about the houses, darling, but the adios is a language I don't understand and refuse to fool with!" Her small hand from which she had pulled the glove touched his sleeve. There was something very light and delicate about the touch and yet at the same time very firm and imperative. She looked up at him, her lovely eyes wistful, her full mouth provocative. "Tony, I'm dining with you to-night. You're either going to call up and break your date or take me along with it. Of course, I'd prefer the former."

"Corliss," he asked, as he ordered their third drink and the minute hand of the clock moved past six, "what's happening to you?"

Corliss didn't reply, merely smiled up at him a trace audaciously.

"I've always thought of you as a nice girl," Tony went on. "Not a man chaser. And here you are meeting me at a bar and trying to date me in the most brazen and shameless way."

"All right then"—under the soft velvet of her voice was that same firm touch of her hand, for Corliss could be that way when she wished, velvet clad but steel beneath—"I'm brazen. I am shameless, but you're eating with me to-night, taking me out somewhere. You've got to, Tony. You've got to pay for some of the things you've done, things like you did to Vi this afternoon.

You're doing them to everybody, husbands and wives and girls and parents impartially and generously. Well, there's a bill for all that. It's just been automatically made out as you went your gay and careless way. I'm presenting just the very beginning of that now."

Tony stared at the girl.

"Corliss, you've never been this way before."

"I know," she murmured, gently but firmly. "And the answer is that neither have I ever lived this day before. We're eating together to-night, Tony darling, and you might just as well like it. After all, I'm not such a bad dinner companion."

"But I've never been ganged into things like this before by a woman," he protested half earnestly and half in fun.

"Probably because there's only one Corliss Landry in the world and not many women really take leap year seriously. I do. And I've already let too much time slip away. I've only a few days left."

"I'd forgotten there was such a thing until you brought it up."

Corliss snickered over her drink.

"Well, you see, darling," she said easily, "I'm like the elephant, I don't forget."

Cartwright was suddenly serious.

"Corliss," he said earnestly, "let me see that you get home now or wherever it is you would be going at this time of day. I've got to be on about my date. I'm not fooling, really."

"Neither am I"—smiling sweetly up at him. "You're not taking me or sending me anywhere except to dinner with you. We've got a big date, Tony—you have and I have! And it's together! What's wrong with me, Tony? Aren't I nice?" she asked, wistfully, her lovely face lifted to him, framed in its luxury.

"There really isn't anything any other woman can do for you that I can't, you know."

The man looked down at her for a moment at that, his eyes warm and intimate. Corliss sensed the weakening of his resistance.

"That's a large order, lovely," Tony said and then, brightening: "Tell you what—my date for tonight was a pretty bright and shining one but I'll call it off, postpone it if you'll promise never to do this again to me or any one else. It isn't the sort of thing a nice girl does, Corliss."

"I'll promise part of that—never to do this to any one else, but yourself. But the rest I can't. You see, I'm not a particularly nice person."

"That isn't enough."

"All right. I'll promise never again to do this to you." She smiled almost too sweetly. "Now go call your date and tell her to expect you when she sees you and not before!"

Tony went to the telephone. Corliss standing outside the booth could see that he was having a difficult time persuading the lady at the other end that he couldn't do otherwise than he was.

Corliss smiled inwardly. Tony who always got himself into mix-ups with his dates! Tony who was always wriggling gracefully out of a situation! Well, his feminine trouble was about at an end. She'd see to that.

He came out not unpleasantly.

"Well," he said, "that's done and you don't know what doing it took! You're a little vixen!"

Corliss smiled the sweet, secret little smile of hers.

She waited until they reached their table and Tony had ordered before she spoke:

"There's something that I must tell you, Tony," she said wistfully earnest. "I believe the truth is the only basis for a lasting association, you know." She smiled to herself as she saw him start slightly. "You know there at the bar, before you telephoned, I only promised never to do just what I had done then—chase you in a bar, a particular bar, that means. Well"—smiling—"that still leaves me a lot of latitude. That was only one bar out of all there are in New York, besides all the other places you may be."

"Devil!" But there was a trace of admiration in the word.

Corliss smiled at him, serenely conscious that she was at least pleasant to look at and that more than one pair of eyes were turned her way. That she knew, was always compensation for a man, he liked other people to admire his companion.

"But you really shouldn't call me such names," she said gently.

"But that's just what you are—charming, but a devil."

"Then I really don't see why you don't like me better. I should be just your type."

Tony Cartwright was about to reply when something visible over Corliss's shoulder attracted and held his attention.

Corliss noted the change in his expression—a peculiar tenseness definitely etched with something like fear. Corliss had never seen Tony look quite like that before. There was something in his face that chilled even her courageous soul.

"What is it?" she asked after waiting a moment for him to speak. "You see something"—her voice taking on an edge of nervousness. "What is it?"



Adorable Deceiver

By Suzanne Brown

JOCELYN BREEN, working slowly through Gloria Linton's fan mail, looked up across the room at her employer-friend practicing at the grand piano.

"You must have been pretty good at your last broadcast," Jocelyn called. "Your mail is almost double yesterday's."

Gloria nodded her head in acknowledgment and went on singing.

But suddenly Jocelyn's business-like manner was utterly destroyed. She read and reread the letter she

had just opened, her tousled black head bent over the page, her smoothly round cheeks flushing more deeply every second. In another moment she had run across the room to the piano.

"Guess what!" Her voice was breathless with excitement.

Gloria looked up in surprise. "What?"

"You've received a fan letter from Kent Dawson!"

"Kent Dawson!" Gloria cried and let her fingers crash on the keyboard.

Jocelyn's eyes still clung to the letter. "He thinks you have a marvelous voice and would like to meet you. Won't you have supper with him after the broadcast to-morrow night? Wants you to drop him a note and let him know whether he may phone you at the station then?"

"The Kent Dawson, dramatic critic of the *Daily Echo*, the one you're always daydreaming about, Jo?"

"Yes, of course! He once lectured to our dramatic club at school, and every one fell in love with him. He's absolutely perfect!" Jo's eyes shone and she stretched her slim young arms above her head in delicious, thrilling remembrance.

"Well, that settles that. I'm not meeting him."

"You're what?" Jo questioned, disbelief in her voice.

"No," Gloria said emphatically. "I'm not going. I'm not going to make Johnny Traven jealous! He's too rich to risk losing. He'll be asking me to marry him one of these days."

"But, Gloria, this is important! Kent Dawson has influence. He could do a lot for you." Jocelyn's earnest young eyes implored her friend.

Gloria was silent, but suddenly her face lit up.

"Listen, Jo." Jocelyn felt her arm being shaken. "You've got to go!"

Jo felt as if a thunderbolt had been thrown directly at her heart. "To meet Kent Dawson? You mean, I'm to pretend that I'm Gloria Linton, that—that——"

"Yes, all of that. Then if he does want to give me any publicity he'll be sure to say nice things. Besides, here's your chance. Take it! It may be one way of curing this useless passion of yours."

Jocelyn's thoughts were in a

whirl. Gloria's proposal sent her heart soaring. For a whole year, ever since that lecture, Jocelyn had been following Kent Dawson's activities. She had read, hungrily, every word he had written in his newspaper and magazine articles. She had picked up every crumb she could find that meant news of him, listened for every word any one might drop around the studio.

"Useless passion" Gloria had called it. But somewhere, deep in her, was the conviction that, if they met, Kent Dawson would fulfill every one of her longings. And now Gloria seemed to be handing her the man of her dreams all safely wrapped, addressed and delivered. But was she?

"My chance?" Jocelyn woke from her reverie, a tinge of bitterness beneath her words. "Under a false front? I'll never be able to let him know who I really am!"

But Gloria refused to have her suggestion battered down. "Be a good sport, Jo. Think of what he might do for us," she urged. "Go ahead, for as long as it lasts! Drop him a note and tell him to call." With a kindly laugh and shake of Jo's arm, she gathered up her music and went out of the room.

Left alone in the living room of Gloria's spacious apartment, Jocelyn sank down into an easy-chair. Gloria's suggestion opened up a maze of terrifying and thrilling possibilities. To meet Kent Dawson, not just unnoticed in a sea of girls, but the woman he had singled out!

In the midst of Jo's musings, Gloria thrust her head in the doorway.

"Don't forget, Jo," she said smilingly. "I'm laying out my white satin dress for you and the blue cape with the white fox collar. See you to-night!"

Jocelyn knew it was time for Gloria to rest and eat her light supper alone in her room. Then, later in the evening, the two of them would start for the broadcasting studios, Jocelyn, the competent secretary, in charge of Gloria's music, wraps, notes.

It was all right for Gloria to suggest this substitution. She was a successful radio star and felt sure of everything she did. But Jocelyn's position was different. Gloria had taken her in when she finished high school the year before, and taught her to be her secretary and housekeeper. But Jo had never shared Gloria's social life. Instead, she had done the drudgery.

Jocelyn worked long, hard hours opening, sorting out, answering fan mail, attending to domestic duties and generally running Gloria's affairs. There weren't many idle moments. Gloria's thoughts were forever on her music. She was content to live in her singing and the love of rich Johnny Traven.

But Jocelyn knew that she herself was wilting under the pressure of hard work. Her creamy cheeks, under the black mop of hair, were losing some of their roundness, her brilliant blue eyes some of their luster. For Jocelyn Breen had discovered herself to be an imaginative, beauty-loving girl, in whose secret dreams Kent Dawson had come so wonderfully to figure. She longed for an enormous rambling house, holiday festivities, birthday celebrations, and above all, for love and tenderness—from Kent Dawson.

Instead, she had Gloria's empty New York apartment, in the center of a fashionable street, where every one was too busy to know she existed, her days filled with fan mail, radio work and intolerable loneliness.

Abruptly, she started up. "I will go! I will meet him! And we'll be together for as long as it lasts!" Without any more hesitation she wrote a note telling Kent Dawson she would be expecting his phone call that evening.

Jocelyn never forgot those next hours, tense with anticipation. Feverishly, she pored over the endless mail and finally finished it. Then she had a quick supper, mended a negligee of Gloria's, and at last was ready for a warm shower. Massaging her skin until it achieved a rosy translucency, and brushing out her dark curls, she slipped into the gown Gloria had made ready. A dusting of powder, a rose-petal touch at lips and cheeks, and Jocelyn surveyed herself—slim, boyish, creamy satin skin, eyes starry with excitement.

In the taxi, Gloria patted her hand reassuringly. The moments flew by. Both in evening dress, they went up the wide steps of the broadcasting station. The elevator boy's courteous greeting, "Good evening, Miss Linton," was accompanied by a stare at Jocelyn, as though he had never seen her before.

Even when Gloria stood before the microphone in the studio and Jocelyn sat in the adjoining control room, everything still seemed unreal.

The control room was partitioned off by glass windows from the main studio where Gloria was standing before the microphone singing. Jocelyn could hear Gloria's lovely soprano as it came through the glass partition. But in her heart she wondered whether Kent Dawson was listening, whether he looked forward to the phone call as eagerly as she.

Her thoughts were broken into by Jimmy, the engineer, who sat beside her and whose job it was to adjust

the apparatus that controlled the broadcast. She realized then that Gloria was finished.

"Look mighty beautiful to-night, Miss Jocelyn," she heard him say.

"Thanks, Jim!" Jo flashed him a smile.

Any moment, now, Kent Dawson would call! Jo's heart rocked, a shivery mixture of happiness and fear.

Exactly five minutes after the announcer had signed off Gloria, Jim came rushing back to her. "Telephone for Miss Linton." He knew Jocelyn always answered Gloria's calls. But to-night she was not answering as Gloria Linton's young secretary.

Aware that Gloria herself was smiling at her now, Jocelyn went into one of the offices to take the call. Her finger shook as she lifted up the receiver. She didn't know how she'd ever summon up courage to say those first words. But at last she did answer.

"Hello? This is Gloria Linton!" she said.

"Hello! This is Kent Dawson!" The deep voice she knew she would recognize anywhere!

"It's awfully nice of you to call, Mr. Dawson," Jo found herself saying.

"I've just been listening in on your broadcast," she heard him reply in a laughing tone that matched her dreams, "and I'm more anxious than ever to meet you. Won't you be

unconventional and all that and have supper with me to-night?"

Jocelyn felt that underneath his laughing voice there was an impetuous rush, as though he were trying to overcome the obstacle of distance, telephone wires and all that separated them.

"I'd love to! If you'll come over to the studio, I'll be down at the side door."

"In five minutes, then"—his voice jubilant—"I will be there!"

Jocelyn hurried back to Gloria.

"You had better leave," she whispered. "He'll be here any moment."

"All right, Jo. Buck up! Don't stay out

too late. I'll be sleeping when you come in, but be sure to tell me every little detail in the morning!" Gloria grinned.

Jo just had time to reach for her compact and powder her nose. There was no need for more color.

"Some one waiting for you?" Jimmy asked, a knowing light in his eyes, as they went down in the elevator together.

"Yes." Jo let the word escape and caught her breath.

They had reached the ground floor, and in the side doorway stood Kent Dawson. Gray felt hat in hand, the black satin lapels of his tuxedo showing under the soft gray tweed of his coat, Kent Dawson in evening clothes was even more good-looking than in the informal suit he had worn at the lecture. He had



well-modeled features, too, capable of being serious, but with such an engaging boyish grin that it lit up his face like a sudden sun.

Jocelyn let her glance go, deep and fearless, directly to him. A smile leaped to his face as he caught it. She saw him study her. Then he drew a breath, squared his broad shoulders, and advanced to meet her.

"You're as lovely as your voice, Miss Linton." The deep masculine tones she had heard over the telephone, but a caressing lilt in them now!

Jo's heart pounded, but she laughed lightly.

"It's a relief to know you're not disappointed, Mr. Dawson!"

As he stood aside to hold the door open, their eyes met. She had remembered that his were a curious hazel color, rimmed with thick black lashes. But even in her dreams she had not known they could be so warm. Was his heart, too, doing crazy things? Life was either beginning or ending for her! Jocelyn gazed back at Kent, joyous and smiling.

"I'm wondering if you wouldn't like to go to a gypsy night club I've discovered?" he asked as he took her arm and led her to his car.

"I'd go anywhere with you!" Before she knew it, Jocelyn had uttered the words that lay uppermost on her heart. Then, to cover up her real meaning, she pretended, "Unless, of course, you're taking me to another broadcasting station!"

"So you do tire of your work," Kent said thoughtfully, as he started the motor. "You know, you're not like a professional singer at all. In fact, you look just like one of those dancing-eyed girls who was always the heroine in the boarding-school stories my sister used to read!"

Kent paused a moment, and Jocelyn felt his intent look. Then in a quiet voice he added: "I've wondered how you enjoyed being in the public eye. Have you ever thought of giving it all up?"

Why was he saying this? Jocelyn didn't dare tell herself the answer.

"Oh, yes! Some day when I am ready to settle down I want all the things other women have—a husband, love, a home!" She smiled.

"Then you haven't chosen the person you want to settle down with yet?" he questioned, still looking at her.

Jocelyn looked away and shook her head. "No, there's no one," she answered in a low voice.

That seemed to be all Kent needed. From that moment on he was like a little boy, full of high spirits. Jocelyn felt herself swept along by his spontaneity. All her fears leaving her, she was conscious only of the warmth and joy of these moments close to him.

The Gypsy Inn turned out to be a glamorously decorated restaurant, with fashionable-looking people, gaiety, and a gypsy orchestra.

As Kent guided her between the rows of tables, the orchestra struck up one of Gloria's own songs.

Jo's face grew red with embarrassment. Was this chance? Or did they really believe they were honoring Gloria Linton? And who had told them?

"I hope you don't mind my having tipped them off," Kent whispered, bending toward her, his cheek close to her own as they edged their way to their table.

All for Gloria Linton!—Jocelyn thought. She felt herself grow icy. She had been forgetting the false colors under which she was sailing. She had been forgetting that this

was just a fairy tale, that she would have to stop knowing Kent Dawson.

Jocelyn tried to banish the mood that hung so heavily upon her. But it wasn't until Kent asked her to dance, until he held her close in his arms, that she knew she didn't care what price she had to pay for her one glorious night!

Yes, this was her dreamed-of heaven, this feel of Kent's arms drawing her even closer as they circled the floor. She knew that the infectious music of the dance had stirred them both, and that Kent's cheeks were as flushed as her own. She was oblivious of the people who kept their eyes turned upon them as Kent spun her around, the circular skirt of her evening gown swirling rhythmically, the luxurious creamy satin marking her grace like the silken sheen of moon-swept water.

It was only when the music ceased and she looked up at her partner that she saw they had been practically alone on the floor. The applause that was echoing through the night club was not so much an encore for the orchestra as one for their dancing.

"Kent, you shouldn't have told them about me!" she scolded with a smile, her voice scarcely more than a murmur.

She might play at being Gloria Linton, but the quick surges of happiness that assailed her no one could ever take from her.

Kent tucked her arm under his own with a proprietary air that made her heart smash into a thousand pieces. Then, as they found their table again, he said softly: "But I imagined you'd like the publicity—that is, before I met you. Now I know you're not that kind." His eyes met her own.

Again and again the expression in them proclaimed that she had been

right. There was an instinctive bond between them, an intense sympathy, a ready exchange of trust.

Jocelyn felt as if she had taken some heady wine. Across from her, light flashing in his eyes, she was aware that Kent watched her with a delight he didn't try to hide. Yes, there was such a thing as love at first sight!

"We've known each other forever and ever! Do you understand that?" suddenly Kent asked, putting his hand for the first time over her own.

Jocelyn felt her fingers quiver. She wanted to stay here, facing Kent Dawson, listening to him talk, telling him the hundreds of things that belonged to her childhood, that she had never told any one. And he was eager, too, Jocelyn could see, that this evening go on forever.

But, as it grew later, the club grew more crowded. The room became overflowing with a dancing, merry crowd that robbed them of their feeling of intimacy.

"Shall we go?" Jocelyn heard Kent ask. "Will you let me come back to your apartment now? There's something I want to ask you tonight!"

Jocelyn's heart quickened. Her thoughts raced ahead. Well, why not? Gloria would be asleep.

"Please say yes," he urged, his voice thrilling with tenderness.

Jocelyn looked at him, then nodded her head. "Yes," she whispered back.

Gloria's apartment was only a short drive away, and soon they were in the elevator, her key in the lock.

Jocelyn ushered him into the elegantly furnished living room, the modern furniture upholstered in soft materials of luscious hues. She lit two of the deep-shaded lamps, and their dim light shedding itself upon

them only added to the beauty of the hour.

Gently, Kent removed Jocelyn's wrap and seated himself beside her on the couch. Somewhere, a clock sounded the deep note of midnight. Kent broke the spell as, his voice husky, he leaned toward her.

"My dear," he said, taking her hand in both his own, "there is just one favor I want to ask of you."

Jocelyn waited, her pulses quickening. But her heart sank as she saw Kent look toward the grand piano that stood flanking one end of the room.

"You know all your voice has meant to me. Will you sing for me? Please, just one small song!" Kent's words were boyishly appealing.

Shock clutched Jocelyn. She stood still, unable to move. Her lips were dry. Then, realizing how strange and nervous she must appear, she said: "No, Kent. Please excuse me. I'm awfully tired."

Kent Dawson was staring at her. Suddenly, she started up from her chair. She laughed a real note of merriment, of relief. Gayety sprang into her tones. She could yet save her glamorous night!

She smiled back at him as she hurried over to a shelf at one side of the wall. In another moment she had twirled a disk onto the phonograph that stood in a corner of the room.

Outwardly gay still, she came back and sat near Kent as Gloria Linton's beautiful soprano filled the room. To Jocelyn, though, the notes sounded with a hollow mockery.

But Kent seemed satisfied. "That was beautiful," he said. "I realize how thoughtless I was to ask you to sing when you must be tired. I haven't any business keeping you up so late!" And then in a lower tone, "But I'm glad I did!"



"Yes, I am tired." Jocelyn smiled wanly.

"And I only want what's best for you," Kent returned in his gentle tone.

Jocelyn jumped up nervously. "No, Kent. Please don't ask me to sing to-night. I'm awfully tired." She wondered fearfully what he would say if he knew she was not Gloria Linton, famous radio singer, but plain Jocelyn Breen.



She watched him gather up his coat and hat. Then, holding her hand in his own, he told her: "I'll call first thing to-morrow. If you're free, we'll drive out to the country

for the day. I'll see that you get lots of fresh air and rest, and I promise I won't tire you out again. Will you?" he asked, urgency in his question.

"I'd love to," Jocelyn whispered.

And bending, his lips found her hand. When their eyes met, his gaze said clearly that she was something infinitely precious.

In another moment he was gone, but not before he had whispered again, "To-morrow!"

The door closed behind him, and Jocelyn sank back against it, unable to move. The hand that his lips had touched lay now against her cheek. But it was his eyes, urgent, tender, passionate, that she could feel on her lips, her throat, her hair.

She gave a long sigh; then, gathering the wide folds of the satin gown about her, she turned toward her room. As she turned out the last light and finally lay alone in the darkness, she gave herself up completely to the dreams that would come, full of the promise of to-morrow!

Jocelyn woke the next morning when a beam of sunlight stretched across her eyes. She sat up, smiling. It was a glorious day, clear and cool, and all the bliss of being close to Kent last night had tumbled over into this morning.

From her window, twenty-four stories above the street, she could see nothing but a stream of cars moving along. A quarter to nine, the clock's hands showed—hundreds of people hurrying to work. But Jocelyn was visioning herself beside Kent Dawson in his long, low roadster, flying out of this traffic to white roads, the first green of spring fields, new-budding trees. What a day it would be!

She knew it was too early for Gloria to be up. She'd have to tell her about their plan to go away for the day, and wondered what Gloria would say. After all, there was work to be done. Gloria might object to

her leaving. But it was Gloria who had started this. She would have to let her go on with it!

In the midst of her thoughts the phone rang. Could it be Kent already? Jocelyn's mouth curved alluringly in anticipation as she picked up the receiver.

"My dear, how are you this heavenly morning? Did I wake you up?"

Yes, it was Kent's voice, low and intimate.

"I feel marvelous, Kent. No, you didn't wake me!" Jocelyn replied, her own voice throbbing.

"I was afraid I might. But there's a reason for this early call. I've just discovered that I have to write a magazine article, and they're only letting me have the next eight hours to finish it in. You'll never know how I feel about giving up our day together. My only compensation is remembering that there's to-morrow."

Jocelyn's bubble of hope became, suddenly, a fragile and evanescent thing. In the next second it burst with the weight of her despair.

"That's all right, Kent," she heard herself replying in an unbelievably calm voice. If only he knew what was going on in her heart!

"But I'll be at the station in time to hear you broadcast to-night! Sorry, my dear, I have to ring off now and get at that article. I'm counting the hours until to-night, though, and after!"

"But, Kent, you can't—you mustn't come!" Jocelyn shrieked into the telephone. It was too late; Kent's voice had been cut off.

All the agony in the world seemed to be piling on Jocelyn's slender shoulders. Should she phone him? But what reason could she give for asking him to stay away?

Well, Gloria would have to help her. Of one thing she was certain.

She couldn't give Kent up yet—not after last night, dancing in his arms, the tenderness in his eyes, his lips pressed to her hand, imprinted there forever.

Jocelyn could hardly wait until Gloria woke up. But when finally she did she was buzzingly curious about the evening.

"Yes, he's as wonderful as I thought he would be! We went to a gypsy night club, and we danced and we——" Jocelyn began in reply to Gloria's prompting.

"And he made love to you, I suppose," Gloria interrupted slyly.

"No, not the kind of cheap advances you mean, Gloria!" Jocelyn flared up. "But he did—— Oh, we do mean something to each other! Listen, Gloria, he just telephoned. He insists on coming to the studio to-night to hear me broadcast—me!" Jocelyn's voice held an hysterical undertone. "Oh, Gloria, what can I do?" Jocelyn was kneeling now beside the chaise longue on which Gloria lay, her negligee spreading itself out in a fan of pleats.

A determined expression flashed across Gloria's face. "Look here, Jo," she said, "we've started this thing and we might as well get some publicity out of it. Better lure your Kent Dawson along until he comes across with a column or an article on the beautiful and clever Gloria Linton, alias Jocelyn Breen. Never mind; we'll fix it!"

"But how can we do it?" Jocelyn begged frantically. "How on earth can he see me broadcasting?"

"That's just it, Jo. We'll fake it. I'll put you in a room with a dead mike and switch in my singing from the real sound room. You go through the motions with your back to Kent; my voice will come through the loud-speaker, and he'll think it's yours!"

"But won't he realize that a real radio performer usually faces the control room, where he'll be sitting?"

"Of course not. He'll never know the difference. It's all settled now. I'll speak to Jimmy to-night. Run along and start on the mail!"

Somehow or other, Jocelyn lived through that day. No joy this evening in slipping into another of Gloria's shimmering gowns! There was too much at stake. She felt only queer trembly feelings, until at last she and Gloria started for the studio.

"Now you leave everything to me, Jo," Gloria emphasized. "I'll speak to Jimmy and get him to arrange things. When Kent asks for Gloria Linton's broadcast he'll be led into the control room facing the studio you're standing in. Don't you worry!"

Jocelyn tried to pull herself together. What if something should go wrong and she should lose Kent? No man would have any use for a girl who he thought had deliberately deceived him. How could he know that she meant every look she gave him, every returning pressure of her fingers, every exultant smile?

This whole affair seemed a mad thing, and she and Gloria engaged in a mad deception. But she steadied her nerve, and as the hour for Gloria's broadcast drew near, she stood before the microphone she was supposed to use, while Gloria herself went to the regular broadcasting room.

In a few moments Jimmy had ushered Kent into the control room. She had only a moment in which to flash him a smile, a moment in which to know she was still wildly in love with him, before Jimmy gave her the signal. Turning her back to Kent, she went through the motions Gloria had rehearsed. Jimmy's switch-in of Gloria's voice came

through perfectly. Jocelyn didn't dare turn to see how Kent was taking it on the other side of the glass partition. But everything seemed to be going all right and the first song was over.

Suddenly, everything whirled in black spots before Jocelyn's eyes. One of the call boys had appeared in the doorway of the studio, and his voice sounded loudly:

"Hey, there! Why don't you stop fooling around with that mike? We need it!" He swooped down upon the portable microphone and carried it from the room. And Jocelyn was left standing helpless, her back still turned to Kent, while Gloria's voice crooned on, horrible evidence of the deception.

Kent! What had he thought of this whole shameful spectacle? The pretense must be clear now. Those were the first

thoughts that raced through Jocelyn's mind, but she couldn't bring herself to turn around to look at Kent. A deep blush crept up, infolding her. She had only one impulse, and without a second's consideration she fled from the room, the skirt of her evening dress twirling as she ran down the wide stairs to the first floor, her black cap of



"Yes, Kent did make love to me, but not the kind of cheap advances you mean!" Jocelyn flared. "Oh, we do mean something to each other!"

curls bobbing, her eyes full of despair.

Hurrying past the amazed doorman, she tried to whistle for a cab, but no sound would come from her dry throat. She didn't care how curiously passers-by stared at the wild picture she made. At last a cruising taxi stopped in answer to her frantic call.

Breathless, she gave the driver her address and sank back into the seat. Her cheeks were feverish. Hot waves of shame swept over her. So this was the ending to her fairy tale!

She could hardly wait to pay the driver and rush into the apartment house. All she wanted was to be safe inside her room, alone with her humiliation. She was too wretched to think clearly, but she knew she couldn't stay here with Gloria in New York. She wanted to run far away from any reminder of Kent Dawson, and she never, never wanted to see a radio station again.

Miserably, she let herself into the apartment. A dim light showed in the living room, but she went straight to her own bedroom door. Candles on her console table shed their soft flickering light, leaving half the room in deep shadow—candles, on this night when she wanted only darkness and oblivion!

She flung her white evening bag down on the bed and bent over the candles to blow them out. But suddenly a man's figure loomed out of the shadows and came forward into the flickering light. In another instant, Kent Dawson had stifled her cry and gathered both her hands to his lips.

"Kent! But you saw everything! You—you must know that I am a—a—" Jocelyn faltered, trying to hide her scarlet face.

LS-6C

"I knew who you were all along, you darling idiot!" Kent cried in a thrilling, teasing tone. "And I saw how much you cared when you ran out of that studio like a desperate, beautiful ghost! Oh, darling, may I?" Jocelyn heard him murmur as he caught her to him. And she yielded her lips for a century-full kiss.

"But, Kent, how did you know? This can't be true!" at last Jocelyn breathed, still not sure whether the haven of his arms were real.

Kent drew her down to a chair. "Because of this, dear." He took out a sheet of Gloria Linton's note paper from his pocket. "You wrote the note telling me to phone, but you forgot and signed your own name! Of course, I began to suspect something. Then when I did telephone, the first thing you said was, 'This is Gloria Linton.' So I was sure something was up."

"But how did you know who I was?" Jocelyn asked, still puzzled.

"That was simple. After I got your note I inquired at the studio," Kent replied.

"Then the way you sounded over the telephone that first night—that wasn't because you thought you were going to meet Gloria Linton?" Jo couldn't resist asking.

"It certainly wasn't! And the moment I saw you I knew I was right. I happen to have seen a picture of Gloria Linton!" Kent smiled. "I did my darnedest afterward, trying to make you 'fess up, having that theme song played, asking you to sing, but you stuck to your guns. Finally, in desperation, I insisted on coming to the broadcast. I never thought you'd try to go through with that. I wanted you to break down and tell me you were just plain Jocelyn Breen and that you wanted to



"You will marry me, dearest, won't you?" he murmured tenderly. Jocelyn didn't have to answer, for her eyes told him everything.

hear all the things I wanted to say to you!"

"But in the beginning it was Gloria's voice you fell in love with," Jocelyn said wistfully.

"In love with? I wanted to write

an article about women radio singers, and Gloria Linton just happened to be one of them!" Kent burst out. "Of course, I had to play up the interest in her voice or she might have refused to see me. I was all ready to fall in love with a girl I had an idea would be an adorable deceiver before I ever met her, and then when I did, well—" Kent's eyes looked into hers, so that no other world but their own existed.

"You do love me, Jo," Kent whispered. "I was sure of it when you ran out of the studio so heart-brokenly. That's why I knew it was right for me to force my way in here."

Jocelyn didn't have to answer. "But there's something you haven't told me," Kent went on very

seriously. "Why did you substitute for Gloria in the first place?" he asked.

Jocelyn burst into happy laughter. "It was only because I wanted to meet you. You see, I fell in love with you long ago, the first time I saw you, when you lectured at our school club."

She watched Kent's face break into a wreath of smiles. "Then you will marry me, dearest, won't you?" But there was no need for Jocelyn to

reply. Her eyes had long ago told him everything.

"And now how about hunting up Gloria and telling her the good news?"

Jocelyn didn't know whether she was nodding yes or no. But, feeling Kent's arms about her and his lips against her own, she was sure that storybook tales did come true, after all! She knew one prince and princess who were going to live happily together forever after.



GYPSY MAID

I COULD not sleep on my safe, snug bed,
 I could not sleep when the blinds were drawn,
 I wanted a couch of boughs instead,
 I wanted the blue sky overhead,
 And the rose-and-gold of dawn.

I could not dream on my pillow white,
 I could not feel that my veins were warm,
 I wanted the dark, and the lure of night,
 I wanted the stars, far off and bright,
 And a cloud that might bring storm.

I could not fancy a shy, pale bride,
 Of loving and being loved, afraid,
 I wanted a mate to lie at my side,
 A mate of tempest, and flame, and pride,
 I wanted my gypsy maid.

L. MITCHELL THORNTON



Kiss And Remember

By Grace Poe Porter

THE fleet was in. Joy Dexter could see the ships dotting the Hudson. One by one they moved majestically to their appointed places and dropped anchor. White launches began bringing boat-loads of sailors ashore.

Joy, curled upon the window seat in her bedroom, twisted her fingers nervously. A whole year had come and gone since the fleet had been out there in the river. Even now it seemed impossible. It seemed no more than a few days ago that she

had lost her heart to Ralph Compton—Ensign Compton of the *Connecticut*. She realized now that for Compton it had been just one of those things—a shore-leave flirtation, nothing of any weight or importance. Probably he had a girl in every port, some one to romance idly with, kiss and forget.

But Joy was sure she'd never forget. What had been beautiful had become poignant. What had been rapture had turned to sorrow. With a quick breath, she shook back her curly brown hair, smiled cynically, and climbed down from the window seat when a knock sounded on the door.

It was Paula, the maid—prim and proper Paula, her face expressionless.

"I hope I didn't disturb you, Miss Joy."

"No, I was watching the lights on the ships."

Paula coughed.

"There's a young man downstairs who wants to see you. He's wearing a uniform and I guess he just came ashore."

Joy's heart skipped a beat before it raced and pounded. Then it sank slowly, dully. For a wild instant she was certain it was Ralph Compton. The envelope Paula handed her dispelled that illusion quickly.

"He asked me to give you this, Miss Joy."

Joy recognized her aunt Ryder's familiar writing. Aunt Ryder lived in California, near one of the west coast naval bases. She opened the note, turned on a lamp and read its contents.

Her pretty face cleared, but her gray-blue eyes were still troubled.

"Tell Ensign Alston I'll be down in a few minutes," she directed Paula.

A tall, slim young man was prowling around the living room when Joy entered. Her first impression was of his rough, tumbled hair, the deep tan on his attractive face, and the distinctive air with which he wore his uniform. He turned slowly when he heard her step on the polished floor. She noticed how dark his eyes were, how white his teeth. He came toward her.

"Miss Dexter?" he said eagerly. His strong hand closed over hers. Joy forced a smile.

"Sit down, won't you?" she invited graciously. "Aunt Ryder gives you a very good recommendation. She says that you're her favorite ensign in the entire navy and I'm to see that you're well entertained while the fleet's here."

Alston laughed.

"I'm afraid Mrs. Ryder's too kind. She and your uncle were awfully nice to me while I was at Port Palms. I don't want to force myself on you in any way. You see, this is my first visit to New York, and it would be rather nice to have some one show me the sights. I've felt somewhat like a lost sheep in other ports without friends."

Joy nodded her lustrous brown head.

"I suppose so," she said without any great enthusiasm. "Which is your ship?"

"The *Connecticut*. She lies toward the Jersey shore."

Again Joy's pulses pounded. The *Connecticut!* She kept her eyes averted, waiting for the tide of memory to recede.

"Well, Ensign Alston," she announced finally, with mock formality, "since Aunt Ryder requests entertainment, I offer my services. Where would you like to go and what would you like to do?"

He considered her doubtfully.

"I'm not upsetting any of your plans?" When she shook her head, he continued: "Suppose you have dinner with me at the Anchorage on Broadway. I understand it's quite a place for naval men when they hit town."

For a minute Joy was silent. Her red lips trembled, but she was careful to conceal their quivering. At length she jumped up.

"Give me a moment to powder my nose and I'll be with you. The Anchorage by all means!" she cried vibrantly.

"You know it? You've been there?"

"Oh, yes, I know all about it," Joy informed him.

They rode on top of one of the Riverside Drive busses. It was a cool, crystal-clear night. All the way downtown Alston pointed out the various ships, naming them, mentioning their tonnage and how many guns they carried. Winking lights signaled from ship to ship, the white launches bustled back and forth, and the crowd of pedestrians along the Drive viewed the spectacle in the river below.

Quiet and thoughtful, Joy crept into herself. A whole year! Another bus, another visit to the Anchorage and another sailor! Only this time, she vowed, it was going to be different. She wasn't the same impulsive, silly Joy who had given her heart so freely and her kisses with such careless abandon. She had scorched her fingers at love's bonfire and she knew better now.

"You're a quiet girl," Alston remarked, when they were near their destination. "You haven't said ten words since we started. What's the matter—am I boring you?" he demanded.

She lifted her eyes to his.

"Not at all. I've been thinking."

"Maybe," he suggested, "you don't like sailors."

Joy drew a little breath.

"Maybe," she murmured.

"But you do like to dance and, from what they've told me, the place we're going to has a swing band that toots 'em high, wide and handsome."

The Anchorage was tucked away on a side street twenty steps from the glowing lane of Broadway. Something flared up within Joy when they entered its circular foyer. The lights, the music, the smell of tobacco and liquor all brought a picture back to her that was at once painful and disturbing. It was here that Ralph Compton had first kissed her, told her that he loved her, that to him she was like a dream come true and would never, never fade.

Joy's red lips compressed. A never-fading dream? Compton had not even bothered to write her, once his ship steamed down the majestic Hudson and vanished in the mists of the Lower Bay.

How well she had learned her lesson! Men were cheats, gay deceivers. She stole a glance at Roger Alston. He looked sleek and handsome, but appearances meant nothing. Probably, Joy confided to herself, he was like all the others. Doubtless he had a girl in every port. Navy men were all the same, happy-go-lucky vagabonds, taking their love where they found it.

The head waiter led them to a table. The famous orchestra began playing a syncopated tune. Alston stood up.

"Shall we?"

Joy moved off in his arms. The floor was crowded, but he guided her accurately through the weaving couples. His sense of rhythm was perfect. He danced with a smooth,



His touch was hot and magnetic. His eyes were bright and his voice unsteady as he drew her toward him. "Joy! I hadn't meant to tell you yet, but— Joy! I've fallen in love with you!"

almost professional ease. At any other time, Joy reflected, she would have been contented and happy. An attractive escort, marvelous music— what more could any girl ask?

"Like it?" Alston inquired.

"You dance very well."

"Thanks. You are not so bad yourself, but I expected that."

"I suppose my aunt told you."

"My eyes did, when I first saw you."

"Oh, you have only to look at a girl and know what she's capable of." She smiled cynically.

Alston frowned.

"I don't believe I understand."

"Skip it," Joy said shortly.

After the dance they went back to the table. He ordered and sat back in his chair.

"I've been hoping," Alston went on, "we'd be friends. I guess you don't like me."

"What makes you think that?"

Joy asked.

"You've been so quiet and—*and* bored."

For the first time she laughed.

"Probably it's just my nature."

"Or the fact," he added, "that you don't like sailors."

They danced several times more in the shifting lights. As the hour grew later, the place became more crowded. Sailors and their sweethearts came in. Tables on the balcony filled up. It was nearly twelve when Alston suggested:

"Guess it's time we shoved off. I don't want to monopolize you. I hope to see you again soon."

They went toward the foyer. Joy received her wrap at the coat-room desk. It was when the check girl handed it to her that a familiar voice, a pace behind her, filled her with wild confusion.

"Allow me," the voice said suavely.

Joy swung around and looked directly into Ralph Compton's blue eyes. He stood smiling at her, tall and blond, as immaculate as always, trim and compelling in his uniform.

Alston saluted and stepped aside while Compton draped the wrap over Joy's sweetly sloping shoulders.

"How've you been?" he asked in a low voice.

"Very well, thank you," Joy replied, glad that her voice was under control. "And you?" she added politely.

"Never better."

And that was all.

It was Alston's turn to be silent and thoughtful when they rode back up the Drive. When they reached Joy's house he stood on the front steps, cap in hand. She was conscious of his eyes and nearness. She supposed this was the moment when he would try to kiss her good night. Instead, Alston merely thanked her for the evening and asked permission to see her again on his next shore leave.

For a long time after he had gone, Joy sat on the window seat, staring out at the winking pin points of fire that were telling their secret stories.

The telephone beside her bed aroused her toward nine the following morning. She unhooked it, rubbing sleep from her drowsy eyes. Compton's voice on the wire was more awakening than a cold shower. Joy gripped the receiver more tightly.

"Hope I didn't wake you up," Compton was saying. "I've only got a minute before I go back to the gun carrier. I just wanted to ask if I could stop in to-night."

Joy pressed an arm over her heart.

"Sorry, I have a date."

"How about Friday?"

"I'm dated," she told him, "every night as long as the fleet's here."

In the pause that followed, she heard his crisp, sardonic laugh.

"Meaning," he drawled, "that you don't want to see me. Who is it this time—Alston? I get you. Never mind! Forget that I ever telephoned. Good-by."

Toward the end of the week, Joy began to realize the worst thing that could possibly happen to her, was actually happening. Roger Al-

ston had awakened her interest, and she found herself thinking a great deal about him. In vain she tried to lapse back into the ironic, quiet Joy who was positively through with love and sailors. Futilely, she attempted to go back and visualize again the disappointment and sorrow that had come when the fleet had sailed that last time. But she couldn't. A new, roseate haze dropped a curtain before the eyes of memory, shutting out the past and all the unhappiness it had brought.

Then, one night when she and Alston sat on a grassy bank along the Drive, breathing in the fragrance of a sheltering lilac tree, his hand found hers in the gloom. His touch was hot and magnetic. His eyes were bright and his voice unsteady as he drew her a little toward him.

"Joy! I hadn't meant to tell you, but the night—you so close—Joy! I've fallen in love with you!"

She wanted to wrench her hands free, to cry out the impossibility of caring for him, but the night he spoke of held a potent magic—footsteps in the dark, distant voices, the perfume of lilacs and the pageant on the river. She seemed in a trance, under some spell that made her limp and unresisting. When he cradled her in his arms, his breath touching her flushed face, before he kissed her passionately, she knew she had no strength to rebel and fight the inevitable.

For a swooning space she clung to him. Finally, she pushed him away, sat up, and with a shaking hand brushed back her fluffy hair.

"I suppose this is an old story with you," she said in choked tones.

"Joy!"

"Well, you have kissed other girls and told them you loved them?"

"Never! I never loved anybody

before. I never will again! Oh, Joy, darling, this isn't an idle romance that ends when the anchor's up and I'm on my way! This is something beautiful and lasting! Don't you see, I want to marry you, sweetheart?"

"Marry me?" Joy spoke through stiff lips.

"I expect to be transferred to permanent shore duty—in the marine bureau at the Battery. That means you wouldn't have to be a sailor's bride with a husband on the high seas. I'll be with you always—always, Joy!"

Again she melted into his arms, her lips tremulous under the pressure of his, while the night seemed to tiptoe closer, surrounding them with a curtain of fire and rapture.

Until almost dawn Joy lay awake, going back over the past hours. She remembered every word he had said, every kiss. Finally, when she fell asleep, something had washed away the last of her doubts and fears. She believed Alston. He was different—no philandering sailor-man, who made love with casual indifference. He wanted her to marry him! Joy smiled happily in the dark. It was real love this time, not the fascination and infatuation that Ralph Compton had aroused in her. This was the true love of her dreams, the ardor and affection born of certainty.

For three enchanted days they danced, went to the theater and dined together. Joy took Alston on pilgrimages around the city. They visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art, went down to Chinatown on a lantern-hung bus, investigated Greenwich Village, and rode across the gigantic span of the George Washington Bridge.

That Tuesday, Alston prowled



Joy closed her eyes while they danced. She wanted to remember this waltz. In weeks to come, she wanted to take it from the treasure chest of memory and relive it. She opened her eyes and looked up at Alston. "Happy?" he asked softly.

around the living room. When Joy joined him, she saw that his handsome young face was troubled. She slipped into his arms, offered her lips and laughed at him with her eyes.

"Why so grave and gloomy, ensign?"

Alston lighted a cigarette.

"My last day ashore. We sail tomorrow for maneuvers off New London. I won't see you again until my transfer goes through."

"Oh, Roger!" Joy cried, dismayed. She hadn't thought that the happy interlude would ever end.



What he told her came as a tiny, climactic shock. It quenched the gladness in her heart, but only momentarily. He wasn't leaving her forever and ever. In a few weeks he'd be back again—hers for all eternity!

"Your last day?" Joy's voice was

bravely cheerful. "We must make it a red-letter one, dearest. First, luncheon at that quaint little place at Inwood, then a long walk together, and to-night the Anchorage. Doesn't that sound intriguing?"

Alston gathered her in his arms. "Darling, darling!" he whispered

huskily. "What am I going to do without you? I'll count every hour, every minute, and pray that the authorities at Washington will get my papers through without delay."

What a happy day! To Joy it was perfect in every detail—their luncheon, the walk through the woods on the grassy banks that sloped down to the shining river, then toward dusk, the lighted pile of the city with its roaring voice, crowds and confusion. A song of happiness sang above the note of sadness in Joy's heart.

Again they rode down the Drive on top of one of the green busses. The Hudson was crisscrossed with searchlights, studded with the crimson glare of the cruisers stationed there. The last night! To-morrow the stream would be empty, deserted. Joy sat with her hand in Alston's.

"You're sure those transfer papers are going through?"

"Positive. Why?"

Joy sighed.

"Because, if there were any doubt, I—I don't know what I'd do."

He leaned to brush a swift kiss on her glowing cheek.

"I wouldn't have asked you to marry me otherwise, yet!"

The Anchorage held a capacity throng. The management had decorated the place with flags and bunting as their gesture to the fleet's departure. The members of the band wore sailor suits and jaunty white gob caps. Everywhere was the flash of uniforms, girls with starry eyes clinging to officers' arms, enlisted men with their sweethearts. The noise was great, but somehow it seemed to hold a note of spurious gayety.

Joy closed her eyes while she danced with Alston. She wanted to remember this waltz. In weeks to

come she wanted to take it from the treasure chest of memory and relive it. She opened her eyes and looked up at him.

"Happy?" he asked softly.

"So happy," Joy smiled back.

It was close to midnight when they decided to leave. Alston led the way through the center aisle between the tables, out to the foyer and halfway to the coat-room desk. There he stopped suddenly. A girl had gotten up from a lounge on one side of the room and had come swiftly toward him.

She had jet-black hair, wide, flashing eyes, a mouth stiff with lipstick and a high, exotic complexion. There was something about her that arrested Joy's attention—something tense and strained in her manner.

"Roger!"

Her voice was low, husky, but vibrant. Alston wheeled around. Joy saw his brows go up.

"I beg your pardon. Were you addressing——"

The girl glided closer. One of her slender hands clutched his arm.

"Roger, you must come back to me! I can't stand it any longer! I know you don't love me any more, but you can't cast me aside! Roger please——"

Joy felt as though the world had stopped. She looked from the girl's dramatic face to Alston. His expression was one of surprise and, Joy thought, dismay. A flood of color swept his embarrassed face.

"I don't understand." He spoke sharply. "What's this all about? Who——"

"Roger! Please, just let me see you for a few minutes! If I can only talk to you again, make you realize what I've suffered!"

"But I tell you——"

Tears gathered in the girl's black eyes.

"Roger!" she cried brokenly. "If you ever cared——"

Joy could stand it no longer. Turning, she almost ran toward the entrance. Behind her, above the beat of the orchestra, she could hear the dark girl's pleading voice, Alston calling after her to wait. She plunged out into the quiet side street and hurried toward Broadway. There was an empty taxi at the corner. Without a backward glance Joy climbed into it, gave her destination in a choked, stricken voice and sank down on the worn upholstery.

In the gloom of her bedroom, with the reflection of the searchlights making weird shadows on the walls, she told herself she deserved what had happened. She hadn't learned her lesson. Ralph Compton had taught her nothing. She had had one experience and had gone back for more. She knew what navy men were, but she had thought that Alston was different. She had believed in him, trusted him with a supreme confidence, only to find his sincerity but a false veneer.

Eventually, when the dawn was haggard at the window, Joy fell asleep, her hands tightly clenched, the pillow under her hot cheek damp with the tears that came at last.

When she awoke, she heard the bustle of departure on the river. Sirens were screaming. Far down the river, a twelve-gun salute sent its reverberating echoes rolling over the city. The shrill piping of whistles blended with the pound of engines. Joy jumped up and went to the window seat. The stately gray *Dakota* was moving past the foot of the street.

There was a knock on the door, and Paula's inquiry:

"Are you awake, Miss Joy?"

"Yes, come in."

Paula entered.

"There's a young lady here to see you. She says it's urgent. I asked her to wait, but she came up."

A girl pushed past Paula into the bedroom. It took Joy a perplexed minute to recognize her. Then abruptly, all last night's disillusionment poured back into her broken heart. Her visitor was the girl who had charge of the coat-room desk at the Anchorage!

"I'm sorry I barged in like this," she began quickly, with a glance at Paula who discreetly shut the door and withdrew, "but I was afraid you wouldn't see me. I've got to tell you this and there isn't much time. The fleet's leaving——"

Joy stared at the other's excited face. "What is it?" she stammered.

The girl leaned earnestly forward. "Listen, you've been framed. All that stuff last night—it wasn't on the level! I know because I overheard. A couple of days ago they were talking it over in the lounge. The girl's name is Sonya Trent and she used to sing and dance at the Seventy Club. She'd do anything for a few dollars."

Still Joy stared, uncomprehending.

"What—what do you mean?"

"That the man—his name is Compton—got Sonya to put on the act. I heard him tell her he wanted to get even with you for something, and that Sonya was to make believe she was an old sweetheart of the boy you were with last night. You should have waited, because after you ran out, your friend made Sonya admit it was all a gag. I got your address out of the telephone book and I thought it was only right——"

But Joy had heard enough. She dressed with quick, shaking fingers.

In a daze, through which her heart's broken pieces seemed to come together again and form one whole, beating unit, she was conscious only of the need of haste. Afterward, she remembered thanking the girl of the coat-room desk, hurrying out into the sunny street and finding a taxi.

"Ninety-sixth Street and the Drive!" she gasped.

That was where the embarkation for the *Connecticut* was staged. With parted lips, Joy watched the streets drop past. Now and again traffic lights stopped their steady progress. Then she sat on the edge of the seat, trying to determine whether or not his ship was the turreted cruiser that had broken its line and was steaming down the river.

"Ninety-sixth Street, lady!"

Joy paid and alighted hastily. Was she too late? Would she ever see him again? Was she going to let him go, thinking that it was all ended? She couldn't let Roger sail without knowing that she knew, that nothing had changed, and that he must forgive her for doubting him.

"Just a minute, miss. You can't come through here."

A sailor barred her entrance to the wooden walk that led to the wharf below. Joy had a glimpse of two tenders there, of a group of officers climbing into them.

"The *Connecticut*—has it sailed?" she heard herself ask.

"No, miss, but she's going any minute."

"I've got to get a message aboard! I must!"

"Sorry, there's no chance now."

"Surely, there's some one down there who's going aboard, who'll take it!"

"Joy!"

She heard Alston's wondering exclamation behind her. She swung around and, careless of those at the entrance, swept into his arms.

"Roger! I've been a fool! I should have known——"

He kissed her, holding her close for a fleeting instant.

"Darling, you shouldn't have known! At first it was so convincing, I wasn't quite sure whether I was awake or dreaming! I've got to hurry now, but I have good news. I've just learned that after the maneuvers the transfer becomes effective. Two weeks, sweetheart—two little weeks! I tried to get you on the telephone, but Paula said you had rushed out."

A happy, teary Joy smiled up at him.

"Rushed out," she whispered, "to find you! To—to," she added unsteadily, "kiss and remember, not kiss and forget!"



Starting next week

"PRIZE OF HOLLYWOOD"

By EDNA ROBB WEBSTER

The story of an ambitious girl and the most glamorous city in the world—Hollywood.

Don't miss the first installment!



The World Of Dreams

By Marie Calvane

IV.

I HAVE so far discussed only the symbolical dream. However, not all dreams are symbolical. Occasionally we may have a dream which is a direct message, one in which no symbolical figure is employed. The following is an example for the authenticity of which I can personally vouch.

A little boy was desperately ill, wasting away of an obscure fever which would not lend itself to medi-

cal treatment. The mother was frantic; only a year before she had buried a daughter who had passed away in the same manner. She had been watching at his bedside for hours. Finally, exhausted, she lay down on a couch which had been placed for her beside the baby's bed.

She had been asleep only a few minutes when an elderly lady, whom she did not recognize, appeared before her in a dream. She shook her roughly by the shoulder, as though trying to wake her, and said sharply:

"Don't you know what to do? Give him some——" She named a vine which grew outside the cottage, and of whose medicinal value the mother was unaware.

Startled, the mother awoke instantly and looked around, almost expecting to see the lady, the vision had been so vivid. Then, realizing that it had been a dream, she ran outside, broke off a piece of the herb and, pressing some of the juice into a spoon, gave it to the infant who was moaning and tossing around very restlessly without any pause.

She realized it was a great risk. Suppose the child got worse instead of better? After all, it had only been a dream. But she felt that it had been a dream in answer to her anguished prayers and with her child's life at stake, no risk was too great.

Almost miraculously, as she watched, the moaning and tossing subsided. In less than a half hour the child had dropped off into a sound sleep. In a few days the fever left him and before a week passed he was well on his way to recovery.

I could quote many such examples which have come to my attention, but this one will suffice to illustrate my point. After all, no mystery surrounds dreams such as these, we can all understand them and if we have the faith and the courage to follow their warning or advice, we might save ourselves many tears and much useless regret.

It is the symbolical dream which many people at first find so confusing, with their varying accents and shades of meaning. For instance, to say simply that you dream of a dance is not sufficient. To

dream that you are dancing indicates that you will be gay, but not altogether happy. If, however, you dream that you stand by, watching others dancing, it is a sign that you will suffer from envy. To dream that you are the dancer at an entertainment means that unhappy circumstances will cause you to feign a happiness you do not feel.

A dream of the dead is always portentous. They come as frequently with a direct message as they do in a symbolical dream. It is not the dream of the departed but rather the message they bring which is fraught with meaning for us.

Diamonds symbolize money and success. If you dream that you find a large and beautiful diamond it indicates that you will meet a new and wealthy lover or enter upon a new business enterprise

which should prove very lucrative. However, to lose a diamond is an evil omen. By your own carelessness you will lose something that you value. It may be a friend, a lover, or a material possession.

Ditches are symbols of degradation. If you dream that you fall in a ditch it is a sign that your conduct will bring you into scandal and disgrace. If you jump over a ditch, you will escape the dishonor which threatened your happiness.

Dreams of the dead seem to intrigue us most, perhaps because every one has at some time had the experience of seeing a departed one appear to them in their dreams. They may come in a direct message, utter a few words and then disappear, or again they may come in a long, symbolical dream which taxes all our learning and intuition to un-



rael. At other times they may be no more than a fleeting vision, a word or a touch, a token of love and reassurance and they are gone once more, and all our tears and conjuring cannot bring them back until such time as they again choose to appear.

A mother died leaving three small children and a grown daughter of eighteen. The daughter stayed home, taking care of the small children and her father. There wasn't very much money, but by careful economizing they managed to live comfortably, if frugally.

Sally went out very little, although she was frequently invited out by her friends. There was no money for finery or party dresses and Sally was sensitive.

Her mother had, somehow, managed to eke out a few dollars when an important occasion demanded a new dress or one of its many accessories, but Sally had no experience in that higher and more intricate form of finance. She only knew that when there was no money—there was no money.

And just at about the time when things were at the lowest ebb Ann's mother sent out invitations for what was going to be a big and important party. They were going to announce Ann's engagement, and Ann was Sally's best friend. Sally did want to go. She wanted to go badly, but she'd just come out of mourning a few months before. Even her best dress was terribly outmoded and there was no money for a new one. Every one would know why she hadn't attended Ann's engagement dance.

LS—7C

At this crucial time in her life Sally dreamed of her mother, for the first time since she had died.

"Why don't you take the money out of the blue vase and use it to buy a dress?" she asked. "It will make you very happy."

Before Sally had a chance to ask a question or say a word the vision disappeared.

The next day, without saying a word to any one about it, Sally searched high and low for a blue vase. She felt rather sheepish about it. It seemed so silly, giving credence to a dream. But there was no blue vase to be found and finally Sally gave up the search, dismissing the dream as just "one of those things."

However, she could not get it out of her mind, and that evening she asked her father, "Dad, did we ever own a blue vase? I seem to have a recollection of seeing one around," she lied glibly, a guilty feeling stealing over her.

"Yeah, we did have one, once. Your ma got it for a wedding present, I think. It may still be some place in the attic, or maybe she's thrown it away. Why?"

"Oh, nothing," Sally dismissed the subject with feigned lightness, but her pulses were racing. "I just thought a blue vase would look nice in that corner, with some yellow corn-flowers in it."

But Sally's father was buried behind his paper once more and evinced no interest in nook or vase.

In a few minutes Sally walked unobtrusively out of the room and then, racing up the attic stairs, began hurriedly rummaging around. In a corner among an assorted collec-



tion of odds and ends she found the vase that had once been a wedding gift. And in it she found over fifty dollars in small bills, which her mother had apparently saved out of her small income and had kept for just such emergencies as this.

Sally went to the party. And the strangest part of it all, Sally told me, was that that party was the turning point in her life, for it was there she met for the first time the man whom she subsequently married.

Sometimes dreams are not such tangible things; they are like a melody wafted on the air, the song of a bird, the fragrance of a rose. They pass and all we have left is a memory, but a memory that keeps vibrating through our thoughts for a long time, sweet and unforgettable.

Lucille's was such a dream. She had found happiness in the love of a man who was considerably older than she in years, but not in life. Theirs was the perfect love which needs no vows, no protestations of affection to plead its case. A sublime faith in their love and in each other bound them both.

And then, suddenly, he passed on. A void was left in Lucille's life

which nothing was able to fill. She tried to lose herself in her work but to no avail. She began to search for flaws in their love in an effort to assuage her grief.

"He was so much older than I. Perhaps we might have not been happy anyway," she told herself, hoping in that way to minimize her loss.

And then one night she dreamed of him. Almost as if conjured by her thoughts, he came to her. And she told to him the very same words with which she had tried to gain forgetfulness:

"Why, I'm almost young enough to be your daughter!" she protested.

He smiled tenderly, understandingly. "But I don't want you for a daughter."

"And I don't want to be your daughter!" she cried honestly, dropping the pretense. That was all.

A dream like this has no beginning and no end. It is like a chord out of a mighty symphony, vibrating with life and feeling. A thought sent to comfort and reassure one whose faith in the power of love to transcend time, space and even life itself had begun to waver.

Next week Marie Calvane continues her interpretation of dreams.



DESERTED

MY heart is a deserted house
 Lost somewhere on a shabby street,
 And sad-eyed ghosts glide in and out
 On slow, reproachful feet.

It stands with patient doors flung wide
 That cheer and comfort proved.
 But, oh, it has not been the same
 Since the last tenant moved!

ERIKA SCHWAGER



Bride By Request

By Rosetta Welch Volpa

I HATE this!" Shirley snapped, as Tommy brought the expensive roadster to a stop. Her eyes traveled resentfully from the shacks built along the side of the hill, that housed the workmen's families, to the great mass of machinery down the slope at the bridge site.

Yet, if Shirley had stopped for one moment and thought, she'd have realized that she had no right to be

angry, for if it hadn't been for Tommy's grandmother, Shirley would probably have remained in that orphanage. No doubt she'd have been tall, too slender and awkward, with straight black hair, instead of being the smart woman that she now was. Her hair, inky-black and soft as silk, rippled into waves over her head and broke into a wealth of tiny ringlets on her creamy neck.

Shirley was five when Mrs. Curtis had adopted her as a playmate for the seven-year-old Tommy—Tommy, who had become Mrs. Curtis's ward when his parents had been killed in an accident.

She was nineteen now and Tommy twenty-one. Only twice in all those years had her foster mother asked a favor of her. The first time was when Shirley wanted to marry Oliver Pittman. Mrs. Curtis had begged her not to. The second time occurred an hour before she died, when she asked Shirley to marry her grandson, Tommy, who had forsaken the life of a wealthy playboy for the hard life of an engineer. Unable to refuse, Shirley had married him, an exquisite bride in Mrs. Curtis's lovely old wedding gown.

Tommy spoke tenderly. "I'm truly sorry, Shirley, you feel that way about all this, but it's my first real job and I must be here." He climbed from the car and opened the rumble seat to get out the bags.

"If Oliver hadn't disappeared so suddenly I'd have married him, and then you wouldn't have had to be responsible for me and I wouldn't have had to come here!" she flared.

It was too dark for Shirley to see Tommy wince under the lash of her tongue. He let the rumble seat slide back into place without speaking.

Angrily, Shirley jumped out of the car, turning her ankle, and would have fallen if Tommy's strong arms had not caught her. She leaned against his broad shoulder for a second. Then, before she realized it, Tommy's lips were on hers.

She wrenched herself free, fire blazing in her blue-black eyes. "Don't you ever do that again!" she stormed. "It's bad enough to have married you. You can't ever mean anything to me, Thomas Curtis!"

"Forgive me," he said gently. "I'll try to remember!"

But as Shirley followed Tommy up the path to the cabin, she was forced to admit to herself that his kiss had set her blood racing.

A moment later they were inside the cabin. Tommy struck a match and held it to the white mantle of the gas lamp which hung from the low ceiling. The bright light revealed a leather couch against one side of the rough board wall, plain wooden chairs around the bare table in the center of the room. Over in the corner was another table which appeared to be Tommy's desk. There were no curtains. Through an open door Shirley caught a glimpse of a crude kitchen—heavy dishes on the board shelves.

"Tommy!" she gasped in horror, her coral-tipped nails clutching the purse in her hand. "How could you bring me to a place like this?"

She stared up at him. Sandy hair curled stubbornly over his fine forehead, and his broad shoulders seemed to fill the shabby room. There was an intangible allure about this man, she thought involuntarily. Perhaps it was the way he looked down at her or the deep tan of his skin, or was it Tommy himself that suddenly made Shirley ashamed of the things she had said?

She watched him carry her expensive bags through the door that creaked. Returning a moment later, he said quietly: "This will be your room, Shirley. I'll bunk over there on the couch." He brushed past her and walked into the kitchen.

Shirley hurried into the bedroom. As she drew off her green peaked hat, a tear that had clung to the long dark lashes fell unheeded onto her green gabardine suit. She dropped down on the quilt-covered bed, tossing her gloves and purse be-

side her hat on the old-fashioned dresser.

For the first time in her life, Shirley wished she were five years old again and back in the orphanage, that Mrs. Curtis had never picked her out to adopt.

Shirley heard dishes rattle from the kitchen, then Tommy's kind voice:

"Come on, Shirley. Have a bite to eat. It'll make you feel better. You must be hungry after that long trip."

Shirley declared that she wasn't hungry and that she didn't wish to talk, but the aroma of coffee and the clicking of Tommy's knife and fork aroused a poignant appetite.

Swallowing her pride, she rose, pulled her double-breasted suit into place, and without looking at Tommy, crossed the room and sank into a chair opposite him.

Gratefully, she attacked the delicious steak and sipped hot black coffee from a clumsy, thick cup. Presently, she said:

"I don't know what mother was thinking of, to make us marry each other when we've grown up together."

"Your security," Tommy replied gravely.

"But I could just as well have married Oliver Pittman. He has money. Oh, I know you thought the same as mother. She always said, 'Too much money, liquor and idle hours, mixed, is the devil's workshop,' but he was always so—so reliable."

"I know. I feel yet that grandmother scarcely realized what she was asking of us in her dying hour. I think she wanted to see you married in her wedding gown. It was lovely, Shirley, and you were beautiful. Oh, well," Tommy sighed,

"she wouldn't want you to stay married and be unhappy, so what do you want to do?"

Tommy watched intently the girl whom he had adored from childhood, whom he had shielded throughout school days and on into college. He had seen to it that she didn't drink too many cocktails or go on moonlight rides, though she despised him for it. For her sake, he had even helped Oliver out of a swindling mess before it was publicly known that the Pittmans had lost their money. Despite his acute dislike for Oliver, Tommy had given him a job, sending him to a construction camp a month before. He had hoped that Shirley had forgotten him, but now he wasn't so sure.

"I don't know what I want to do about it," Shirley told him brokenly, feeling Tommy's searching gaze upon her. Tommy hadn't wanted to marry her any more than she had him, she recalled. He had inferred as much. How could they go through life pretending? Yet Shirley knew they must—knew she had to appear as happy as a bride should, for Tommy's sake, in the presence of his coworkers.

Suddenly the tears, which she had held in check for the past three days, came like a flood. She pushed her chair back and stumbled to the couch. Tommy was quickly beside her.

"All this has been rough on you, Shirley," he was saying tenderly. "But I'll be good to you as long as you care to stay. When you want to leave, I'll arrange it." He sat down and put his arm around her. He wiped her eyes with his handkerchief, just as he had done a thousand times in the past.

But never before had Shirley experienced this peculiar feeling around her heart. A strange quiet

followed. Then, awkwardly, Tommy rose and returned to the kitchen,

realizing fully what it meant to Shirley to be cut off from her social friends. He had never enjoyed the life of a playboy, fired with an ambition to be a successful engineer. He had overcome many hardships and loneliness, interesting himself in his work, and was able to stand it. But Shirley had nothing to do but think and dream.

Finally, Shirley had gained control of herself and glanced up to

"Shirley, you're a real sport," Tommy exclaimed. "You don't have to cook, you know." He glanced around the room. "And you've scrubbed everything!" Shirley herself wondered why she was doing all this for a man she did not love.



see Tommy expertly washing the dishes. A thrill shot through her. The kitchen looked too small for his broad shoulders. Shirley's heart swelled with pride in spite of herself, to have a man as fine as Tommy sacrificing his happiness for her.

The next evening Tommy came home from work early, and went directly to the kitchen, where he heard the clatter of dishes. He stopped on the threshold and gazed at Shirley in astonishment.

Her lovely hands were slicing tomatoes for salad, her soft black hair brushed off her face and fastened back, revealing two tiny shell-like ears. She was just as beautiful in her green-checked gingham and green frilly apron as she ever was in her laces and satins.

"Shirley, you're a real sport! You don't have to cook, you know." He glanced around the cabin. "And you've scrubbed everything! I hate now, more than ever, to ask a favor of you, but there seems no other way." He paused.

"What is it, Tommy?"

"Well, the men insist on celebrating our wedding. Their wives have made cake and ice cream and want to wish us happiness in their own simple way. They're expecting us to-night at the schoolhouse lunch room." He was looking intently at the toe of his boot.

"Of course we'll go. Just because we've been brought up on cocktail parties is no reason why we should snub their hospitality. Mother didn't teach us to be snobbish, Tommy."

"Shirley"—huskily—"thanks!"

Not looking up, Shirley went on with the final preparations of the meal, feeling Tommy's eyes upon her. Her hands were unsteady. After a long minute he walked away.

They arrived at the lunch room at eight o'clock sharp, Tommy more handsome than ever in evening clothes, and Shirley in a simple white gown trimmed with a bright-red scarf that looped at her lovely white throat and fell back over her shoul-

ders, floating to the floor. They were greeted with cheers of congratulations from the crowd as they entered the well-filled room, which was decorated with wild flowers.

Instantly, they were swept up onto a low platform where every one offered more congratulations and rained rice upon them good-naturedly.

Some one called out: "Let's see you kiss the bride, Tom." And others took up the words until it became a deafening chorus. Tommy slipped his arm around Shirley. Their lips met. A shiver of ecstasy shot through her, draining the color from her cheeks and the strength from her body. Her heart hammered wildly, uncontrollably, beneath the fire of his kiss. Surely this couldn't be Tommy—Tommy whom she regarded as a brother!

Tommy's hands were trembling as they drew apart. "Thanks for being so loyal," he whispered softly.

So she was being loyal! His kiss was loyal! The crowded room swam before her blue-black eyes. Something tugged at her heart. Her cheeks flamed red, then white as his words struck her.

At that same moment she saw Oliver Pittman! There could be no mistaking that dark, slick head, those small dark eyes set a little too close together, or the man-about-town way he walked and swung his shoulders. He was elbowing his way through the crowd of dancers to her. Her legs felt weak, as if they would not hold her up. Oliver, of all people! She stared at him, hardly able to believe her eyes, until he spoke.

"I'm real, Shirley. Don't look at me like that. I'm working down at the bridge, you know, and fly Tommy's plane to Los Angeles for food and machinery supplies, or didn't you know?"

"No." Her voice was scarcely audible. So Tommy was holding out on her! Why hadn't he told her Oliver was here?

Then she was in Oliver's arms, dancing. "Shirley, with you here, this place won't be so unendurable." His eyes burned into hers and she swayed toward him. "You're ravishingly lovely as ever, darling. Tell me, how long are you going to stay?"

"Until Tommy's work is finished. You see, I married Tommy four days ago."

"What?" Oliver's mouth dropped open in astonishment.

Shirley told him of her foster mother's last request. When she finished, Oliver laughed and drew her closer to him. "So you're married to Tommy! That's rich!" His dark eyes gleamed strangely. Then he led her out of the door, across the school grounds.

"We're soaring into the wide open spaces, darling," Oliver explained as he met her questioning look.

Shirley knitted her brows. She wanted to refuse, tell him she couldn't go off like this. Why, she hadn't even danced with Tommy, wasn't acting like a bride.

But what was the difference?—she asked herself. If it weren't for her foster mother, she'd have married Oliver!

They reached a long, low roadster and Oliver lifted her in.

"Oliver," Shirley protested, sitting up straight, "this is Tommy's car. You can't use it. He never allows any one to drive his car."

"That's just too bad, sweetheart. This is one time he doesn't have much to say about it. Anyway, he wouldn't refuse his wife the car," Oliver said mockingly, as he pressed the starter. Swiftly, he slid the car into gear and swung out of the school yard.

As they rode over the rough road a strange feeling of recklessness took possession of her. Why shouldn't she go for this ride? Tommy wouldn't care, and what if he did? It wasn't as if they loved each other. Yet the memory of his burning kiss suddenly seared her mind. She touched her lips caressingly with cold fingers, and wished that Tommy were some sort of brute instead of always being so kind.

She had taken on the cooking and the cleaning of the shack, for what? Surely not for Tommy! But now was her chance to go out with Oliver again and snatch a little happiness.

Shirley clung to his arm as they left the car and walked toward the plane.

They flew into the starlit heavens. The wind cooled Shirley's burning cheeks. Even while she relived her former life with Oliver in one swift hour, she was conscious of Tommy's face before her.

Back to earth they swooped. Oliver cut off the motor as he brought the plane to a stop and climbed out. He held his arms up to help Shirley from the plane.

"It—it was heavenly," she whispered. "I can't begin to thank you."

"Don't. We're going to have many more rides together."

They walked back to the car, Oliver's arm around her. At the car she was seized roughly into his arms, his lips pressed hungrily against hers.

"Shirley, you belong to me. I love you. No, don't try to stop me. I can see by the look in your lovely eyes that you feel the same about me. Promise to come out here tomorrow evening. We'll sail high into the heavens again."

Unable to resist him, Shirley promised, and they went back to the schoolhouse.

Something tugged at Shirley's heart as she met Tommy's worried eyes. She forced a smile to her lips as he took her into his arms to dance. For some unaccountable reason, her heart was heavy. She was aware that Tommy saw the change in her, yet he said nothing, only held her close. She had a mad desire to cry on his shoulder. If she didn't hate him so, she would believe that she was falling in love with him. But that was impossible!

Shirley finished the dishes the next evening and stepped into the large living room. Tommy was there, absorbed in papers at his desk. His shoulders seemed to droop as if under a strain. She glanced at her watch. The hands pointed at the exact time she had promised Oliver to meet him.

"I'm going for a walk, Tommy," Shirley said, a little catch in her voice.

"A walk will do you good, my dear," he replied. "Later, perhaps, we can have a talk." The look in his eyes made Shirley's pulse quicken and she hurried out of the cabin.

The night was dark and velvety, sweet with the perfume of the pines. The quarter moon gazed down from the star-spangled sky, and Shirley shivered, drew her coat around her slim form.

As she climbed the mountainside she visioned Tommy as he sat slumped at his desk, his unruly hair falling over his forehead. There were lines around his mouth, and his gray

eyes looked worried. This marriage, no doubt, was proving too much for him.

Shirley reached the clearing. A second later, Oliver emerged from its shadows and came forward.

"Shirley," he breathed as he met her, "I knew you'd come! Oh, I love you, my precious! Come away with me, darling!" He caught her in his

waiting arms.

"Oliver! Do you know what you are saying?" gasped Shirley.

"Of course, I know. I want only you, my sweet!"

"You are mad, Oliver!"

"Probably. But if I am, you are to blame. You captured my

heart ages ago—during your *début*, if you'll remember."

Shirley did remember. She remembered how she had pleaded with her foster mother to let her marry Oliver, but the older woman had stanchly refused. But now, Shirley argued, there were no reasons why she could not accept Oliver's offer. Tommy had said he'd release her of her marriage vows whenever she wished.

Her silence seemed to madden him. He caught her close to his pounding heart. Then, for some unknown reason, Shirley pushed him away, her heart leaping in a throb to her throat.

"Shirley," he whispered, "meet me here to-morrow morning at nine. We'll go off together, anywhere you say."

With a sudden frightened feeling,



Shirley turned without answering and ran like a wild animal down the mountain. Not until she was in sight of the cabin did she slacken her pace.

Shirley quietly opened the door. Tommy was no longer at his desk but at the table in the center of the room, his head in his hands, his fingers in his sandy hair.

Shirley's heart leaped within her. She hurried over to him.

"What is it, Tommy?"

He glanced up, startled. She was lovely, her black hair blown about her creamy, flushed face, dark eyes sparkling.

"Shirley," he said gravely, "the way things are going down at the bridge it won't be finished on schedule—machinery always breaking. I can't understand it. I bought all new machinery with the money grandmother gave me to start in business. You know what this will do to me, if it isn't finished? It'll ruin me, and my first job alone, too! I'll have to pay a penalty and besides— Oh, why am I telling you all this?"

"Tommy——" Her voice caught in her throat.

He rose, caught her hands in his. "You've been sweet, brave and loyal. I know how you must hate me, this marriage! But grandmother would be proud of you. Oh, Shirley!"

The next instant she was in his arms, his head buried in the sweet fragrance of her hair. Her fingers ran through his sandy hair unconsciously. She kissed his temple, closing her eyes. A fantastic happiness ran through her.

Their lips met and Shirley shivered with glorious ecstasy. She felt herself sweeping to heights of happiness. Then she was angry at her-

self for thrilling like this. She didn't love him, she reminded herself. Yet she felt her heart throbbing madly. Looking up into Tommy's gray eyes, she saw a warm, shining light there. It made a lump come to her throat. She turned and ran quickly into the bedroom.

It seemed hours that Shirley tossed, trying to fall asleep. Finally, she rose and dressed. Placing a chair by her window, she climbed out. A chill passed over her as she started down the path, and she pulled her coat around her. She didn't seem to notice or care where the path was leading until she was startled by a noise. Her hand flew to her throat to stifle a scream. She glanced around quickly, fear shooting through her. She shouldn't have come out into the night alone!

Suddenly, she saw the tiniest ray of light. It was on a piece of machinery down at the bridge. Her pulses hammering wildly, Shirley walked on cautiously, staring at the light. There was something strange about it! Soon she was close enough to distinguish the figure of a man. She no longer thought of herself or of her confused feelings toward Tommy. The man stooped before the flashlight, and Shirley saw his face. Oliver Pittman!

Panic seized her. What was he doing here? Then, instantly, everything became clear. Oliver was the cause of Tommy's machinery always breaking!

Shirley crouched down beside a bush as Oliver turned off the light and slowly made his way up the hill toward his cabin.

When he was completely swallowed up by the darkness, Shirley fled on winged feet to the haven of her bedroom. In the morning she would tell Tommy.

In the morning, when Shirley



"Let go of me!" Shirley cried desperately, pounding at Oliver with her small fists. The next instant Pat crashed into Oliver. He released Shirley and dropped to the floor.

awoke, she was instantly seized with a sense of fear. Climbing out of bed, she dressed hurriedly. A moment later she knew why. The sun was already over the hilltops and Tommy was gone! She had overslept!

She ran across the room to the door. She would go out and find

Tommy, warn him of Oliver's tampering. Her hand on the doorknob, she stopped. Some one was knocking from the outside. She swung the door wide. Oliver Pittman stood there!

"Oliver!" Shirley gasped, clenching the doorknob.

"Shirley, you aren't going to disappoint me? I've waited a half hour for you. You're coming with me, darling." His voice was pleading softly, but his eyes glinted hotly. He stepped toward her and reached his arms out for her.

"Don't you dare touch me. I despise you!" She backed into the room. "You've no business to come

here. What will people say who saw you?"

"I don't care! I've come for you and I'm taking you with me!" he said fiercely.

"Oliver, get out of here before I smash something over your head. I'm not going with you. That's final! I never want to see you again! I love Tommy!" The words slipped from her lips of their own accord. She was surprised for a second, then realized in a blinding flash that she did love Tommy. She must have loved him always.

Shirley was conscious of Oliver's dark eyes upon her, fire flashing dangerously from them.

"I shall stop at nothing to get my own way now!" His voice was thick and unpleasant with anger. "Tommy and I went to engineering school together. I failed; he didn't. Everything I've wanted to do and couldn't, Tommy has done! I swore I'd ruin him even when he pulled me out of a scrape a month ago and brought me down here. To-day a cable will break, but you and I will be high up in the clouds when it happens."

Eyes blazing, Oliver took a stride nearer Shirley. She shrank back, but he caught her roughly to him.

"Let go of me!" Shirley cried desperately, pounding him with her small fists, but she was no match for him.

A voice shouted from the doorway: "Leave that girl alone, you dirty——"

In the next instant Pat Murphy, one of the workmen, stepped over to them. Shirley heard the blow, so close to her ear that it sounded like the blast of a cannon, as Pat's fist landed on Oliver's jaw. Oliver released Shirley and dropped to the floor.

"Tom's been hurt down at the bridge, Mrs. Curtis," Pat said.

"Tommy's hurt?" Shirley cried, and ran wildly out of the cabin, down the slope to the bridge construction. Frantically, she pushed her way through the crowd that had gathered about Tommy.

"Tommy!" The cry was wrung from her heart. There was a deep gash just below his temple, right where she had kissed him the night before.

"Carry him to the cabin!" she ordered. "Carefully!"

She ran ahead of the men carrying Tommy. She breathed: "Please, God, don't let him die just when I've found I love him! Save him for me!" With the back of her hand, she wiped away the tears that blinded her.

Inside the cabin, she filled a basin with water and snatched up towels from the open board shelf. She raced to the bedroom and flung back the covers of her bed for the men to place Tommy there.

It was several hours later, long after the doctor had gone, that Shirley heard a light rap on the door. She went quietly to answer it.

It was Pat Murphy.

"Mrs. Curtis, the doc just told us Tom would live, so I thought ye'd like to know the fellas took that sneakin' Pittman over to the sheriff. I couldn't help overhearin' him tellin' ye the cable was goin' to break so I'll be right glad to be a witness in case Tom takes it to court."

"Oh, thank you, Pat. You're a peach!" Shirley exclaimed with gratitude and relief.

The next two days were like a nightmare. Tommy's eyes remained closed, the pallor of his face frightening, even though the doctor had said he would recover. Shirley stayed at his side night and day. The workmen's wives came and

helped, making broth that Shirley forced through Tommy's lips.

And then, at last, he opened his eyes.

The moon, like a mellow light, was shining through the window. Shirley held Tommy's hands in hers as he whispered: "Shirley!"

"Tommy darling!" she cried with relief, and bent over him.

"Why did it break?" his weak voice asked.

"It didn't. That is, the cable had been cut. But don't worry about that now, dear. The source of all your trouble has been taken care of." Tears choked her.

"Oh, Tommy," she cried, "I want you to know that I love you. I couldn't have stood it if—if you didn't get better. I knew it from the moment you kissed me that night."

"Shirley—Shirley!" His voice was husky, stronger now.

In the moonlight, she saw a smile come into his pale face. His arms reached up to her. Shirley went into them.

"Oh, my sweet," he whispered, "I've been tearing my heart out over you—loving you, knowing you hated me and knowing it was Oliver."

Shirley, her cheek against Tommy's, whispered softly: "I've loved you ever since mother brought me to you from the orphanage."

"My dear little orphan bride," Tommy whispered weakly.

"It's a funny sort of love, isn't it, Tommy?" The happy tears dropped from the long black lashes and splashed on the bed quilt.

"It may be a funny sort of love, Shirley darling, but it's the kind that will go on forever and ever."

He kissed her then, and all Shirley's heartache, weariness and uncertainty fled, leaving a breathless ecstasy in their place.



SUDDEN STORM

A HONEY-COLORED gown,
A throat gardenia-fair,
The firelight's jealous flames
Burnishing her hair.

Eyes as velvet brown
As a pansy leaf.
How could a lovers' quarrel
Be so swift, so brief!

Hot words—then, a sigh
Like a shy refrain.
A honey-colored gown
Crushed in my arms again!

HELEN BAYLEY DAVIS



Lady of the Evening

By Bob Emahiser

A SERIAL—Part III.

CHAPTER V.

LOOKING at it calmly the next day, Sabina saw how utterly impossible it was—marriage to Don Furman. Don had always been the true, good friend. She had a suspicion that friendship alone had

motivated Don when he proposed marriage.

“He doesn’t really love me,” she told herself. “We’ve been too good friends for that. He pitied me. And I think he’d do anything for me, even marry me.”

She laughed at the thought of it,

then shook her head. It was no go. There was no use denying her love for Al Winters. And so long as she loved him there was no use considering marriage to any one else.

And so life went on. Sabina's father was prone to regard the matter as a simple lovers' quarrel which would iron itself out in time. So he told Sabina. But alone with his own thoughts he worried. He wondered if his meeting and conversation with Anne Dunbar had in any way actuated her sudden interest in Al. He had her promise of silence regarding their mutual secret, but further than that—

He liked Al. He was sorry to see the affair turn out so unfortunately.

Mrs. Wright was not so lenient. She was bitter in her denunciation of Al and instructed the servants that should he call, Sabina was not at home. She turned away from the social life that made so many demands upon her and devoted herself to Sabina. And once she suggested:

"Darling, why not take a trip? Get away from everything for a while. I'm sure your father would agree to—say Honolulu for a few weeks."

But Sabina shook her head. "Thanks, mother. It's really not that bad. And Don is being grand to me."

And Don was. He took her on many trips, to luncheons, to dinners. But he was busy, too. He had a huge, growing law practice. He had, too, although he never intimated it to Sabina, a gradually developing interest in another woman—Anne Dunbar.

Despite his loyalty to Sabina, he found his thoughts wandering more and more toward the singer. He found time to listen to her on the radio and on three different nights in one week, he had gone to the Bagdad

to watch her dance and to hear her sing.

Each time he went there he watched for Al, but never saw him. In fact, Al had vanished from his old haunts. Then one afternoon Anne, alone in her apartment, received a phone call from him.

"Can I see you a few moments?" he asked.

She hesitated. Then: "Sure, Al; come on up."

He found her surprisingly changed. She was wearing a black negligee and had been looking over some new songs.

"It's nice to see you, Al," she said with quiet reserve. He stared at her. When she acted like this she was more like Sabina than ever. Somehow, her manner put him on the defensive. He sat down, eyeing her warily.

"Nice to see you, too, Anne."

She nodded and went on looking at her songs. Finally she said:

"Have you and Sabina made up yet?"

The question caught him off guard and angered him. "Certainly not," he snapped. "Did you expect us to, after what happened?"

She turned to look at him, regarding him soberly.

"Al," she said quietly, "I'd give a lot to undo what has been done. I deliberately did something I had no business to do."

He frowned, puzzled. "What the devil are you talking about?"

"You know that I never loved you, don't you, Al?"

He laughed dryly. "I'm afraid I had a few misconceptions. I know now—now that you've had the satisfaction of ruining me with Sabina."

"Al, please," she implored, and he looked at her with surprise. "I must make you understand. It's not too late yet, if you really love her."

"Of course I love her."

She paused a moment and then hurried on: "It was a despicable thing to do, Al, but I deliberately made love to you, to split you up with Sabina. She is so much like me in appearance, almost like a sister—I took a sort of sisterly interest in her. I didn't think you were being true to her. I knew you weren't. You were interested in me. You would have made love to me if I had let you."

He sat staring at her, pale and angry.

"It was wrong of me, Al. But can't you see? It looked as though you were deliberately marrying Sabina Wright for her money, and meanwhile you were chasing around with other women. For all I knew you were making love to a dozen others.

"And Sabina—she seemed like such an innocent, trusting little soul. I couldn't bear to think of her marrying a man who would make her unhappy, who would be unfaithful to her. I'm really not bad, Al. I was merely doing what I would want some other woman to do for me, and I guess I made a bad mistake."

She kept her eyes on Al when she had finished. For a moment she thought he was going to leap across the room at her. She saw his hands clench and unclench.

And then, suddenly, he relaxed. He smiled at her grimly.

"I guess I had it coming to me," he said quietly. "I've been every sort of a fool. No, I don't blame you, Anne. On the other hand, you've probably taught me a lesson."

She stood up quickly and crossed the room, placing her hands on his shoulders and looking down into his eyes.

"You do love her, don't you, Al?"

"More than you'll ever know, old girl."

"Let's be friends, Al. I've done the damage. Now let me help to make amends."

He shrugged. "O. K. It's pretty late. I don't know what can be done."

"Plenty can be done." She straightened up and, going to a small table, poured them each a drink. She handed him a glass and then asked:

"Al, this fellow who came up the other night with Sabina—Don Furman. Have you seen him any more?"

Al studied his drink. "Too much. He's taking Sabina around."

"Oh." Her eyebrows went up slightly.

"Why? Didn't you get along with him the other night?"

"Oh, yes. We got along fine. He's rather clever. He's not so good-looking as you, Al, but he's smart."

He looked so hurt that she rushed over and patted his hand. "No reflection on you, darling. But listen, don't let him have Sabina too much to himself. He knows too much about women."

Al showed signs of irritation. "I don't know how I can stop him. Anyhow, what makes you think he knows so much about women?"

"Oh, by the way he talks and acts," she said evasively.

"Gave you a line, did he?"

"No. He's too original for that."

"Well, he did seem to make an impression on you."

Anne laughed.

Al lay back in his chair and studied her speculatively. This line of conversation, he knew, was leading somewhere. She had some purpose



"It was a despicable thing to do, Al, but I deliberately made love to you to split you up with Sabina. I knew you weren't being true to her. You were interested in me." Al stared at her, pale and angry.

in mind. Was she in love with Don Furman? He took a shot in the dark.

"You spoke of helping me with Sabina," he ventured. "You mean you're interested in Don Furman?"

LS-8C

She smiled faintly. "Decidedly."
"If Sabina is in love with him, she'll hate you more than ever."

Anne shook her head confidently. "She isn't, darling. She's in love with you."

Al didn't betray any signs of enthusiasm. He had become involved in one of Anne's schemes. He didn't care to become mixed up in a new one. He glanced at his watch, frowning, and stood up to go.

She held out her hand. "You forgive me, Al?"

He frowned. "Sure, Anne. I guess everything will work out."

"It's going to," she said fervently. "And I'm going to help."

Leaving, he wasn't so sure that he wanted her to help. He stopped in at his apartment and telephoned Sabina. The maid answered the telephone.

"Sorry, Mr. Winters," came the voice over the wire. "Miss Wright is not at home."

Al swore vigorously. It was the same reply he had received fifty times in the past week. He sat down and tried to figure out some way to see Sabina, to talk to her. In the end he gave it up and, disconsolate, went to work.

Dancing and singing that night at the Bagdad, Anne glanced anxiously out over the crowded tables, hoping for a glimpse of one person. He had been there three nights the week before, sitting alone at a small table on the edge of the dance floor. But on no one of these occasions had he shown any sign of recognizing her.

And then she saw him. Yes, he was there again, at the same table on the edge of the floor, the lights catching the high spots in his red hair, shadows making his homely, rugged face more homely, more rugged.

Anne felt an excitement she had not felt for years. She went through her dance numbers with unusual animation. And she sang with so much spirit and feeling that she won a storm of applause from the crowd.

A waiter brought his card to her dressing room.

"I should like very much to see you a few moments," she read. "Shall I come back, or will you join me at my table?"

"I'll join you," she scribbled on a slip of paper and gave it to the waiter.

She waited until the crowd was dancing under the subdued lights to make her way to where he sat. He stood up quickly.

"So glad you decided to come," he said, grinning. "I was afraid you wouldn't after our stormy evening or that you would be busy. I understand you're always busy."

She gave him her most alluring smile. "I'm terribly overrated. And I wouldn't have missed seeing you for anything. It's the first opportunity I've had to get even."

"I'd suggest we go somewhere that is less noisy, if you don't mind."

"Mind? I insist. This is terrible. Would you like to come up to my apartment? It's the most disorderly place in the city, but it is quiet."

"Splendid. Let's go."

Don, as had Al earlier in the day, noticed the change in her. She was much more alluring, much more desirable in her new rôle. He commented on it when they were alone in her apartment.

"You're so different to-night. You don't even seem like the same person. Perhaps I was at fault the other night."

She arched finely penciled eyebrows in mock surprise. "Different? No; I'm usually like this. You just happened to catch me on a bad night. You know, the very nicest persons are the worst when they go off on a tangent. First of all, I'm going to apologize for what I did

that night, then I'm going to fix you a drink."

"Oh, heavens, don't apologize," said Don quickly. "You'll only make me ashamed of what I did. A bad beginning means a good ending. Let's shake and be friends." He held out his hand.

She took it, and her full lips curved into a lovely smile.

"I'm glad, Don. I like you."

"I like you, too, Anne. I think we're both just ornery enough to get along well together."

They laughed and talked together with rapidly lessening restraint as Anne mixed drinks. Then Don asked:

"Seen Al lately?"

"Yes. This afternoon." She glanced at him. "Why?"

"Oh, mere curiosity."

"It was the first time I've seen him since that night."

"Really?" Don was genuinely surprised. "I had rather supposed——"

"That he'd be right on my trail?" She shook her head. "Al isn't in love with me. The trouble with him is he's too handsome. Women make too much fuss over him. I really thought I was doing Sabina Wright a favor when——"

"And instead of that you placed her in a humiliating position and you may even have wrecked her life." His voice was sharp.

Anne shrugged, eyes hard. "She's a silly little fool. She flung herself at his head. She trailed him around like a sick puppy. He thought all he had to do was snap his fingers and she'd jump."

"So you went out of your way to break them up."

He saw an angry retort forming on her lips. Then she checked herself and smiled. "Please, Don. Don't. You do something to me;

you make me say mean, cruel things. I don't want to throw things to-night. And I don't want to get slapped again."

He smiled back at her. She was propped up on one elbow on the big settee, and he was slumped in an easy-chair a few feet away.

"I'm sorry," he said softly. "But still I can't understand why you should want to hurt Sabina. She looks enough like you to be your sister."

Anne stared at him fixedly, and one hand fluttered to her throat. "Perhaps that is why," she said in a low voice.

"Oh." There was a hint of surprise in his voice. "Feminine jealousy."

She forced a smile. "No. Please don't question me about it now. Some day I'll explain; but, anyway, Sabina is partly to blame for what happened. Believe me, if I loved a man I wouldn't let some other woman steal him away from me. I'm not irresistible, am I?"

Don chuckled. "I'm sure I don't know. I imagine you might be if you wanted to."

Her eyes met his and held them. "Should I try?" she asked after a moment.

"Why don't you?" he dared.

The days fled along into mid-summer, and love, Sabina discovered, was not like an old garment, to be discarded at will. She loved Al Winters, and merely breaking the engagement, refusing to see him, did not ease the pain in her heart.

For all her brave philosophy, her determination, she crumpled at the thought of going down through the years without Al. She read the pages of the *Journal* avidly. Frequently she found stories with his

name over them. These she pored over hungrily, line by line.

She was engaged in this task one afternoon when Don called. He was one of the few persons she really welcomed now.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came!" she exclaimed just a little desperately.

He looked at her searchingly. "Having some bad moments?"

She nodded, trying hard to smile. "Al call?"

"I don't know. Mother has instructed the servants that if he calls I'm not at home."

He patted her shoulder affection-



Love, Sabina discovered, was not like an old garment, to be discarded at will. She loved Al, and merely breaking the engagement, refusing to see him, did not ease the pain in her heart. She crumpled at the thought of going down through the years without him.

ately. "Your mother has the wisdom of age and experience."

Sabina frowned, puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"There is nothing that encourages desire like denial."

"You mean——"

"That the longer Al is kept away from you, the more he is going to want you."

She looked at him with her heart in her eyes. "I've got to have him, Don," she whispered huskily. "I don't care what he's done; I love him."

"And he loves you, too, pet," he assured her. "But be patient. Time has a way of settling all things, even seemingly impossible things."

She squeezed his arm. "Don, you're a dear. I don't know what I'd do without you."

He laughed, pleased.

"Been out anywhere, lately—evenings, I mean?"

"No. I haven't wanted to."

"You'd ought to get out a little. How about to-night? A date with the best dancer in town?"

She hesitated, wary. "Who?"

"Me." He pointed to himself with mock pride.

Sabina laughed, delighted. "With pleasure, kind sir."

"It's a date, then." And he hurried away.

It was not until they were on their way downtown that night that she asked: "Where to, Don?"

"A spot you know quite well. The Bagdad, if you don't mind."

"Oh, Don." There was a tremor of panic in her voice.

"Now, now, pet. Don't feel that way," he chided. "The best way to cope with the enemy is to force it into the open. You're not going to let Anne Dunbar run you out, are you?"

Her chin came up defiantly. "Certainly not. On to the Bagdad. That will be just fine."

The night club was crowded when they arrived, but they finally managed to get a table close to the dance floor. They had one dance before the floor show started.

It was with a queer, detached feeling that Sabina watched Anne Dunbar dance, listened to her sing. How beautiful she was! No wonder men loved her.

Now Anne came down the floor, followed by a bevy of chorines. She was almost directly opposite their table when she turned and looked straight at Sabina. Her flashing smile did not change. She might have been looking at a stranger.

Sabina, heart beating furiously, turned away and looked at Don. What she saw startled her. He was leaning forward, staring intently at Anne. His face was tense. For a moment she lived through another scene. She had seen Al watch Anne Dunbar with that same fascinated expression on his face.

But the next second she wondered if she could have been wrong, for Don was facing her, sipping a drink, and saying casually:

"The girl is good, isn't she? But they tell me you're pretty good yourself, Sabina."

Sabina smiled and turned back to watching the entertainment. She felt more calm now. "Oh, no," she denied. "I enjoy singing, but I don't even pretend to compare with Anne Dunbar. She's so beautiful. I wonder what she's like in private life."

"Grand," said Don, and then caught himself.

"How do you know?"

Don fumbled awkwardly with a cigarette. "Well, that's what they tell me."

But he failed to fool Sabina. Sit-

ting there, watching the dancers, she thought back to that evening when Don had stayed behind in Al's apartment with Anne. What had happened there? Was Don in love with the singer, too?

The floor show ended, and Anne left amid a thunder of applause and ran to her dressing room. Her maid was waiting.

"Get out!" Anne screamed and slammed the door in the face of the startled girl.

"Damn him!" she said through clenched teeth. "And damn Sabina Wright!" Suddenly she sank into a chair at her dressing table, and her head went down on her arms. "I love him," she sobbed. "I love him."

For the first time in her life Anne Dunbar was really in love.

The next moment she was sitting up laughing harshly to herself. Don Furman, with his rough tactics, had done to her what no man bearing gifts and bowing in subjection before her had succeeded in doing.

At precisely the time Anne was in her dressing room, Sabina looked up suddenly to find Al standing before her. Her heart pounded crazily, and for a few seconds the room swam dizzily before her eyes. She fought for control. Then she heard Don's voice. He had stood up quickly.

"Oh, hello, Al. Glad to see you. Draw up a chair and join us."

Al remained standing. "Thanks," he said with just a trace of hostility in his voice. "I merely wanted to ask Sabina to dance."

Sabina sat dumbly, afraid to move lest she give way to sudden emotion, afraid to speak for fear her voice would betray her. She stole a quick glance at Al. He looked thinner and the healthy tan seemed to have faded. He seemed, suddenly, years older.

The orchestra started to play and Sabina found her voice. She spoke to Don. "You don't mind, Don?"

"Of course not," he said hurriedly. "Run right along."

And then she was on the dance floor in Al's arms and going through all the trick steps they had always done together. His very nearness left her trembling. Unconsciously, she stiffened.

"Are you feeling all right, darling?" His lips were against her ear.

His use of that term of endearment brought a little catch in her throat. She did not dare to answer.

"I've tried to call you, Sabina," he went on. "Your father and mother must hate me—"

What should she say? What should she do? Her only impulse was to let herself go, to give way to that mad love for him which racked her soul. But, to her surprise, she found herself replying quietly:

"No, I don't think they do, Al."

They danced a moment in silence, then:

"I still love you, Sabina. I don't care what you do, what you say; I still love you."

She pulled away slightly. "Please, Al—"

"You've got to listen to me. You must. I can't go on like this much longer."

There was real agony in his voice, and she looked up at him. Immediately she wished she hadn't.

"Oh—Al!" she breathed.

"Sabina, I've got to talk to you—where we can be alone—now!" She tried to object, but forcefully he guided her to the edge of the dance floor and out between tables to the spacious foyer. Upstairs was a large lounge room. Quickly they made their way toward it.

Don watched them go. He would have liked to send a note to Anne,

but he was worried about Sabina. Better, he decided, to let his own love affair take care of itself until he had Sabina and Al back together again. He left the table and walked nervously up and down the foyer smoking a cigar.

As she hurried along, Sabina had been thinking rapidly. She loved Al, she wanted him; but she was determined now that never would she accept him until she was sure there was no other woman lurking in the background and looming in the shadows, ready to step forth and rob her of happiness.

They sat on a low bench behind a fringe of tall ferns.

"You look very tired, Al," she said softly. "Working quite hard?"

He looked at her in surprise. "Why, yes. Rather. And I haven't slept any too well since we split up."

"Dissipating?"

He looked away. "Some," he admitted. What he would have liked to tell her was how unbearable his own apartment had suddenly become; how, unable to sleep, he had taken to wandering around the streets at night, visiting old haunts that he had abandoned after meeting Sabina. Haunts where men gathered to drink and drown kindred sorrows.

He had a vague suspicion she wouldn't believe him; he suspected, too, that she still thought he was carrying on with Anne Dunbar. He

groped for some way to eliminate that from her mind.

"I suppose you would call it dissipating," he explained. "More liquor than is good for me. But no women, darling. I've only seen Anne once."

She stared at him in evident disbelief. The glance half angered him.

"By the way," he said shortly, "you're not falling in love with Don Furman?"

She could not suppress a low laugh, even though she felt he was lying to her about Anne. Just the thought of Al being jealous of Don amused her.

"Don is a fine friend," she assured him. "That is all he has ever been. It's all he ever will be. And I'd trust him to

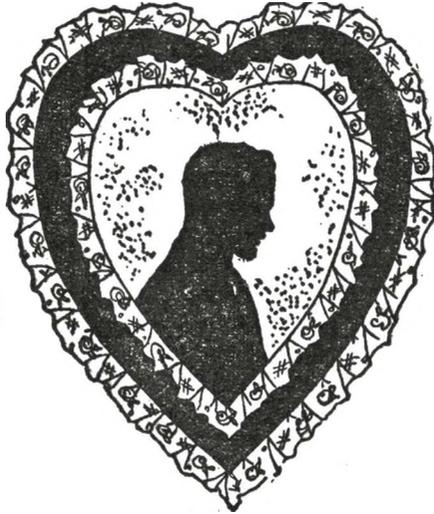
the end of the world," she finished.

He flushed at her words. "You don't trust me?"

She looked at him earnestly. "I don't know, Al. I'd like to."

He leaped at the opening she had given him. "Sabina, how can I—what can I do, or say, to convince you that what happened is all past? I was infatuated. I admit it. But I love you. Can't you understand that?"

She sat, tense, heart pounding. Could she be wrong? She did so want to believe him. And when he talked like that, his voice low, vibrant with emotion, it was almost more than she could stand. He must have noticed her agitation, for suddenly he reached in the pocket



of his waistcoat and produced the ring—her engagement ring.

Sabina stared fixedly at the gleaming, brilliant stone. She felt Al's hand close over her fingers. Suddenly she was panicky, terribly afraid. She pulled her hand away.

"No, Al. Please. Not now. Wait."

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

"Yes," she whispered. "You know I do."

"Then please, darling——" He held out the ring again.

She shook her head, adamant. "No, Al. Give me more time. Let's be sure. I don't think I could stand going through—all that—again."

He sat back wearily, fingering the ring, a stricken look on his face. Sabina, her eyes meeting his, felt a sharp pain in her throat. She had risen to meet his anger, but now he was hurt—she couldn't stand that. She bit her lip and glanced down quickly at her wrist watch.

"Al, I must go."

He grasped her hands. "Sabina," he pleaded. "Meet me to-morrow. Let's talk it over to-morrow."

She hesitated. Another meeting like this and she would give in to him. She wanted to. Why hold off any longer?

"To-morrow—at two. The Cliff House," he insisted.

She looked at him, lips stiff, but her eyes gave silent assent.

Downstairs, Don had smoked his cigar down to a short stub. He eyed Sabina appraisingly as she came down the stairs. She and Al both looked rather pale and strained. His heart went out to them.

Seeing Don, Sabina was immediately solicitous. "Oh, Don, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to keep you waiting——"

"Didn't mind a bit," he said, grinning. "Too hot in there."

She nodded. "Let's go. Have you had enough?"

"Plenty."

Al stood to one side, mouth and eyes grim. He lingered a moment after good nights had been exchanged, and then asked for his coat and hat. On the sidewalk he hesitated. The thought of returning to his apartment was unbearable. Couldn't sleep anyhow. He swung around to start down the street and almost bumped into Anne.

She stared at him malevolently. "What's the matter?" he asked, grinning.

"Oh, I don't know," she said bitterly. "Rotten evening. I'm about fed up with this place."

"Come on, I'll buy you a cup of coffee," he suggested. He wondered what had happened to upset her.

"O. K.," she said wearily. "I suppose anything is better than being alone."

They crossed the street and, entering a café, sat down near the front. Farther back, Sabina, looking into a wall mirror to arrange her hair, saw them. Don saw her face pale.

"Sabina, what's the trouble?"

She forced a smile. "Just a little upset. Too much excitement all in one evening."

He patted her hand.

"I know, pet. A little hot food will make you feel better."

Eating slowly, Sabina lingered over her meal until she saw Anne and Al get up and go out together.

CHAPTER VI.

Don called Sabina the next day shortly before noon.

"Hello, pet," his voice came over the wire. "I'm running down to



Don eyed Sabina appraisingly as she came down the stairs. She and Al both looked pale and strained. His heart went out to them.

Santa Cruz again this afternoon. Want to go along?"

Sabina, almost ill as the result of her adventure of the night before, jumped at the chance. There was very little use, she decided, in talking to Al again. What she had suspected was true. He had lied to her. He was still seeing Anne.

She sat down and wrote him a brief note. It was quite formal, merely saying that she had changed her mind about meeting him that afternoon. She put it in a sealed envelope, gave it to the chauffeur, and told him to take it to Al's apartment.

At Santa Cruz, after visiting his client, Don came back to the hotel where he had left Sabina.

"I think I'd better get you a room," he suggested. "Looks like I'll be here until late this evening. Can you amuse yourself?"

She sighed contentedly. "Oh, sure, Don. I've been sitting here looking at the ocean. But it would be much nicer in a room where I can settle down and be comfortable. I'll get something to read."

Don engaged a room for her, and they went upstairs. Later he went out and bought her fruit, candy, cigarettes, magazines—everything to make her comfortable during his absence.

"Sure you don't mind?" he asked.

Sabina laughed. "Certainly not. I was never more comfortable in my life." She meant it. She was glad to get away. She could lie on the bed in front of the windows and look out over the ocean. The roar of the surf came faintly to her ears. It was an ideal spot for relaxation and to forget.

Al had lied to her—again and again. How could he have talked to her the way he did one moment

and then go straight to Anne Dunbar? The afternoon faded into evening. Don returned and took her to dinner and then left again.

"It won't be much longer," he promised. "Are you getting along all right?"

"Fine," she assured him. To tell the truth, she was utterly weary. She went back up to the room and stretched out on the bed. A few moments later she was sound asleep.

That was a night which made history. The earthquake struck about nine o'clock. Wires hummed with the news, and at the *Journal* where Al worked there was a scene of frenzied activity.

"Better get down to Santa Cruz right away, Al," his city editor ordered. "That seems to be the center of it. Lot of damage down there and several killed. Take a photographer with you and phone me as soon as you can."

From other parts of the State came news of the quake. Other news men were rushed to near-by cities. Excitement reigned.

Al reached Santa Cruz before eleven o'clock. It appeared even worse than had at first been reported. Beach houses were demolished. Uptown brick buildings had collapsed. At least a score of persons were dead. At the one big hotel in the city a peculiar situation existed. The building itself was not badly damaged on the outside, but stairways had collapsed, and when electric power lines fell all elevator service had halted. A score of guests were trapped in their rooms.

Once it was ascertained they were safe and unhurt, they were left to their own devices and all rescue efforts were turned to other parts of the beach resort where dead and injured were buried under the débris.

It was a confusing, bewildering scene. A half dozen fires were burning in various parts of the town. The scream of sirens on fire engines and ambulances rose above the shouts of excited, terrified people. People seeking husbands or wives, father or mothers, sons or daughters, friends or relatives.

Al was standing on the sidewalk questioning an elderly woman who had been in the house when the quake struck. The house now stood with its entire front gone, its interior exposed to the night.

And then a second shock rocked the beach community. Terrified, the woman clung to Al, then broke away and ran down the street, sobbing hysterically. The photographer appeared out of the darkness.

"They're going to take those people out of the hotel," he said. "Another shock like that last one may take the whole building down."

"Ladders?" asked Al.

"Yeah. They've got a fire ladder wagon there now."

"Good. We'll get a couple pictures and the names of the people when they come down."

Together they stumbled through the darkness to the hotel. Frightened guests were already climbing out of windows and down the long ladders to the ground. Some carried what baggage they could. Others tossed suitcases and clothing to waiting hands. Still others didn't bother to take their belongings. Their prime interest at that moment was in getting out of the building.

Al talked to five or six of them and was about to leave when the figure of a young woman, followed by a man, emerged from a third-floor window and started down the ladder. Al stared, and his fingers fumbled subconsciously in a side coat pocket and came in contact with

a crumpled note he had received that day.

A huge searchlight on the fire truck played against the wall of the building. Halfway down, the girl turned and looked out over the crowd below. Al stifled an exclamation of surprise. Sabina Wright. And he recognized the man now. Don Furman.

What was Sabina doing at a hotel in Santa Cruz with Don Furman? Surprise, which for the moment held Al immobile, gave way to sudden, unreasoning anger. He whirled around, shouldered his way through the crowd, shoving people aside ruthlessly, and came out upon the beach.

A heavy sea was piling breakers upon the sands, and cold, salt-laden wind swept inshore. How long he stood there in the darkness, looking out over the turbulent sea, Al did not know, but he came to his senses suddenly to discover that his anger had cooled. He felt, vaguely, a strange pity for Sabina; surprise and indignation with himself for his own blindness.

He thought back to that feeling of utter rage he had experienced a few moments ago when he had seen Sabina and Don together. Yet never before had he given a thought to the emotions Sabina must have undergone when she had seen him with Anne Dunbar.

"She's suffered. I've made her suffer." He flung the words out bitterly against the wind.

His first thought was to hurry back to the hotel, find her and go down on his knees to her. He wanted to talk to her, explain that Anne Dunbar meant nothing to him; that he had hurt her—Sabina—without realizing what he had been doing. Appearances had been against him.

Appearances. He stopped short. Supposing Sabina's presence here with Don Furman to-night was something more than mere appearances? Supposing she really loved him? Intended to marry him. The very thought shocked him; left him uncertain what to do.

The wind was increasing in intensity. Shivering, Al turned his back to the angry sea and started toward the hotel. On the fringe of the crowd his photographer sighted him and dashed toward him.

"Where the devil did you go?" demanded the cameraman. "Everybody here is scared to death of a tidal wave. They're all moving out. Looks like the Belgian refugees during the War. And there's a guy over here buried under a garage—what's left of him. They are trying to dig him out. Say, feel that?"

Al nodded, thoughts far away. Another shock, but this time not so severe. He wondered if Sabina and Don had left. He looked around, half afraid he would see them. It was difficult to identify people a dozen feet away. With all power lines out of commission the frightened populace had resorted to flashlights, auto headlights and torches. It was an eery, unbelievable sight.

They checked the hospital—the only one in town—then went on to the police morgue. Here Al ran into a relief man from the *Journal* and, taking his photographer, hurried back to San Francisco.

At the office he wrote the story. He did not mention Sabina Wright nor Don Furman. He pounded out the words on the typewriter sub-

consciously. If Sabina had turned to Don, it was his own fault. He had driven her to it. If he had lost her, it was because she had suffered often as he had suffered for a few brief moments this night.

On and on he wrote, a vivid, living portrayal of those scenes of terror in the blackness of the night. When it was ended and on the city desk, the city editor came to him and slapped him roughly on the back.

"Swell story, Al. Get yourself some coffee and a bite to eat and beat it over to the east-bay region. There are three or four towns over there pretty hard hit. Here—I'll give you the dope."

Wearily, and sick at heart, Al followed him.

When he left, it was not to see San Francisco again for nearly a week. When he did return, he went to his city editor. The vision of Sabina Wright and Don Furman was torturing him.

"I want to get away for a while—a couple of weeks, anyhow," Al told his chief.

The city editor nodded. Al had done a fine piece of work. He looked pale, drawn, tired out. It had been a tough assignment.

"O. K., Al," he said gruffly. "Take a boat trip north. There'll be a better job, with better money, when you get back. Take it easy, get drunk, and forget your troubles." He swung back to his desk and his work.

It was this series of circumstances which prevented Al from seeing the newspaper stories about Sabina and Don Furman. Where he and the *Journal* had been kind, the other



papers were not so considerate. The morning paper had a flashlight picture of Sabina and Don, one above the other, climbing down the ladder from the open hotel window.

The picture and accompanying story caused more than a slight ripple in high society circles, and Don found himself the object of suggestive remarks and pointed stories. At first, flaming with anger, he showed fight. Only swift apologies prevented a fight on a dozen occasions. Finally he chose to ignore them entirely.

After the excitement had died down, he called on Anne. He did not bother to telephone, and his appearance at her apartment plainly took her by surprise.

"Oh, Mr. Furman! Come in."

There was no use to ask her if she had seen that abominable newspaper story. Her attitude toward him was answer enough. She was coldly cynical. She sat back in a chair and eyed him languidly, a half smile on her lips. He was suddenly on the defensive.

"You don't believe it, do you?"

She feigned ignorance. "Believe what?"

"The inference in that newspaper story."

She shrugged. "I wasn't born yesterday."

"Rather an enigmatic reply."

"Is it? Well, figure it out for yourself."

Don ran a nervous hand through red hair. "Listen, Anne," he implored. "It wasn't as bad as it sounded. You know that."

She laughed dryly. "Of course it wasn't. Nobody could be so cruel as to accuse Sabina—darling, sweet little Sabina——"

"Just leave Sabina out of this," he flared angrily.

Anne leaped to her feet, also angry. Her eyes blazed and her words came in a torrent.

"Sabina," she sneered. "You and Al and Sabina. You make me sick. All of you. Men are all alike. I wouldn't trust you or any man as far as I could throw him. And Sabina—inno-cent, sheltered darling of society. I hate her. I hate you! Get out of here!"

He stood up, facing her. She fell back at the expression of utter fury on his face, then abruptly sank into a chair and began to sob brokenly.

"Al is the only decent one of the lot of you," she cried. "He's honest, anyhow. You and Sabina are just a couple of high-bred hypocrites. Go on. Please get out of here. I don't want to see you again."

She was weeping unrestrainedly when he left, closing the door quietly behind him.

At almost exactly the same moment Sabina was phoning the *Journal* for the hundredth time within the past few days.

"Mr. Winters, please."

"He's not here."

"When will he be there?"

"I don't know."

"Do you know where I can locate him?"

"Only Heaven knows that, ma'am."

And that was typical of her conversations with the *Journal* office. Day and night she called his apartment, but with no better results. Al Winters had vanished.

There was only one answer that she could evolve out of the sinister maze of happenings. Al had read the story. Or he had actually seen her at Santa Cruz with Don Furman. She had seen his story in the *Journal* about the earthquake. He had been there that night.

Finally, in desperation, she went to the city editor at the *Journal*. He recognized her. He had no sympathy with the society girls who tried to steal his ace reporters, and less sympathy for women of that



To cover her heartbreak, Anne went back suddenly to the wild parties which woman, resenting Anne's attentions to her husband, stabbed her.



*she thought she had put behind her forever. It finally ended when a jealous
They rushed Anne to a hospital. She was not expected to live.*

class who spent nights in hotels with men to whom they were not married.

He eyed her coldly, almost beligerently. "Winters?" he barked. "He's gone. The last time I saw him he was taking a boat for Seattle." He swung his chair around back to his desk and resumed work.

She turned away quickly so that he wouldn't see her tears. Blindly, heart breaking, she hurried from the building.

While Sabina was crying her heart out from behind the shelter of the gray stone walls of the Wright mansion, Al was trying to drink himself to death. Anne Dunbar was following a similar route.

She went back suddenly to the wild parties which she thought she had put behind her forever. Often they lasted until dawn, dancing, dining, drinking. It finally ended when a jealous woman, resenting Anne's amorous attentions to her husband, stabbed her. They rushed Anne to a hospital.

Don, the only one of the four who had retained a vestige of calm sanity and had settled down to hard work, read the story the next morning in the newspaper. The golden-haired radio singer and night-club entertainer had been stabbed just below the heart. She was not expected to live.

Sick with fear, Don dashed from his office and took a taxi to the hospital. But once arriving there he was denied permission to see her. Finally, after half an hour of threats and persuasion, they told him he might go in.

The nurse closed the door after him. He shot a quick glance toward the still figure on the bed. Her face was white and drawn, but her eyes were bright and she forced a wry smile.

He dropped to his knees at the side of the bed and kissed her.

"Don," she whispered. "Kiss me again. I love you."

"And I love you, Anne. I always have. You know that."

She closed her eyes. For a moment he thought she had not heard him. He was suddenly panic-stricken. Was she dying? But he was relieved the next second when her eyes fluttered open.

"Hypodermic," she whispered. "Makes me drowsy. Don—I've got to see Sabina. Tell the nurse to phone her. Then—I want to tell you—secret."

Don arose quickly and, at the door, summoned the nurse. He gave her Sabina's phone number. Then he went back to the bedside.

"You do love me, don't you, Don?" Anne asked.

"You know I do, darling. I'm going to marry you as soon as you get well."

He said it confidently and Anne turned her head away. She hadn't minded the thought of death until now. Happiness with Don—too late now. She turned resolutely back to him.

"Don—you're a lawyer. I have a secret. I want to tell it to you. It may explain a few things. But you must promise never to tell any one."

"I promise," he said solemnly, wondering what sort of secret she could possibly have.

She smiled at him tenderly. "Sabina and I are sisters," she whispered. "She was—adopted by the Wrights. I—I loved her so—I didn't want to see her make a mistake—marrying. That's why I meddled—and made things worse."

Don stared at her so fixedly, so completely taken back that her smile broadened. "Darling, I'm not

delirious. That is the truth. I had to tell some one before——”

He anticipated her words. “Nonsense,” he said quickly. “You’re going to get well.”

“I wasn’t sure,” she went on slowly. “I went to the police. Mr. Wright came and talked to me. He told me how he had bought my baby sister from my mother. Sabina—you must never tell. It would ruin her life——”

She paused and a stab of pain erased the smile from her lips. Her eyes closed and for several moments she lay silent. He was about to speak to her when the door opened and he saw Sabina. All rivalry between the two girls had vanished. Sabina, eyes filled with tears, uttered a low cry, “Anne!” Then her face was pressed close against that of the stricken girl.

Don stared. If he had any reason to doubt Anne’s story, that doubt was erased now. The two girls were sisters. There was no question about it.

Anne was speaking huskily.

“I’m so glad, Sabina—so glad you could come. I wanted to tell you. That night of your engagement party—I tricked Al—I told him there was a murder. That’s why he came to me. He never loved me. He’s always loved you——”

She paused for breath, and Sabina leaned closer, her lips caressing the other girl’s forehead.

“Please, Anne, don’t talk about it. You’re weak. And you—you’re so close to me, Anne, for some reason. I used to almost hate you at times. But now—why, Anne, I think I’d die if anything happened to you. You’re almost like a sister to me.”

Don caught his breath. He stared at the two girls. Had Sabina guessed? Or was it just the natural

love that two sisters were bound to have for each other? If they were of the same flesh and blood there would be a natural attraction there.

He thought of his own reactions to the two girls. And Al. What had happened seemed only most natural now.

A nurse interrupted his thoughts.

“You must go now,” she ordered briskly. “All of you. You’re tiring her.”

Don waited long enough to whisper to Anne:

“Hurry up and get well, honey, so we can be married.”

Her eyes answered him.

He walked with Sabina to her car.

“Heard from Al?” he asked.

She shook her head. “Not yet.”

“You will,” he assured her and said good-by.

That evening Sabina was summoned to the telephone. It was Dan Selano, manager of the Bagdad. He recalled that Miss Wright had greatly resembled Anne Dunbar and had done excellent work when the amateur programs were staged. Would she like to substitute temporarily for Miss Dunbar?

Sabina was thrilled.

“Can you come right down for rehearsal, Miss Wright?” he asked.

“I’ll be there in ten minutes,” she promised. And she was.

Three days later Al returned. It was late in the afternoon. His own paper had “gone to bed” for the day, and he did not bother to go to the office. He was going to quit, anyhow. There was an opening in Honolulu and he had decided to take it.

As he packed his personal belongings, that night after dinner, he wondered about Sabina. Thought of her still tortured him. But, after all, it

had been his own fault. He had driven her into the arms of Don Furman. And, from all he could gather, Furman was a fine fellow. Just the right sort for Sabina. He laughed to himself bitterly.

By ten o'clock that night he had packed everything. He gazed around the room restlessly. There was a picture of Anne Dunbar on the dresser. He wondered how she was getting along. Might be a good idea to drop in at the Bagdad and say good-by to her.

Leaving the apartment, he stepped into a neighboring café for a sandwich and a cup of coffee. He glanced casually at the headlines of the *Journal* lying on the counter. War talk. Political strife. Same old stuff. He shoved the paper aside.

On the back page, had he glanced at it, was a large picture of Anne Dunbar and, below it, a smaller one of Don Furman. The story told of the slowly recovering famous singer and a promising young attorney who that day had announced their engagement.

He sauntered out finally and made his way slowly down crowded streets. There was a suggestion of a dull ache in his heart. He loved this city. A pretty young woman smiled up at him as he passed her. Farther down the street he saw the blazing lights of the Bagdad.

And in Anne Dunbar's dressing room at the Bagdad Sabina, getting ready for her evening program, heard a knock on the door.

"Come in," she called.

Don thrust his head in. "See our big story, pet?" he asked, grinning from ear to ear.

"Did I!" she exclaimed, jumping up. "I know it by heart by this time. Oh, Don, I'm so glad! How much longer——"

"The doctor says about two

weeks. I'm on my way to the hospital. It's terribly late, but I've got to see her for just a minute."

Sabina laughed gayly and, coming forward, planted a kiss on his forehead.

Don blushed.

"Coming back?" she asked.

"To take you home, pet," he assured her. "Don't run off with some strange man, will you?"

"Not a chance. I'll be waiting for you. Give my love to Anne."

Al sat glumly at a table in the Bagdad. The floor show bored him. If it wasn't for Anne the whole thing would be a flop. He waited impatiently for her to appear. He was looking the other way when the star of the program did finally appear.

A roar of applause jerked him to attention.

He didn't notice at first that it was not Anne. His first thought was that her singing had a different quality and that she was slipping a bit on her dancing. And then he found himself staring at her as she advanced down the dance floor.

He gripped the edges of the table and blinked. That girl—it was not Anne Dunbar. It was Sabina. And then he found himself looking straight into her eyes. She was not more than a dozen feet away.

The song faltered. For Sabina the world rocked crazily. Al! Al, staring at her in utter amazement. Al, looking as though he were seeing a ghost. She wanted to laugh. To cry. And she could do neither. She tore her eyes away from him and by some superhuman effort carried through the song to the end.

When it was over she fairly flew back to the dressing room. She slammed the door shut and stood in the middle of the room facing it,

trying to get a grip on herself. He would come. She knew he would. She glanced in the mirror. Her face was deathly white and her make-up stood out in hideous relief.

She started toward the dressing table and then the knock came.

She tried to call out to him, but no words came. Stiffly, she crossed the room and opened the door. They stood for a moment facing each other.

"Sabina, I——" He stopped awkwardly, staring at her.

"Al," she breathed, and one hand fluttered to her throat. She leaned against the dressing table as though for support.

"I had no idea you would be here," he said nervously. "When I saw it was you I wanted to come back here and wish you luck." He was forcing the words, and his voice was harsh.

"Luck?" She tried to keep her voice calm. She knew that he must be able to see her heart pounding.

"Yea," he nodded. "I saw you and Don Furman that night at Santa Cruz. I don't blame you, Sabina. I found out that night how you must have felt about me—sometimes—when you saw me with Anne, although she never meant a thing to me."

She stared at him, big-eyed. "Don! You mean you think——"

"Oh, I don't blame you, Sabina. I'm going away. Got a job in Honolulu. Maybe I'll get some sense over there. It's all been my fault,

anyhow." He turned toward the door.

"Al." It was a husky, anguished whisper. "Al, don't you read your own paper?" She held out a clipping for him. It was the picture and story of Anne's injury and her engagement to Don Furman. Al took the bit of paper hesitantly and glanced at it. Then he began to read avidly.

"Sabina!" It was an excited shout. "Then you——"

"Oh, Al, you silly! There's never been any one but you. I couldn't—I never have—I never will love any one but you."

He stared at the clipping, bewildered. "But I thought——"

"We both thought, darling. Too much—and entirely wrong."

There were tears in her eyes as he moved toward her and took her in his arms.

"I've been a blind fool," he muttered, crushing her to him.

"And I'd have died if you hadn't come back," sobbed Sabina. She lifted her lips to his.

Only Don suffered from the reunion. He reached the Bagdad after Sabina and Al had gone. He asked an attendant if Sabina had left.

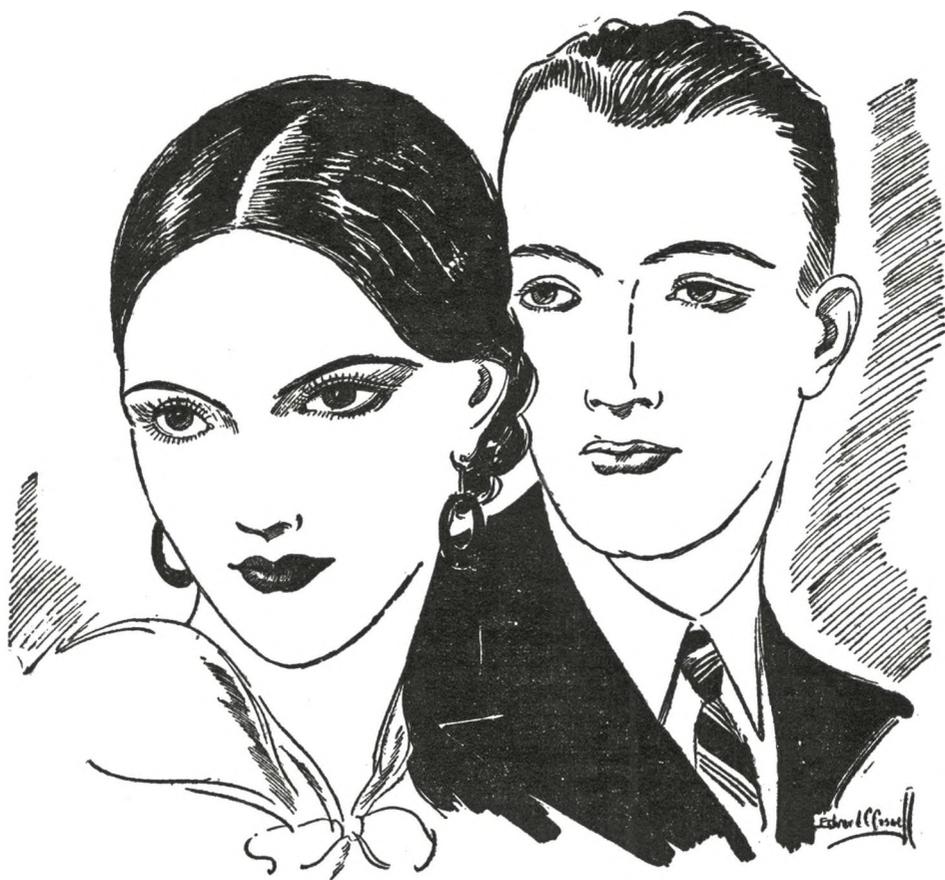
The attendant smirked at him. "Yeah, and with a swell-looking guy."

Frowning and puzzled, Don left.

He didn't know until the next afternoon when he read the *Journal* that Anne Dunbar and Sabina Wright were planning a double wedding.

THE END.





Dark Eyes

By George Asness

RICHARD DAMIAN started toward those eyes. No matter where it might have been, or when, he would have done the same thing. The train had just drawn into the Moscow station. He had alighted and bent over his bags to see if they were all there. Something made him look up, and he found himself literally floundering in a pool

made of two great, glowing black eyes. Their compelling beauty was the kind men dream of and never hope to see. They held him like a magnet, so that he scarcely noticed the slim, rounded figure and easy grace of the girl. He saw only the large, eloquent eyes, which seemed to fill her heart-shaped, olive-skinned face. For a long minute they stared

at each other, as if mutually hypnotized, then he started toward her.

The next moment he was sprawling full-length on his face. He had forgotten the bag at his feet, had tripped over it violently. The other valise, the one with the faulty lock, which he had in his hand as he fell, lay sprawled with him, his scattered wardrobe changing the aspect of the surrounding territory for yards around. There was a ripple of light laughter as he started to rise, but on her face he caught a fleeting look of concern. Several smiling men and women, in simple, utilitarian clothes, helped him gather his belongings, the richness and quality of the American-made garments calling forth voluble praise and admiration. The girl took a quick step toward him, then stopped and stood there, staring at the chaos of clothing. His face turned brick-red under her gaze as he desperately stuffed shorts, undershirts, et cetera into the bag.

Finally, his sense of humor bubbled within him and he looked up with a grin. But it froze on his face. For the swimming warmth of her eyes had hardened to black agate and now she, too, was laughing at him, but not like the others. Theirs was the good-natured laughter brought forth by another's harmless mishap. But in hers there was nothing of kindness, only bitterness and scorn. It prickled his hair and filled him with a hot resentment. Unconsciously, his fists clenched and unclenched while his palm itched to spank her. Once again he started toward her.

"Falling for these Russian dames already, are you?"

He whirled to see Teddy Gleason who had come to meet him, and they gripped hands. The hard edge of his anger melted in the warmth of the greeting. But as they gath-

ered the rest of his belongings and forced the bag closed, he still felt the girl's scornful eyes upon him. And in the cab, all the way to the hotel, her jeering laughter rang in his ears, stirring up devils within him. He broke in on Teddy's flow of chatter:

"Who is she?"

"Who's who?"

"That girl who was giving me the razzberry—the one with the eyes."

"Oh, her," said Teddy in his usual, careless English. "She's a queer duck. I've seen her around, but she never stays put long enough for a fellow to talk to her. Has a rep for being clever. She's supposed to be bugs on hard work—assistant to some big-shot. You'll meet her."

Dicky did, just two days later. He hadn't thought these hard-working Russians would ever take time off for such a thing as a tea, but here he was, being taken to one by Gleason. They mounted the stairs of what had been, formerly, a nobleman's palace. Now it was subdivided into living quarters, its large hall a sort of club-room for officials of the new régime. Now there were no liveried servants and they came, unannounced, into the large living room filled with smoke, chatter and people. There was a cheerful clatter of teacups, and animated conversations in several languages reached their ears.

"There's Liuba," said Ted. Dicky followed his gaze to where a strikingly handsome, jet-haired young woman was talking to a slender, graceful girl. The latter had her back toward them and was evidently on the point of leaving. Ted linked his arm in Dicky's, and they approached the two women.

"Liuba Glubovna, I want you to meet a friend, Richard Damian, but just call him Dicky."

Dicky, starting to greet his hostess, glanced for a moment at the girl with her and was lost. Without warning, he again found himself helplessly floundering in that pool of black eyes—the eyes of the girl at the station! They were being introduced, but neither one heard a word. For another eternity, they gazed into each other's eyes with an intensity that, somehow, subdued the others while entirely excluding them. Then she jerked her head around suddenly, as if a catch had been released.

"Good-by, Liuba," she said in English. There was scorn in her voice, but somehow, they all knew it was for Richard alone. She gave Liuba Glubovna's hand a quick, vigorous shake, nodded briefly at Ted and, with a step like the lithe movement of a cat, was gone. Dick's eyes tensed after her, his lips tight-pressed in puzzled fury.

"Never mind, I like you." Liuba's fingers on his arm were friendly, her voice a gentle salve to his outraged feelings. He relaxed under her smile and went with her to meet the others.

For twenty days he kept meeting others and others, for Teddy apparently knew everybody in Moscow, and for twenty days he kept meeting Tanya—Tanya of the dark eyes and the puzzle of her hatred for him. She made it a point to leave almost at once, whenever he entered a room in which she was. Yet, he kept meeting her in the oddest places—places, it seemed to him where she had no business to be—until he began to suspect that it couldn't all be accident. But still, she never gave him a chance to speak to her. It was maddening, because her hate aroused within him an answering hate, which he did not want. For he knew, as certainly as he ever knew anything,

that he loved this woman, that if he could only talk to her, everything would come out right.

And so, when he saw her at the museum one rainy afternoon, he kept himself hidden, shadowing her until she wandered into a deserted corridor. She turned as she heard his light step, and it sent a stab of pain through him to see the panic in her eyes when she realized it was a blind passage. Graceful even in flight, she ran to the French windows, twisted the handle and stepped out on the stone balcony while he followed grimly. He came upon her there, her back to the balustrade, rain streaming from her hat to her slicker, her eyes wide upon him.

He came closer and stood looking down at her, the many things he wanted to say crowding his throat, so that he could say none of them. For a fraction of a moment she seemed to waver toward him, then quickly, her hand came up. It was surprise that made him step back from the stinging slap on his cheek. Then swiftly, she glided past him and ran down the corridor. He stood a long time, a hand to his cheek.

After that it was worse than ever. People were beginning to notice. And so, this last morning, it was he who did the running away. It was at Liuba's, and he had been chatting with Vera Krasnaya, the actress, when he noticed Tanya across the room. She was talking to Teddy, but looking at him. He had made a lame excuse and left in a hurry.

He reached his hotel room in a sort of breathless misery and closed the door softly behind him. Then he threw off his hat and coat and sat at his desk with vacant eyes. Twenty days of it, but to-morrow his vacation would end. Then back to Stalingrad to begin on his new contract with the Soviet government! A man



could lose himself in work, and forget, he thought grimly. Richard picked up his instruments, but had to give up in a few minutes.

For it was one of Moscow's glorious spring days. The waving window curtains kept beckoning him outside, their billowing rustle a whispered promise of things pleasant and mysterious. He threw down his pencil and began to pace restlessly. When a knock sounded on the door, he

"Reechard Damian," she said softly, "I've been a beast—so terrible, so hateful. Won't you please beat me?" He took her in his arms and kissed her hungrily.

jerked it open in annoyed suddenness, then backed away in open-mouthed amazement.

In one gliding movement, Tanya slipped in and closed the door. Both hands were behind her, clasped on

the knob, while her great eyes held him as in a spell. For a moment she remained so, then her eyes danced about the room. She hurried to the desk, her hands fluttering over his drawing board, his instruments. She flowed from one object to another, light as a breeze, murmurs of pleasure coming from her as she drank in his drawings, his books, the photos of completed engineering projects. Then she spoke, happily.

"You do—oh, you do! You make, you create, you build, you work!"

Then, like a penitent schoolgirl, she came over to him.

"Reechard Damian," she said softly. "I've been a beast—so terrible, so hateful. Won't you please beat me?"

And suddenly, unaccountably, she was in his arms, racked by great, tearing sobs, and his lips were wet with her tears and kisses.

The sun was only a memory in red-and-gold on the Moscow sky when they sat looking out between the now still curtains and talked. He spoke of love, of marriage, and again and again of the wonder of her great, dark eyes. He talked a lot, for he was afraid of the silences, afraid that suddenly he might hear his voice asking for the answer to the puzzle of her hate for him. Suppose it should return?

And she spoke of the Russia they were building, how hard they worked.

"And that was why I hated you, Dickee." She felt him stiffen, and moved a little out of the circle of his arms so that she could face him better. "And when I knew I must love you, I hated you more, and myself, too. For I knew I must love you when you looked at me like that at the station. And when you fell,

I almost cried out in pain. But then your bag fell open, and I saw all your clothes, so rich, so costly. How could I know that in America, a worker can afford such things?"

"And so you thought I was a son of the idle rich, a playboy?"

"Yes, Dickee, just a playboy, who would soon go back and maybe even print big lies about us in the newspapers because he couldn't get a little ice water in a hurry. But that wasn't all, Dickee. I am a woman. I like lovely things, beautiful clothes. It seemed so easy to relent a little, to be kind to you. And then, no more hard work, no more office routine, no more bickering at committee meetings. I would travel, see the world. I—I was afraid, Dickee."

"And what, my darling, made you change your mind about me?"

"It was Teddy Gleason. Only this morning, he talked about you and showed me how wrong I had been, just in one sentence."

"That must have been some sentence. What did he say?"

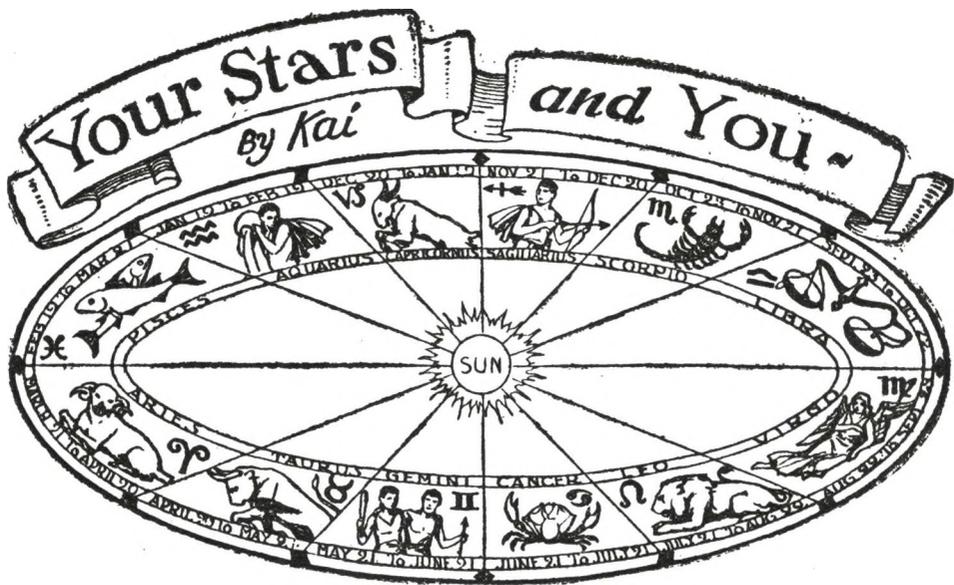
"You remember, this morning, Dickee, you were talking with Vera Krasnaya? Well, Teddy was talking with me, and first he looked at Vera and then at you. Then he shook his head and said:

"'Dicky always was a fast worker.'"

Tanya could never understand afterward why Richard threw back his head and laughed—a rich, musical, tenderly amused laugh. But she wasn't given enough time then to wonder. For Richard lifted her upon his knees and kissed her again and again and again.

"Tanya, little great-eyed beloved," he murmured, "I love you."

That was all that was necessary for Tanya. She merely gave him her lips, arms around his neck.



YOUR WEEK

The major influences this week are largely in your favor. Unexpected financial and business benefits will come to you, although you may be put to some unexpected expense. You will have opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests to a considerable degree. Employment benefits will come to you and you will also be benefited in matters pertaining to your environment. However, your judgment will not be any too good in environmental matters and you may fail to take full advantage of the influences that are beneficial in this regard. There will be a tendency on your part to divide your thoughts between business matters and your employment duties to an extent that may reduce your efficiency in both respects. Also you may permit social activities to rob you of needed sleep, to your reduced working efficiency. Your judgment in matters pertaining to real estate will not be good at this time, so postpone important decisions in this regard. You should restrain any inclination to become extravagant in money matters, as the consequences may be far-reaching.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time. If not using that time, make correction to the time you are using.

Saturday, November 28th During the early-morning hours, things will be somewhat quiet. From 10:30

h a. m. to 12:30 p. m., avoid

unnecessary business transactions and mark time in love and marriage matters. It is not a good time to write love letters nor to unnecessarily travel. Unexpected financial benefits may come to you at this time, possibly through the mail or from near kindred. Between 2:00 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., favorable developments in marriage matters may take place, but unexpected obstacles may appear, most likely of a financial and business nature. You may be assisted by near relatives. Between 5:30 p. m. and 8:00 p. m., you may receive financial benefits from an unlooked-for source, as a result of your mental activity, and business benefits may be received. Your social popularity will increase. A short journey may be taken with beneficial results. Between 8:30 p. m. and 10:30 p. m., your mind will be unsettled, and you should avoid making important decisions, especially in business matters, traveling and dealings with near kindred. Be careful what you write and what you sign at this time, as it will probably not reflect your real viewpoint, though seemingly so at the time.

Sunday,
November
29th



During the early-morning hours, mark time in employment and environmental matters and avoid unnecessary changes. It is not a good time for transactions connected with real estate. Do not become romantic, but keep your mind on practical things. Between 11:00 a. m. and 12:30 p. m., unlooked-for expense may come to you, possibly as a result of a short journey taken by yourself or some one else, and possibly in some manner connected with near kindred. Be skeptical of any sudden impulses to make changes or to do unusual things at this time, as they will probably be to your detriment. You will have an inclination to assert your freedom from the house-tops, figuratively speaking, but keep your thoughts to yourself. The rest of the afternoon will be much better for you and some annoying matters will straighten out. Between 3:00 p. m. and 5:00 p. m., environmental benefits may be received and you may profit in business and occupational matters. Near kindred will be of assistance to you. Some benefits may come to you in connection with real estate. The evening hours will be somewhat quiet.

Monday,
November
30th



During the morning hours, mark time in home affairs and avoid unnecessary business transactions. Curtail your social activities. It is not a good time to consult lawyers nor to travel. Between 11:30 a. m. and 1:00 p. m., unexpected financial benefits may come to you and home affairs will be benefited in an unlooked-for manner. Between 4:30 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., business and home benefits may be received; mark time in marriage matters and keep your temper under control in your home life and marriage relations. Avoid extravagance at this time. Between 11:00 p. m. and midnight, your

judgment will be poor in business and social matters and also in matters pertaining to your environment. Be careful of your speech and of what you write or sign. It is not a good time for transactions involving real estate, so avoid signing papers affecting it at this time, if you can do so.

Tuesday,
December
1st



The early-morning hours may bring home and environmental benefits, but mark time in occupational matters, especially where they come into conflict with home affairs. Between 8:30 a. m. and 10:00 a. m., home and employment benefits may be received, and you may profit as a result of business transactions. It is a good time for planning in business matters. The later morning hours and the afternoon hours will be somewhat quiet. Between 6:30 p. m. and 8:00 p. m., mark time in love, marriage and home affairs and avoid transacting unnecessary business. It is not a good time to travel nor to consult lawyers. Curtail your social activities. The remaining evening hours are somewhat quiet.

Wednesday,
December
2nd



Employment matters will be benefited during the early-morning hours; mark time in matters of environment and avoid transactions in real estate. Between 9:30 a. m. and 11:00 a. m., your judgment will be poor in love, marriage and business matters. It is not a good time for social activities. Avoid unnecessary traveling, and do not make travel plans at this time. Do not write love letters. Be careful of your speech or you may say something you will afterward regret. It is not a good time to discuss business matters with your fiancé, as a misunderstanding might arise. Between 11:00 a. m. and 12:15 p. m., employment matters and love interests may come

into conflict. Attend to your employment duties, if possible, as your love interests can be taken care of later. Between 3:15 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., unexpected financial expense may come to you as a result of entertaining, or some other social activity, or developments in your love affairs may put you to unlooked-for expense for clothes or in some other manner. Avoid unconventional conduct at this time; be careful in love-making. Between 8:30 p. m. and 10:00 p. m., you may be mentally upset over business and employment matters, but it will probably be nothing serious if you watch your speech and actions carefully. It is not a good time to travel nor to make travel plans. Avoid becoming romantic at this time.

Thursday,
December
3rd

4

During the early-morning hours you will be under excellent influences with respect to love and marriage matters; be careful to avoid unconventional conduct in courtship. Business benefits may be received. The finances of marriage partner or sweetheart will improve and may result in marriage benefits and the carrying out of marriage plans. Some unexpected financial expense may occur, which may be more than counterbalanced by unexpected financial benefits received. It will be the commencement of a honeymoon journey for many of you; pleasurable and profitable journeys will come to many more of you, or you will profit by the journeys of some one else. You may be benefited as a result of legal procedure. Between 7:30 a. m. and 9:00 a. m., avoid extravagance in money matters and avoid unnecessary business transactions. If not careful, you may incur needless expense on account of social activities or love interests. Between 2:00 p. m. and 3:30 p. m., employment bene-

fits may be received and working conditions will be more pleasant. Between 4:30 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., you can advance your love and marriage interests by clear thinking; business benefits may come to you as a result of your mental activity. The remaining evening hours will be quiet.

Friday,
December
4th

♀

During the early-morning hours, mark time in employment and marriage matters. Between 8:15 a. m. and 10:00 a. m., environmental conditions may be somewhat restrictive. Keep mentally alert in matters of employment. Mark time in love and courtship. Avoid unnecessary business transactions, especially if it pertains to real estate. However, unexpected financial benefits may come to you, probably as a result of business previously transacted. Opportunity for an elopement will come to many at this time. Between 10:00 a. m. and 11:00 a. m., your mind will be tense, and if not careful, you will do some foolish thing on the spur of the moment that will cost you unlooked-for expense. Avoid unnecessary business transactions at this time. Watch your speech carefully. Between noon and 1:15 p. m., employment benefits will be received by many of you, possibly a change of employment, or you may enter upon an occupation for yourself. Between 6:45 p. m. and 8:00 p. m., mark time in employment matters and keep alert mentally. It is not a good time to become romantic. Be careful in matters of diet and do not eat any unusual dishes. Do not experiment with strange drinks. Avoid worrying. You probably won't know what you are worrying about if you do worry at this time—just an intangible feeling that something is going to happen. The feeling will shortly pass. Between 10:30

p. m. and midnight, unexpected financial benefits may come to you; employment matters may be benefited in an unlooked-for manner.

The influences affecting the particular zodiacal group to which you belong are given in the "Born Between—" section of this article, which you should also consult.



IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN
March 21st and April 20th
 (Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between March 21st and 28th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance love and marriage interests. Mark time in occupational matters. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between March 29th and April 5th, mark time in marriage matters and keep your temper under control. Be careful around fire and sharp instruments. You will be mentally alert in business matters and can advance your business interests by careful planning. Opportunity to advance your love interests will come to you but be careful in your planning. Mark time in occupational matters. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between April 6th and 12th, be alert in your employment. Business matters may be advanced by clear thinking and proper planning. Mark time in your love affairs. Environmental conditions will be less restrictive. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between April 13th and 20th, you will receive benefits as a result of business transactions. Your popularity will increase. A profitable journey may be taken by you or by some one to your advantage. It is a good time to consult lawyers, from or through whom benefits may be received. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday.

April 20th and May 21st
 (Taurus ♉)

—Taurus people born between April 20th and 28th will have the unexpected happen in money matters this week. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. You may profit as a result of business activities and occupational benefits may come to you. Your

social popularity will increase. Best days for you this week are Monday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between April 29th and May 6th, mark time in marriage matters. Business transactions may bring you profit, probably as a result of mental activity. Your social popularity will increase. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between May 7th and 13th, working conditions will be more pleasant. You may receive business, financial and occupational benefits. You will be socially popular. Environmental benefits will be received. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between May 14th and 21st, minor business benefits may be received. Your popularity will increase. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Friday.

May 21st and June 21st
 (Gemini ♊)

—Gemini people born between May 21st and 29th will receive minor financial benefits this week. Mark time in love and marriage matters. You may receive occupational benefits. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between May 30th and June 6th, marriage benefits will come to you, but keep a close watch over your speech and actions. Avoid unnecessary business dealings. You may profit from occupational activities of a routine nature. It will be a week of mixed social experiences—some pleasant, some possibly annoying. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. If born between June 7th and 13th, keep alert in employment matters and attend carefully to your employment duties. It is not a good time for travel plans. Mark time in matters of environment. Minor financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week is Thursday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between June 14th and 21st, avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to travel nor to consult with lawyers. Curtail your social activities. Best day for you this week is Friday. Mark time on Sunday.

June 21st and July 23rd
 (Cancer ♋)

—Cancer people born between June 21st and 29th will be benefited financially this week in an unexpected manner. Avoid unnecessary business transactions, especially in connection with real estate. You can advance love and marriage interests to a

minor degree. Best day for you this week is Friday. If born between June 30th and July 7th, mark time in marriage matters. You may receive minor business benefits. Curtail your social activities. If born between July 8th and 15th, employment benefits may be received. You may advance your business interests by clear thinking. Mark time in love. A beneficial change in your environment may occur at this time. If born between July 16th and 23rd, minor business benefits may be received. You will be socially popular. Best day for you this week is Tuesday.

July 23rd and August 23rd
(Leo ♌)

—Leo natives born between July 23rd and 31st may be put to unexpected financial expense this week, probably in connection with entertainment and social activities, "showers" and other events connected with love affairs. You may profit as a result of business transactions. A beneficial journey may be taken, by you or by some one to your advantage. New friends and business associates will be made. Best day for you this week is Saturday. If born between August 1st and 8th, you will have an excellent opportunity to advance love and marriage interests. Business and marriage benefits will come to you. Your social popularity will increase. You will be benefited in a financial way. Best day for you this week is Saturday. If born between August 9th and 15th, working conditions will be more pleasant. Business benefits may come to you through your mental activity. You will benefit financially to a minor degree. You will be socially popular. Mark time in matters of environment. Best day for you this week is Sunday. If born between August 16th and 23rd, business benefits will come to you. A profitable journey may be taken by you or by some one to your advantage. It is a good time to consult lawyers, especially if seeking employment from them. You will be socially popular. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday.

August 23rd and September 23rd
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo natives born between August 23rd and 31st will receive unexpected financial and employment benefits this week. Mark time in business matters and curtail your social activities. Also mark time in love and marriage matters. Benefits may come to you in some manner connected with real estate. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born be-

tween September 1st and 8th, the influences will be mixed in marriage matters. Some benefits may be received. Mark time in matters that do not run smoothly. Avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to travel. Financial benefits may come in connection with employment and occupational matters. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between September 9th and 15th, keep alert in employment matters. Financial benefits may be received. Your judgment will not be good in business matters. Avoid unnecessary traveling or the making of travel plans. Environmental conditions may be somewhat restrictive. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between September 16th and 23rd, avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to travel nor to consult with lawyers. Avoid litigation. Curtail your social activities. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday.

September 23rd and October 23rd
(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and 30th will have the unexpected happen in money matters this week, with possibly mixed results. Business benefits will be received; avoid unnecessary transactions in real estate. Socially you will be popular in some quarters but not so popular in others. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between October 1st and 8th, there will be much activity in marriage matters which you may be able to turn to good account if you keep control of your temper and speech; otherwise misunderstandings and strife might ensue. Be careful around fire and sharp instruments. You can advance your love interests by careful planning. You will be socially popular. Mark time in occupational matters. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Wednesday. Mark time on Monday, especially in home life and marriage matters. If born between October 9th and 16th, minor employment benefits may be received. Mark time in love and courtship. Environmental conditions may be somewhat restrictive in marriage matters. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between October 17th and 23rd, you will profit as a result of business transactions. Your social popularity will increase. A beneficial journey may be taken by you or by some one to your ad-

vantage. It is a good time to consult lawyers, especially if seeking employment from them. If estranged from wife or husband, it is an excellent time to seek reconciliation. Best days for you this week are Sunday, for planning, and Friday, for reconciliation or the advancement of your love interests.

October 23rd and November 22nd
(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 31st will meet with unexpected expense this week. Minor business and occupational benefits may be received. Opportunity to advance love and marriage interests will come to you, but avoid unconventionality. Best days for you this week are Monday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday, especially in heart affairs. If born between November 1st and 7th, you will have an excellent opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. Financial benefits may come to you. You will be socially popular. Business benefits may be received as a result of clear thinking. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between November 8th and 15th, employment benefits will be received. You may profit as a result of mental activity in business matters. A beneficial change of environment may occur. Financial benefits may come to you. You will have opportunity to advance your love interests. Best day for you this week is Tuesday, on which day home benefits may also come to you. Mark time on Thursday. If born between November 16th and 22nd, business transactions may bring you profit and you can advance your social interests. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Friday.

November 22nd and December 22nd
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 29th will have the unexpected happen in money matters this week; whether good or bad will largely depend upon your previous actions. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. You may receive occupational benefits. Best day for you this week is Wednesday, especially for making progress in love and marriage matters. Mark time on Saturday and avoid unnecessary journeys, and Friday in employment and other important matters. If born between November 30th and December 7th, you will have an excellent opportunity to advance your marriage interests. Business transactions may prove profitable.

You may receive financial benefits. Progress can be made in love affairs. You will be socially popular. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between December 8th and 14th, keep alert mentally in employment matters. Occupational and business benefits may come to you. Mark time in matters of environment. Avoid unnecessary transactions in real estate. Be careful around dangerous bodies of water, and avoid falls. Best day for you this week is Thursday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between December 15th and 22nd, you may be benefited in a business way. A profitable journey may be taken by you or by some one to your advantage. It is a good time to consult lawyers and to seek employment from them. Best day for you this week is Friday. Mark time on Sunday.

December 22nd and January 20th
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 22nd and 29th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. You may receive occupational benefits. You will be socially popular. Mark time on Monday. If born between December 30th and January 6th, mark time in marriage matters. Opportunity to advance your love interests may come to you. You may profit from business transactions. Your social popularity will increase. Mark time on Monday. If born between January 7th and 13th, employment benefits will come to you. You may profit as a result of mental activity in business matters. A beneficial change of environment may take place, or beneficial adjustments made at this time. Benefits connected with real estate may be received by you. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between January 14th and 20th, you may profit from business dealings. You will be socially popular. Mark time on Tuesday.

January 20th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 20th and 28th will be put to unexpected expense this week. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance love and marriage interests. Occupational benefits may be received. Best day for you this week is Saturday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between January 29th and February 5th, love and marriage interests can be materially advanced by you. Business benefits may be received. Your finances will be in better condition. Best day for you this

week is Saturday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between February 6th and 12th, keep alert in employment matters. Business benefits may come to you as a result of your mental activity. You will have opportunity to advance your love interests. Environmental conditions will be less restrictive. Best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between February 13th and 19th, you may take a pleasant and profitable journey, or one may be taken by some one to your advantage. Business transactions will bring you profit. Your social popularity will increase and new friends will be made by you. It is a good time to deal with lawyers. Best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Friday.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♋)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 27th will receive unexpected financial benefits this week. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Business transactions connected with real estate may bring profit. Occupational benefits may be received. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Saturday and Friday. If born between February 28th and March 6th, mark time in love and marriage matters. Occupational benefits may be received. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between March 7th and 13th, mark time in employment matters. Your judgment will be poor in a business way. Opportunity to advance your love interests will come to you. Environmental conditions may be somewhat restrictive. Be careful around dangerous bodies of water and avoid falls. If born between March 14th and 21st, mark time in business matters. It is not a good time to consult lawyers. Avoid unnecessary traveling. Curtail your social activities. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday.

Note for "Born Between—" readers: The week referred to begins with Saturday, November 28th, and ends with Friday, December 4th. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.

**MORE ABOUT SAGITTARIUS
PEOPLE**

If you were born between November 22nd and 27th, you have many accomplishments and are seldom out of work. You

are scientific-minded and your judgment is good in business matters. You are agreeable, pleasant and peace-loving, generous in a practical way. You are successful in business and respected by others. If too much alone, you may become melancholy. You should avoid unprofitable enterprises, even if temporarily you may be compelled to do something that you dislike, as eventually you will find a remunerative occupation more to your liking. You should avoid litigation, if possible. Although you have many friends, few come to know you intimately. You are sportsmanlike competitors. The distress of others deeply affects you, unless it is caused through their own wilful actions. You love family life and kindred. You are dutiful and sometimes become imposed upon because of it. You like to vacation in wild places. You make good draftsmen, engineers and architects, and are good at drawings or graphs that are made to a scale. You would succeed in crime detection by scientific means, if you let others provide you with the data to work from. You have a talent for music which you can commercialize.

If you were born between November 28th and December 2nd, you thoroughly familiarize yourself with interesting subjects and gain advancement in commercial life as a result of your comprehensive knowledge along certain lines. Your accomplishments are many and you are seldom out of work. Some of you become professional people, but your financial success is apt to be greater in business pursuits. You are just and fearless. You improve present methods but may fail to gain financially thereby. You love peace and harmony; you are domestically inclined and face hardship cheerfully. Success does not turn your head. You should direct into proper channels your enthusiasm and if you find that you are pursuing an unprofitable course, you should not persist in it. You are inclined to be too impulsive at times and should guard against it. You will acquire more wealth if you will adjust yourself to environment and circumstance than you will by constant change. Find what you like to do and then stick to it. You dance gracefully and are socially popular. In athletics you have good coordination of muscles and balance. You may succeed if you turn to literature as a business rather than an art. You would be good in technical or analytical articles.

If you were born between December 3rd and 7th, you are romantic and imaginative. You like to travel, to read travel

literature and to see travel films and news reels. You may inherit or gain wealth sufficient to satisfy your travel longing. You are restless mentally and active physically. You are honorable, courageous, cheerful and socially popular. You are steadfast in love and friendship. You love home and family. You may become proficient in astronomy and may study metaphysics. If you become engaged in church activities, the business affairs of the church will probably be brought to your attention, possibly as trustee. You should avoid diplomatic service abroad, as attaché of the service or otherwise, as you will otherwise lose more than you gain. Your memory is good. You should avoid excess in pleasure-seeking. You should practice self-control at all times. You may succeed in newspaper work.



COMMENTS BY KAI

Life may be compared to an adding machine; your acts to its keys. Whatever keys you depress, will give you their total when the lever is pulled. If the wrong keys are struck, the total will not be what you desire. Two and two make four. You cannot do wrong acts and expect right results. Nature totals your acts, no matter what they may be. Ignorance of nature's adding machine will not save you from its totals. If you accidentally fall off a high wall, you will as surely be drawn down by gravity as though you deliberately jumped; but whether you do a thing ignorantly, or with full knowledge, will have much to do with its effects upon your inmost being. If you merely follow blind force, you are like wind-blown gossamer. Once you learn that life is scientific and that even your most trivial action is a part of the total that will be yourself at the end of your life, you will begin to think clearly on life's meaning and do with deliberation the things that will most nearly perfect you. You will take subtotals along the stations of life, as a bookkeeper takes subtotals on his adding machine, and in that way you can note your progress. Daily actions are cumulative. If they are directed toward a definite goal, the grand total will be greater than you may have the faintest idea. If they are constantly balanced by variable aims and desires given way to, the net balance will be small. Whether that balance will be good or evil, will be according to the preponderance of your good or evil actions. Ignorance of life's mathematical laws will be no defense,

save that one who unknowingly does the things that place him in the red on the ledger of the Book of Life, will suffer less acutely than if he acted wilfully. He who knowingly controls his destiny and shapes it to his undoing, must face the added burden of his conscious—wilful disobedience to the law of his being. Count each act as a sum on life's adding machine; then learn the mathematics of life. Unlock for yourself the rudiments of life's arithmetic. When you know within yourself what produces harmony and what produces discord in your body, mind and soul, you will truly understand what is good and what is evil, rather than be dependent upon some one else for their definition. Until you understand them, you will be following a haphazard code that may be right or may be wrong, or may be a mixture of both. You cannot afford half truths when you can know the truth for yourself. Your knowledge must be more than a mental acceptance of what some one else says; it must be knowledge based on your own experiences in life. Watch the transformation that will come to you following a conscious change in the character of your thoughts and your actions. Choose wisely your thoughts and then, by the use of your will, exclude undesirable thoughts from your mind at all times. Your progress toward peace and happiness will be rapid, once you have done this, no matter what may have been the suffering, sorrow and hardships you have theretofore endured.

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Kai does not send answers by mail

F. N. M., female, born March 28, 1916, about 11:55 p. m., Indiana: There are three possible marriages in your life, one of which will bring home life discord should you contract it. This marriage which you should avoid by being forewarned, is apt to be to a person considerably older than yourself, of a morose, grouchy disposition, with your interests as antagonistic as fire and water. The thing that is apt to obscure your judgment is your desire for a home of your own. That is natural, but in your case you should consider other mutual interests as well, lacking which, you might find that it was a home in name only. If not on the alert to guard against it, this

possible, disastrous marriage is apt to occur before two other very fine opportunities for marriage come to you, thereby tying your hands when real opportunity presents itself. These two opportunities for marriage may come close together. One will be to a person of a jovial disposition and probably a keen-minded business man. The other will be to a fiery lover. You will probably be happy with either one of these. Other opportunities, if any, will likely be of your own planning. During the next five years you will be passing through a period of much social activity though possibly in restricted circles. Opportunities to marry will come to you during the years from 1938 to 1942 inclusive, with chances in favor of your choosing happily a little better than even. You can increase those chances materially by bearing in mind the foregoing.

MISS H. L. P., born March 23, 1915, about 9:00 a. m., Virginia: Marriage will be apt to come to you more readily if you take the initiative and use your mind to bring it about, than if you wait for opportunities to present themselves. Your marriage partner will probably be one whose mental interests are congenial with your own and for your own happiness, you should choose such a person, with as many other harmonies between you as possible. You will have an excellent opportunity to become married during the next eighteen months, if you keep alert mentally and make marriage a first order of business. I wish you success.

U. M., female, born January 27, 1912, 7:00 p. m.: I have examined your horoscope and that of the man in whom you are particularly interested, and both horoscopes show possible marriage during the next two years. You will, therefore, have an excellent chance of marrying him, if you want him. I have compared your horoscopes, and were it not for what you say in your letter, I would advise you to look in another direction for a marriage partner, as I am fearful that you will find more of discord in your marriage to him, if it takes place, than you will find of harmony. Thanks for writing me, and I hope everything comes out all right.

RITA, born August 23, 1919, about 10:00 a. m., Pennsylvania: This date fell on Saturday. I have examined your horoscope and that of your sweetheart. There are some very fine harmonies between you and some noticeable discords. Part of the

discords are mental on his part, and can be pushed into the background if he will just accept you as something he can't make over to any appreciable extent; if he succeeded, he would probably produce discord where harmony now prevails between you. On your part, you should not be too strenuous in trying to regulate his business or employment according to your own ideas. There will be plenty of lines on which you can agreeable cooperate in this regard, to your mutual benefit. If you will bear this in mind, both of you, and make such other mutual adjustments as you may find necessary from time to time, the agreements between you should produce happiness for both of you. Present financial and employment conditions are apt to prevail with your sweetheart for about another year, after which there will be an improvement for him in several directions. You may marry the latter part of 1937 or sometime in 1938, but will probably have obstacles to surmount at that time and for a few months following marriage, when you will come under very good influences. You have rather an unusual horoscope, with heart interests highly stressed, and ultimately you may become an accomplished performer on some instrument, possibly the violin, or may come before the public in some other manner in an entertainment capacity, with prospects of much success.

MISS L. E., born April 2, 1912, 1:15 a. m., Massachusetts: Next year, 1937, will bring you under very good influences with respect to employment, financial and home-life affairs. This may result in other changes, the meeting of new people, et cetera. About 1938, you will have acquired a new social circle, if you take advantage of your opportunities during 1937.

MISS B. S. R., born January 4, 1909, New York: During your life you will have several opportunities to marry and the degree of your happiness will depend on which you take. One possible marriage may result from a romantic affair in which material values are lost sight of, and if you make such a marriage, your home life will be one of worry and apprehensive uncertainty. Another opportunity might result in a sudden marriage, probably to a person with an unusual vocation. Should you marry such a person, your happiness would depend largely upon your mutual willingness to cooperate. Another marriage possibility is to a person of steady working habits, with an agreeable and happy disposition, and if you marry such a person,

you will probably find much happiness. These opportunities may occur within several years of each other. Opportunity for marriage will come to you during 1938.

M. A. C. J., female, born January 5, 1914, Iowa: You gave me the hour of your birth, but didn't state whether it was a. m. or p. m. You will probably marry suddenly during 1937 or the fore part of 1938.

Miss V. M., born August 5, 1920, 1:30 a. m., Massachusetts: You will really fall in love during the next two years and will probably marry within that time. I am glad to hear that you enjoy reading "Comments by Kai." Thanks.

Miss G. M. S., born August 15, 1916, 4:00 a. m., Rhode Island: There will be much social activity for you during the next four years, and opportunity for marriage will present itself during that time, with more than one suitor likely to be seeking your hand. You will probably marry during the last half of 1938 or during 1939. You will have opportunity to marry earlier than that, but will probably pass it by.

A. M. D. S., female, born February 8, 1914, about 4:00 p. m., Missouri: You will eventually marry, so do not worry on that score. Opportunity to marry will come to you during the next twelve months.

A. O. L., female, born November 23, 1907, about 12:00 noon, Canada: Eventually you will probably be very happy in love. Opportunity to marry will come to you during 1940, and you will be mentally alert to take advantage of it, if you so desire. It is possible you might marry during 1938, but that opportunity will not be so favorable as the one during 1940. I am inclined to think that you are a trifle too critical in looking over your marriage prospects, and that in the past you have condemned some as being unsuitable to you, without becoming acquainted with many of their good qualities. To the extent that you have done this, you have narrowed the field of your choice. The extent of your popularity will be largely governed by yourself.

Miss J. S., born August 3, 1913, about 1:00 a. m., Florida: The next twelve months will bring opportunity for romance and perhaps a romantic marriage. If this is passed by, you may marry suddenly in 1938 or the fore part of 1939. An excellent

opportunity for marriage, if then unmarried, will come to you about 1942.

Miss M. C. T., born October 2, 1918, 6:00 p. m., Pennsylvania: You are very romantic; but fortunately it is not apt to get you into any disastrous marriage. You will probably marry happily during the next eighteen months, a person of steadfast love, who will prove his love by deeds rather than words. He will be reliable, serious-minded and a hard worker, with few extravagances and those mostly directed toward your happiness and comfort. Be alert to take advantage of this opportunity when it comes to you, for it will bring you much happiness.

Miss A. D. P., born July 20, 1919, 2:00 p. m., Pennsylvania: Opportunity to marry will come to you during the next twelve months. If alert to take advantage of it, you should be able to contract a happy and successful marriage during this period.

V. R., born July 24, 1911, 2:00 p. m., Kentucky: Your best opportunity for a very happy marriage during the next few years will come to you during 1938, at which time you will also be exceptionally alert mentally and can easily plan to bring it about. Avoid unnecessary delay following your engagement.

B. B., female, born July 25, 1914, 7:00 p. m., Canada: In your case, marriage probably will be hard to bring about, due to your reaction to your opportunities. Engagements are apt to be broken through indecision on your part. Yet marriage is not denied to you, if you will use your mental faculties to plan its bringing about. If you wait for the man to woo you impetuously and persistently, you will probably be disappointed. When you see a man that you want, make it your business to create in him an interest in yourself, and then marry him, before you have time to change your mind or do something that will make him change his. During 1937, you will have an excellent opportunity to use your mind to bring about love and marriage. If you miss that opportunity, you may go until 1942 before another favorable opportunity will present itself, when a love affair with possible marriage, will come to you. If that is passed by, you will have an excellent opportunity to marry during 1944 and 1945. But if you shy at the marriage halter when faced with an opportunity for marriage, you will probably fail.

Mrs. H. A. R., mother of girl born January 21, 1913, 7:30 p. m.: This date fell on Tuesday. Your daughter is rather strong-headed in marriage matters and will be apt to do her own choosing, regardless of the advice of others or what they may think. At some time in her life she is exceedingly apt to marry hastily, and her temperament is such that it is just as well for her to do so, if she decides upon that course. Should she think it over, she would probably change her mind or complications might arise. If she desires to plan for successful marriage in preference to one dictated by the heart, she will have opportunities during the next five years to marry for social position, money, intellectual advancement. The social position and money marriages would prove disappointing to her, unless social position and money came incidental to, rather than a prime requisite of, such marriages. The mind-stressed marriage would likely prove satisfactory. She doesn't think along lines of marriage as most people do, having rather definite ideas of her own, and the more pressure that is brought to bear upon her by others in an attempt to get her married, the more likely she will be to mess up her life by either abandoning her viewpoint temporarily and resentfully regaining it later, or prematurely or unwisely exercising it in the defense of her liberty of action which she might feel was being encroached upon. Quit worrying about whether or not your daughter will be an old maid, which you say every one says she will be. She would rather be that, if need be, than to marry some one she didn't want. And if others try to choose a husband for her, she will probably marry one of her own choosing and tell them about it afterward. I am glad you wrote me. Have a heart-to-heart talk with your daughter, and she will probably confirm what I have just said. Best wishes to both of you.

SALLY P., female, born September 6, 1921, "at midnight," Kentucky: You say you were born on Tuesday. The above date fell on Tuesday, so you were probably born on September 6th, but "at midnight" might be the night between September 5th-6th, or the night between September 6th-7th, a difference of twenty-four hours. Write me again, please.

Miss L. C., born December 19, 1916, about noon, Pennsylvania: This date fell on Tuesday, not on Monday, as stated in your letter. Opportunities for marriage will come to you during 1937 and 1938. If these are passed by, it may be 1941 before another opportunity presents itself.

WOMAN, born July 5, 1906; man born March 14, 1898, 6:00 a. m.: There are entirely too many discords between these two nativities to warrant marriage between these two people. There are some harmonies, which can be stressed, if they remain on a friendship basis, but they would probably be lost sight of in a marriage where the antagonisms are so many that they could not all very well be ignored. The extent of the antagonisms between these two will not be fully discovered by them until after marriage, should they marry. I'm sorry I can't report favorably.

A. M., female, born November 14, 1916, Pennsylvania: I am sorry that things have been going against you; but they won't always be that way. You will have an opportunity to marry during 1937, if you plan properly; 1938 will bring another opportunity, but an unsatisfactory one; 1940 will bring another opportunity that is apt to end in marriage, if you are not married by that time, but it will probably prove unsatisfactory. If unmarried when 1941 arrives, you will probably marry suddenly and will likely find married happiness.

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, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.





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. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. 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. We are not responsible for money (coins) sent through the mail.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Do not mail letters to these Pen Pals after December 4th.

MANY of you are attracted by the lure of water sports, so why not get ready for next summer? Here is your chance to correspond with a professional backstroke swimmer who has competed in many races and is personally acquainted with famous swimming stars. He has plenty of time to answer all letters, and will gladly discuss the finer points of swimming and diving. Boys, you will certainly find it worth while!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I've never had any Pen Pals, and think it would be just fine if I could start a correspondence with any one who is interested in swimming. I'm a professional backstroke swimmer, have competed in many races, and know many swimming stars. I'm a young man twenty years of age, and will gladly exchange snapshots with any one who answers my plea. I promise prompt replies, and am ready to

talk about swimming, diving, and anything else of interest to other Pals. CLARK.

Married, single, old or young, all are welcome here.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm twenty-six, a divorcee, and the mother of a sweet little girl. I want to correspond with any one—married, single, old or young—who is interested enough to answer my plea. I'm considered a good letter writer, live in Texas, and I'm right there when it comes to friendship. SLIM PAT.

See that your State is represented on her list.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to hear from at least one Pen Pal from every State in the Union. I'm a girl of eighteen, live in Chicago, will exchange snapshots, picture post cards, souvenirs, and anything of interest to other Pen Pals. I've traveled, and feel sure that I can make my letters interesting. I want Pals everywhere.

DUCHESS.

Jolly Gert collects a number of interesting things.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm sending you this S O S in the hope that it will bring me some Pen Pals. I'm a good-natured girl, considered friendly, sociable, and teach school. I'm fond of sports, shows, and dancing. My hobby is collecting—stamps, post cards, and small figures of animals. Come on, Pals, one and all, write to me. The first ten will receive desirable souvenirs.

JOLLY GERT.

Marnie teaches music and dancing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would love to correspond with Jewish girls who live in New York City, but will answer all letters. I'm a girl seventeen years of age, enjoy all kinds of sports, teach music, dancing, and have done some radio work. I am full of fun, like to enjoy myself, and have plenty of time for prompt replies. Won't you try me, girls?

MARNIE.

This Pal has done stage work in Hollywood.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a steady reader of Love Story Magazine, and think your Friendliest Corner is very interesting. I'm a young man of twenty-three, have traveled in most of the United States, tried stage work in Hollywood, and at present I'm staying near Houston, Texas. I'm fond of music, movies, making friends, and will gladly answer all letters received. Who'll give me a chance?

J. R. A.

Pals, help make her life more interesting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I have a little space to tell the world I'm lonely and looking for Pen Pals? I'm a deaf girl of twenty-two, and would like to hear from Pals everywhere, including those who are also deaf. I have brown hair and eyes, a cheerful disposition, and do very well in swimming and other sports. My hobby is letter writing, and I want Pals everywhere.

MERCEDES S.

She will send you a little toy dog.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea? I'm a bride, seventeen years of age, and although I'm not exactly lonesome I want to find a few true-blue Pen Pals. I love to travel, and expect to make a trip West soon. My hobby is

collecting little toy dogs, and I will send one to every Pal who answers this plea.

SAVANNAH BRIDE.

Emmelyne raises canaries.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is Hawaii calling! I'm a tall girl in my early twenties, have a pleasing personality, can play the piano, sing, and enjoy tennis and swimming. My hobby is collecting stamps, and I also raise canaries. Won't some of you girls write to me? I can tell you lots of interesting things about Honolulu.

EMMELYNE.

This Pal enjoys writing letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find room for my plea in your Friendliest Corner. I'm a girl twenty years of age, employed as stenographer, and live in a large city in Wisconsin. I want to hear from girls everywhere, and will answer all letters promptly. I like dancing, outdoor sports, and enjoy writing. Girls, if you want a real Pal, don't overlook me.

ALYCE R.

She'll give you pointers on beauty culture.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Russian girl of seventeen, a high-school graduate, and at present taking a course in beauty culture. I live on a farm not far from town, keep scrapbooks of songs, fashions, interesting snapshots, and enjoy outdoor sports. I'll be glad to hear from any one.

META.

She's never too busy to write letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from girls all over the world. I'm a blue-eyed girl of twenty, enjoy knitting, sewing, reading, skating, and am never too busy to write letters. I'll be glad to exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and anything that is interesting to other Pen Pals. I'll answer every letter, so please, young and old, don't pass me by.

EAGER KAY.

Carrie has had offers to go on the stage.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please print my plea? I'm a young married woman, and a mother, intensely interested in music, and have had offers to go on the stage, but settled down after marriage. I would appreciate hearing from any one who likes to write letters, and promise prompt and interesting replies. Come on,

single and married Pals, and let's be friends.

CARRIE.

A lonely young man from South Africa.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely young man of twenty-eight, ready for all the Pals you can find for me. I live in South Africa, am broad-minded, friendly, and promise speedy replies. Any one between twenty-one and thirty years of age is welcome. I am sure I can make my letters interesting.

CHEERFUL LEX.

She hopes for an interesting career.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think you can find me some Pals? I'm a happy-go-lucky girl of fifteen, fond of outdoor sports, dancing, cooking, writing letters, and drawing. Some day I hope to become an artist, but in the meantime I'm lonesome and would love to correspond with girls of any age. I'll exchange snapshots, autographs, poems, and drawings.

MERRY MILLY.

Zel collects butterflies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room for a lonely young girl who is interested in collecting butterflies? I would love to hear from girls in Alaska, Canada, New Mexico, South America, and our own United States. I like sports, making friends, and will gladly answer every letter that comes my way. Please, girls, let's be friends. I'll be waiting.

ZEL.

She's deeply interested in people.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a call for Pals from far and near. I'm a Pennsylvania girl of twenty, deeply interested in people, their opinions, ideas, et cetera. My hobbies are art, music, sports, literature, and making friends. To the Pal whose letter reaches me first I will send a framed silhouette of my own making. To the others I promise prompt replies and sincere friendship. Who will take me for a steady correspondent?

HELEN K.

Delight has danced professionally.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from girls eighteen to twenty-five years of age. I'm a girl with copper-colored hair, black eyes, and until recently I danced professionally. My dad used to raise horses, so horseback riding is one of my favorite sports. I also like to swim, and play tennis. I've traveled some, and my ambition

is to visit foreign countries. Every letter will be answered.

DELIGHT.

A call for younger Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl fourteen years of age, and would love to have some Pen Pals. I am making a scrapbook about France, and hope some of the girls who live in that country will write to me. I'll exchange souvenirs, and promise prompt replies. One and all are welcome.

LOTTIE.

Indiana Kit enjoys gardening and hiking.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea so some one will write to me. I'm a girl of twenty-three, and want to correspond with Pals from far and near. I like reading, gardening, hiking, embroidering, and am interested in every one. I'll answer letters promptly, and will gladly tell you all about my home State. I'll be waiting, Pen Pals, so please don't disappoint me.

INDIANA KIT.

Two Pals from the South.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two lonely Southern girl still in our teens, very anxious to find a few true Pen Pals. We enjoy dancing, movies, collecting picture post cards, and hope to hear from Pals from Oregon, Montana, and Colorado. Come on, girls, get busy and start writing.

TWO BURLINGTON PALS.

He's been all through New England.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: The writer of this plea is a young man of twenty-three, a college graduate, interested in the movies, reading, swimming, amateur theatricals, fond of travel, and can tell many interesting stories about the remote corners of New England. Writing poetry is one of my hobbies, and writing letters is another. So how about it, men?

TOM GAR.

This young mother is keen about swimming.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm not exactly lonesome, but anxious to make new friends, and hope to find many through your Corner. I'm a young married woman of twenty-five, have a son seven years of age, love to read, do fancy work, but swimming is my pet hobby. I'll be looking for lots of mail, so hurry, Pals, and write to me.

MODERN MOTHER.

She finds a summer resort lonely in winter.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like to have a Pen Pal in every State in the Union. I'm a girl of seventeen, particularly keen to hear from girls from the Western and Southern States. I live in a summer resort, and the winters are long and lonely. I like sports, pets, books, music, poetry, and anything girls of my age enjoy. Please, Pals, hurry and write to me. I'll greatly appreciate your letters.

JUST CAROL.

A real Southern Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a very lonely girl of nineteen, love to travel, but as I work every day the only traveling I can do is via the mail box. So please, everybody, won't you write to me? I will gladly exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and to the first five Pals I will send interesting souvenirs. I'll answer all letters regardless of age.

KENTUCKY LU.

A versatile Pal from Montreal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a plea from Montreal. I'm a girl of eighteen, rather tall, have a pleasing personality, and am easy to get along with. I like skating, dancing, and can play several musical instruments. I'll answer all letters promptly and try hard to make my replies lively and interesting.

SARAH.

Alice-Rose hails from the Windy City.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a high-school sophomore? I'm a peppy girl of fifteen, live in Chicago, have brown hair, blue eyes, love art, the great outdoors, baseball games, swimming, and walking. I want to hear from Western Pals, but promise to answer every letter that comes my way. I'll exchange pictures.

ALICE-ROSE.

She wants to hear from prospective brides.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to become one of the Pen Pals. I'm an engaged girl twenty-five years of age, and especially anxious to correspond with young brides, or engaged girls who expect to be married in the near future. Come on, girls, and write. I will send a gift to all prospective brides who answer my plea. I'm sure we can be good friends.

BALTIMORE MARGE.

Girls, help Bryda to cheer up.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm so lonesome I don't know what to do with myself. I'm a girl twenty years of age, attended college for two years, and as I recently moved to a strange town, I miss all my old friends. I like dancing, swimming, reading, and will gladly exchange snapshots with any one who answers this plea. Girls, won't you take a chance on me?

BRYDA.

Eloise collects China animals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Pals, are you interested in collecting china animals? I am, and would like to hear from married and single girls of any age. I'm nineteen, and married. I live on Long Island, enjoy writing long letters, and will send a souvenir to the first three Pals who write to me. Please, girls, try me. I'll be a true-blue Pen Pal.

ELOISE.

A call for Syrian Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young Syrian man, live in South Africa, and work as clerk in an office. I will exchange snapshots, souvenirs, and promise prompt replies. I want to hear from Syrian Pen Pals everywhere, especially from America. I'll tell you many interesting facts about our Empire Exhibition.

SYRIAN PAL.

You'll all like Happy Mrs. M.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me make friends. I'm a married woman in my twenties, fond of the movies, like to embroider, crochet, and am deeply interested in music and painting. I am friendly, good-natured, and easy to get along with. So come on, Pals everywhere, and take a chance on me. I hope to get lots of replies. I live in Washington, D. C.

HAPPY MRS. M.

Zenia likes to putter in a garden.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's hoping you can find room for one more letter. I'm a young Connecticut girl, enjoy writing and receiving letters, reading good books, gardening, and adore music. I promise to write long letters and will try to make them interesting. Come one, come all. Be good sports and write to me.

ZENIA.

Monty is a showman.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a congenial young man in my early twenties, live in New York City, and am engaged in the

show business. I have plenty of time to answer all letters, and want to hear from young men everywhere regardless of age. Pals, how about writing to me? **MONTY.**

Who wants to hear about Gee Gee's travels?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of seventeen, a high-school graduate, and as I am not working time passes very slowly for me. I travel a great deal, and will gladly tell you all about the different places I have visited. I have sandy-colored hair, blue eyes, make friends easily, and will be a sincere friend. Please try me, girls.

GEE GEE.

Kara wants Pals from many countries.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: My pet hobby is writing letters, and my other main interests are music and interior decorating. I am a good-natured girl living in New York State, and would love to correspond with Pals in England, Italy, and other European countries. I also want to hear from girls living in Mexico, and will exchange souvenirs and pictures.

KARA.

These peppy triplets can tell you about ranch life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are triplets, girls twenty years of age, live on a ranch in California, and want to hear from Pals everywhere. We like all sports, and as our school years were spent mostly in England we have loads of interesting things to write about. We are English-German, and will answer all letters. **JEAN, JANE AND JUNE.**

Arkansas Red is ready for all comers.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would some girls who like to read, sew, and write letters, care to correspond with me? I'm a married woman of twenty-five, have three lovely children, live on a homestead, and find plenty of time for the things I like to do. I'll answer every letter that comes my way.

ARKANSAS RED.

This California Pal likes plenty of fun.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Some time ago you helped me find some lovely Pen Pals, and now I would like a few more. I'm an eighteen-year-old California girl, fond of reading, skating, writing letters, and will gladly ex-

change snapshots, picture post cards, and anything else of interest. I want to hear from Pals all over the world. Please, girls, do write to me.

INGLEWOOD PAL.

B. R. is all alone in a big city.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any one care to write to a lonely widow of thirty-four? I am living alone in a large city, and get very blue. I enjoy writing letters, and feel sure I can make my replies interesting. I like outdoor sports, will exchange snapshots with any one, and would especially like to hear from farm and ranch Pals.

B. R.

Tuneful has an ear for music.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Pals, stop, look, and read my plea! I'm a peppy girl of sixteen, fond of anything that spells fun, especially dancing and music. I can play the violin and guitar, have a large collection of toy dogs, am an only child, and get terribly lonesome. Come on, everybody, and take a chance on me. I have oodles of things to write about.

TUNEFUL.

Discuss your hobbies with Bunny of Australia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young girl in my teens living in Australia, and very anxious to correspond with American Pals. I like outdoor sports, reading, knitting, and movies. I'll answer every letter received, and will tell you all about myself later. Please, girls, hurry and write.

BUNNY OF AUSTRALIA.

This Pal has many things to write about.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I get very lonesome and want to hear from single and married Pals of any age. I'm a young married woman of twenty-one, live in Cleveland, Ohio, am fond of pets, outdoor sports, knitting and crocheting. I have many things to write about, and will try hard to make my letters worth while. Won't some of you drop me a line?

ARKAY.

She's interested in poetry.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hello, everybody! Here's a plea from a girl of nineteen. I graduated from high school, and am now working in an office. I enjoy sports, music, reading, and especially poetry. I'll exchange photos, souvenirs, and cards with every one. No matter where you live, write to me.

POETRY LOVER.

THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

Well-known Authority on Love and Marriage

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.

IT is not easy to give up some one we love, but no girl with an ounce of self-respect should permit an engagement to drag on for an indefinite length of time when her fiancé shows only a half-hearted response toward marriage. It is unfortunate that women love men who are weak, undependable, and more inclined to take than to give. But no matter what the strength or weakness of a man's character, happiness will remain out of reach unless both individuals can meet this great experience with the loyalty and unselfishness that are characteristic of true love.

Would *you* break your engagement if you were in Dennie's place?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I will be grateful if you can help me. I'm a girl twenty-one years of age, and engaged to a young man of twenty-six, but goodness knows if we will ever be married, because I have become impatient about the way he treats me. Of course, I love him; and until a short time ago I've had no actual reason to think that he did not love me. But we've been engaged for three and a half years and all our plans for the future seem to be at a standstill.

During the time we've been engaged Joe was out of work for about a year. I have

helped him in every way I could; loaned him money occasionally, paid doctor bills, and on his birthday and holidays sent him practical gifts like shirts, ties, socks, et cetera. I have in every way tried to be of real help to him.

However, in spite of everything, we often argued, and still do. Whenever we are angry with each other and he doesn't come to see me, he often dates other girls. He always tries to lie out of it, but I have tried to overlook it because I know that men will tell lies when they don't want to tell the truth.

Don't you think I've been fair with him, and that after all this time he should be willing to settle down and treat me with more consideration? He now has a steady job and earns enough to support a wife. He is sharing a three-room apartment with his sister, who is also working. Their parents are divorced and live in different States, and he says that when he marries, his sister will be left all alone, and that he should like to see her get married first. But she is twenty years old, has a steady job, and they have relatives she could room with if she wanted to. So don't you think that's a silly reason for postponing our marriage?

Another excuse he offers is that he's not sure how long his job will last. But can we ever be sure of anything? I've offered to keep my job, which pays twenty-six dollars a week, for an indefinite time after we are married. I wouldn't mind working if we could have our own home and be together. After we announced our engage-

ment he used to talk about our future; now he seldom refers to it.

I've tried to talk to him and settle matters, and even offered to have his sister stay with us until she gets married, but he can't seem to make up his mind. When I tell him that he has changed, he says he wouldn't have become engaged to me if he didn't love me. He says maybe we can get married next year; but he said that last year and nothing came of it.

I'm so discouraged and undecided I don't know what to do. I have only a father who is well able to take care of himself. He has a traveling job, is seldom home and, anyway, I've never been able to talk to him about my problems.

Do you think I should keep on waiting, or break off our engagement and let Joe go? It would really be terribly hard for me to do that, and I don't know if I would care to go out with any one else. I know that he has often failed me, but I have been true to him, and he knows it. He tells other people what a lucky fellow he is to be engaged to me, but I feel I can't go on wasting the best years of my life just waiting around. Please give me your opinion, and I would also welcome advice from your readers.

DENNIE.

Any one who finds true love finds the richest treasure in life, and it is a great pity that some people make so feeble an effort to keep the love that is offered them. When a man has asked a girl to be his wife and then does nothing about marriage, some course of action should certainly be taken.

I know it would be hard for you to suggest a break, my dear. But one of the unpleasant things in life is that we have to face reality, whether we want to or not. I would suggest that you have another talk with your fiancé. If he means to marry you he will refuse to listen to even the hint of a definite break. But if he remains indifferent, it is high time that you should give him up and try to find happiness with some one else. It is foolish for a girl to wait for a man who seems less interested in marriage than when they first became engaged.

The excuses Joe offers are far from satisfactory, nor are they substantial. When a man is really in love he is not afraid of taking chances, no matter what the future may hold. His sister can no doubt take care of herself and, as you say, if she does not care to live alone after Joe marries you, she could make her home with a relative. Unless absolutely unavoidable, it is not wise for newlyweds to share their home with others.

As matters stand, it seems to me that it rests with you if you are to continue living in a state of anxiety and indecision, or settle all your doubts without further delay.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My problem concerns two brothers. Bill is twenty-seven and Jim twenty-two. I am nineteen, and considered pretty. I've known both boys for quite some time. I like Bill, but I don't care for Jim. For a long time, however, Bill acted as if I didn't exist, so I went out with Jim.

One day Bill surprised me by asking me to go out with him. The following evening he came again and said he wanted me to go steady with him. I told him I would think it over. Of course, I felt flattered that at last he woke up to the fact that I was around.

However, several times when we went out his brother Jim came along with us, and it was not exactly pleasant for me when he found out I had agreed to go steady with Bill. One thing led to another, and we quarreled.

Then Bill and I quarreled about Jim. They were always fighting, and I simply hated it; I didn't want them to fight over me. However, since our quarrel, Bill has not been to see me, although I'd love to make up with him.

My girl friend said that if she told Bill how much I cared for him he would come to see me again. Do you think that would help?

At the time I dated Bill we did not get along very well. We had differences of opinion about many things and seldom could see things from the same viewpoint. I think when a boy is in love with a girl he should try to see things her way, because if she gives in every time they have

an argument she can never have her way after they are married.

Please tell me whether I should make the first move to make up with Bill, or wait until he tries to see me again. It doesn't look as if he ever will. We quarreled almost a month ago and I haven't heard from him since. — UNDECIDED BEE.

Coöperation is as necessary in love as it is in any other partnership. It is not so much a question as to who should give in and squelch the argument; differences of opinion should be settled amicably. But young people are inclined to want the right of way, and it is hard for them to accept the truth that winning an argument for argument's sake is not going to make them happier.

Whether or not Bill would be tempted to make the first move if your girl friend told him how much you cared is hard to say. But it is only reasonable to suppose that when a man loves a girl he would hardly wait as long as three or four weeks without making some effort to set matters straight again. I would suggest that you enjoy other friendships while waiting for Bill.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have often wondered why many nice-looking, friendly girls are not popular, while some plain-faced, plump girls have every one running after them.

My best girl friend and I have been going around together since we graduated from high school a year ago. We are both twenty years old. Without wishing to sound conceited, I believe that I am the best-looking girl in our part of the town. Meryl is five feet three inches tall and weighs one hundred and sixty pounds. I'm the same height and weigh a hundred and ten pounds. I have good features, curly blond hair, brown eyes, and dress well enough. Meryl has straight features, but you couldn't call her pretty. She has straight, dark hair, and blue eyes. One thing, however, is that we both have good complexions.

We both know quite a few boys and girls, but the boys always seek her out. At a dance she is hardly ever left alone.

She's a good dancer even though she is plump. She takes a drink to be sociable, smokes, and so do I. She has a steady boy friend, and we expect to hear of her engagement any time now. Several times when she didn't show up at a party the boys would get into a car and go after her.

I suppose I'm jealous because no boy has ever asked me to go steady. Meryl is always laughing and joking, and handing the boys a line, and they love it. Is that what boys want a girl to do? Whenever a boy shorter than herself asks her to dance she never hesitates, but I would feel awfully self-conscious. She even jokes about their height and the boys do not seem to mind it.

I go out with a boy maybe once in two weeks. Most of the girls I know have boy friends and date several times a week. I know you will understand how I feel; I often think I'd give anything if the boys would pay more attention to me. What can I do to interest boys to the extent that they will date me more often? Please help me if you can. BROWN-EYED BLONDE.

Most of us have met people who, after we have spent a little time with them, succeed in making us forget what they look like; we remember only their personalities, and their friendly ways. There is no special formula for popularity, but any girl can be cheerful and entertaining, and make the boys feel that they are all fine fellows.

The thing to do, it seems, is to make a man think he's wonderful, and ten chances to one he will return the compliment and ask for more. I don't mean that a girl must be insincere; most humans have some good points which, if commented upon, makes us appreciate the person who takes the trouble to mention them, directly or indirectly.

Chances are that your friends want Meryl at parties because she really is good fun and tries to help others enjoy themselves by doing the things they like. Try this method yourself, my dear, and see how it works out.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My home life is so unhappy; I wish something could be done

about it. The trouble is that my parents are always quarreling.

I'm a girl of seventeen, and have two younger sisters. One is twelve and the other fifteen. My parents always shout so loudly that all the neighbors can hear them. You can imagine how it makes me and my sisters feel whenever we go outside. I always think that when the neighbors see me, they talk about me because of the way my parents act.

I know my father has a roving eye, and that several times he went out with other women. My mother knows about it, and that's one reason why she is always nagging him. Mother is nervous and unhappy, and cries so much I often wonder how she can keep it up without getting a nervous breakdown.

When I'm eighteen I'm going to leave home, unless I can't stand it and leave before. Do you think I should? I know my parents must love us because we three girls have nice clothes, and mother is always fixing up the house so we can bring our friends home. But all that doesn't help us to feel better because every one knows about dad dating other women, and that mother and he quarrel all the time.

There is not one peaceful day in our house; it's always something. Sometimes they even quarrel when I have a friend over, and I feel so ashamed I could fall through the floor. Isn't there something that I can do? Please try to help me. I've tried talking to mother, and told her that neighbors gossip about us; she always says she'll try not to quarrel with dad, but it never lasts.

ELLEN MAY.

I sincerely sympathize with you, my child. Parents should, of course, strive to maintain peace in the home not only for their own sakes, but because children are impressionable and should not be compelled to listen to quarrels.

It is difficult to say what you can do to help them. Married people cannot be helped unless they make a real effort to help themselves. Try to be as patient as you can, and forget about leaving home. If you and your sisters treat your parents with affection and consideration, you will help them more than you think and make things easier for yourselves.

Whenever your mother is on the verge of an argument, coax her not to take it out on your father for the time being. Ask her to take you children to a movie, or to visit a friend. Be more agreeable to your father, too, no matter what his shortcomings; a little kindness from his family makes a man respond accordingly. I am not condoning his going out with other women, but there may be reasons which you cannot now understand.

As to worrying about what the neighbors think—forget it, my dear. People always like to talk. I know you cannot help feeling self-conscious, but try to keep in mind the thought that many people talk for want of something better to do. They do not really care whether your parents argue or not, and don't think half as much about it when they see you as you believe.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm twenty-six years old, have been separated from my husband for two years, and I'm now waiting for my divorce to become final. A year ago I fell madly in love with a young man four years my senior. He acted as if he returned my love, and for seven months I trusted him implicitly.

About three months ago he had to leave town on business. I was heartbroken to see him leave, especially as he was not sure whether he was coming back, or whether he'd decide to settle down in another city. However, he promised faithfully to send for me just as soon as my divorce became final, and said we would be married. I never doubted him.

In the meantime, we corresponded almost daily until a few weeks ago when I was taken sick and had to stay in the hospital. I couldn't write to him for a while, and when I finally wrote and explained just how everything happened, he didn't believe me. He said that I was telling a lie, that there was another man in my life, and told me that it would be best if we forgot everything.

I have written to him several times since I received his letter, but he's ignored my letters. I still love him, and I don't think I will ever change. Recently, I've met

several nice young men but they do not interest me. Do you think I should write again, or go to see him personally? Sometimes, I think that if I could only talk to him we might straighten things out.

I think he is very unfair. He knew that I loved him dearly, and that he hurt me terribly by writing as he did. He has, I'm sure, received my letters. I can't understand why he doesn't believe me. Before he left town I was so sure of him, so sure that he were going to get married, and now all my hopes are gone. Is there anything that I can do? A DEVOTED READER.

Judging from your letter, it seems that this man has never loved you as truly as he wanted you to believe. A man does not deliberately give up the girl he loves, even if circumstances compel him to part with her for a time. In fact, a separation should have made him all the more anxious for the day when you could be married. His actions, at the time of your illness when you needed his sympathy, proved that he was looking for an excuse to break with you. Surely, you do not want to continue feeling badly about losing a man who is not worthy of your love?

There would be no use in humiliating yourself by writing to him again, especially since he has not bothered to answer your previous letters. And although at this time you may feel that the bottom has dropped out of your dreams, give time a chance to heal your hurt. Find something to interest you, make new friends, and be glad that you did not marry a man who would not have made you happy.

DEAR MISS BROWN: I have a problem I can't seem to solve. I'm a young married woman and have two babies. My husband and I have been happy until recently. He is really a fine man, but you know how a man is likely to grumble when he has been laid off from work for a long time.

We had to move to a smaller house and became acquainted with the family next

door. I liked the woman, but my husband didn't like her husband. After several weeks, however, this man and I found we had a lot in common, and we would often stand in front of the house and talk while I watched the children, and sometimes we even went for a walk. It went on like that for a while, and then my husband asked me if anything had happened between me and this other man. Although to this day I don't know why I did it, I let him believe that something did happen. Of course, there really was nothing more between us than a kiss or two.

However, my husband will not believe me now, no matter how hard I try to convince him there was nothing really wrong. His attitude is breaking up our home. I've done everything to prove that he ought to believe me, but he won't.

My husband still treats me well enough, except that he sometimes says mean things to me. But I don't fight back. He thinks I have deliberately become interested in this other man in order to hurt him, but I didn't. I love my husband, but if he keeps on saying he hates me, I don't know how long my love will last.

I know it's my fault, but don't you think a man should try to be more reasonable? We get along all right for a while, and then something happens to spoil it all. We want to stay together because of the children, but how can we if he refuses to take my word when I'm telling the truth? L. OF NEW JERSEY.

Few things have the power to spoil marital happiness as quickly as suspicion. Where distrust enters, peace of mind disappears, although sometimes it disappears only to a point where both husband and wife have to battle with it occasionally. But even that is likely to take the joy out of what should be a harmonious and satisfactory companionship.

As you say, the whole thing was your fault. You have been foolish to be more than casually friendly with your neighbor. But if your husband loves you, he should be willing to give you the benefit of the doubt this once. We all make mistakes, and since nothing really serious happened between you and this

other man, the sensible thing would be to drop the matter and say no more about it. You have not only your own happiness to consider, but the happiness of your children.

Talk it over with your husband again, and I sincerely hope that you will reach a better understanding. Let him read this; it may help.

DEAR MRS BROWN: I'm a girl of fifteen, considered good-looking, but there is no use trying to disguise the fact that I am stubborn and have a very quick temper.

I try hard to control my temper, but at times it gets the better of me. I think I have lost the boy I'm fond of because I'm stubborn. I think I treat him nicely, but my girl friends tell me I treat him very badly. I wish I could be more popular with boys and girls. It's not hard for me to meet people and get acquainted, but when it comes to keeping my friends, that's another matter. Can you help me?

I have another problem. I was very friendly with a girl whom I considered a true friend until recently. We were invited to a picnic, and the boy I like went with us. She did everything she could to keep him away from me. Then, when her boy friend came, she paid no more attention to this boy. However, since that day, he doesn't seem as much interested in me as before. I think he likes her more, and I feel very blue about the whole thing. Do you think I should drop them both?

STUBBORN.

In the first place, my child, making and keeping friends is a job in itself. If we want to keep our friends we must put our own emotions into the background. I know this is hard to do when one is young. But whenever others refuse to follow your suggestions, keep in mind the fact that if you cooperate with them you will get along much better.

You should have many friendships at a time, with boys and girls near your own age. This is more fun, and saves a girl from being disappointed if one of the boys begins to pair off with another girl. Having many boy friends now will help you

later with love. Try to stifle any jealousy that you may feel. It only makes a girl feel unhappy.

There is no real reason why you should drop this girl and boy because he seems less attentive to you. Since you are not engaged to this boy, your girl friend did you no injustice if she was chummy with him. Forget the incident and enjoy other friendships.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a night-club and radio singer, have traveled some, but never thought much about love until about two years ago, when I signed up to sing at a night club and met a very nice young man. We saw each other every day, and then he asked me to go steady with him.

For four months we were very happy, but when he found out that I was going to have a baby he wouldn't marry me. I'm sorry anything like that happened, but in a way I'm glad I have my little girl because my experience has taught me a great deal about life.

Three weeks after my baby was born I went back to work, singing in a show, and there I met another young man. He knows about my baby and thinks the world of her. We've been going together for six months, and he often tells me he loves me, but sometimes I doubt him. I suppose it's just because of my previous experience.

I have heard also that he goes out with other girls, but I don't believe everything I hear. I trust him to a great extent, but not so long ago, he asked me to live with him and said he would also take care of my baby until we can be married. I think he means to marry me, but I don't know what to do, although I love him and would do almost anything to make him happy.

I know that he jokes and talks with other girls, but I'm not jealous. He is singing in another club in this town, and comes to see me every day. I know he's true to me.

Mrs. Brown, do you think he would keep his promise to marry me if I do as he asks? I don't want to bring grief upon myself. I've had a large dose the first time, and I don't want to make another mistake. Please help me decide.

BLUES SINGER.

I'm afraid there is only one way of looking at a problem like yours, my dear. Your previous unhappy

experience should have proved to you that love without the security and sanction of marriage usually comes to grief. If this young man really loved you, he would have offered you marriage. And if, for any reason, he cannot marry you at this time, he would have asked you to wait rather than propose a complicated relationship.

I suggest that you talk things over with him. When a man loves a girl, he is only too eager to offer her the protection of his name along with his affection. You would not be helping your own case at this time if you permitted yourself to be persuaded to see things from his point of view. Besides, you have the baby to consider.

If you cannot reach an agreement with this man, it would be better to break off with him.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: When I was seven years old, my father put me in a convent school and I stayed there until a few years ago. Now I'm twenty years old. My mother is dead.

When I left school and came home to live with my father, I found out that he was unreasonably strict. He wouldn't let me have any friends. I know this is not a new story to you, but I hope you will help me as there is no one else I can go to. Whenever I spoke to a boy who lived in the neighborhood, my father chased him away. Once a girl asked me to go to a movie with her, but my father wouldn't let me. I asked him why, and he said he didn't like the girl's looks.

Two years ago, I left my father and went to live with my aunt. My aunt is very sweet to me, but she is also strict. I am twenty years old and can't bring a boy in for a cup of coffee and a piece of cake when he brings me home from a show, and you know a girl likes to do the things that help a friendship along.

It is hard for me to make friends, as I work at night. I take care of a candy stand in a theater. If I ask my brother to take me to a dance, he refuses.

I almost married a boy I met recently out of sheer desperation, but when my father heard about it he told me to get

such silly notions out of my mind. I guess he is so strict with me because my oldest brother was wild, and my younger brother got married without his permission.

I love my father; he would give me his last cent if I asked him for it. I'd hate to hurt him. But whenever I try to talk to him he raises the roof. He tells me that I can go to a movie any time I want, but a girl can't spend all her days in a theater.

I'm so lonesome and blue, I wish I had never been born. I never have fun like other girls of my age, and my father tells me I'll have to do as he likes whether I'm twenty or forty. Please tell me what you think about my problem, and whether or not there's something that I can do.

LOUISE.

A girl of your age is certainly entitled to friends of her own choice and a reasonable amount of freedom. It is very hard to understand why some parents refuse to reconcile themselves to the fact that boys and girls twenty years of age are almost grown men and women and cannot be cooped up at home all the time.

I understand that you do not want to hurt your father, but surely there can be no harm in your joining a club where you could make friends and have fun with young people of your own age. Do you suppose that your father would listen to a close friend of the family, or a relative, or perhaps your pastor if you are personally acquainted with him, since he refuses to listen to you?

Try not to be too unhappy, Louise. Things have a way of eventually straightening themselves out. In fact, if you invited your friends to the house now, and introduced them to your father, you can perhaps coax him to be less unreasonable. You could also put this up to him from another angle. He loves you, I'm sure, and wants you to be happy. Tell him how unhappy the lack of friends is making you. There is nothing like trying.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a girl of nearly seventeen, and have one more year to go before I finish high school. My parents are lovely, and I can bring my friends home any time. I have two brothers, one fourteen and the other sixteen. The older one works in a store after school hours delivering orders, and it helps to pay for some of his clothes.

We live in a fairly large town. I have lots of friends, and although we are not as well off as some other families, the boys and girls never leave me out if there's a party, dance, or a picnic.

However, dad is working only part time, and although I help mother make my clothes, I wish I knew how I could earn some money after school hours. Can you suggest something that I can do? If we lived in a city I could probably find a job of some kind, but you know how it is in the country, even if ours is a rather large town.

I'd appreciate it very much if you can tell me what to do and how to go about it.

HOME GIRL.

Sometimes, a country town presents more opportunity for a girl to earn money after school hours than a large city. Have you thought of running errands, minding children by the hour, making goodies and selling them? If you can typewrite, perhaps the merchants of your town will be glad to let you do their monthly bills. One high-school girl who lives in the suburbs, informs me that every week she collects ten to fifteen youngsters between seven and ten years of age, at ten cents per youngster, and takes them on an outing for the entire day. The children bring their own lunch, and their mothers are glad to have a free day. Perhaps you could use that idea. If you can do needlework, you might be able to get orders to hemstitch and initial linens. Few people do work of that kind really well.

If you will write again giving me your name and address, I will gladly send you a list of suggestions for making money at home.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I hope that Savant, who is down on all girls, will have a chance to read this. Does he ever stop to ask himself whether or not all girls are alike?

I agree with him that some girls are careless, but there are a lot of nice girls too. Many times, a fellow is to blame for lack of dates. If he dates a girl and she'd rather stay at home, he never asks her out again because she's too "old-fashioned" and not a good sport. If he takes her out for the evening, he expects her to smoke, drink, and let him make love to her. If she doesn't let him she's a wet blanket and that ends their acquaintance. Is it any wonder that some girls take everything they can get? They act just as the men want them to.

I certainly ought to know, as I have a position where I can read the character of both girls and fellows. If any one happens to mention a nice girl, the fellows generally sneer and say, "Who wants to meet a wet blanket?"

I am nineteen years of age and have met many modern young men who ought to take lessons on how to act toward girls. As for applying make-up, it is an art that requires time to learn. Wearing hose that have runs may not always be the girl's fault, although they can be mended, but perhaps money is scarce. So you fellows who think that all girls are gold diggers, should stop to find out what the girls think of you.

I have yet to meet a fellow who didn't act like a conceited fool. Most men are so stuck on themselves, they think every girl they meet is just aching to fall into their arms. Well, boys, that's where you're wrong. I wouldn't date a fellow like that for all the tea in China! And the rest of the girls will back me up.

Try being a friend instead of a sweetheart to the girls you meet, and they'll think a lot more of you. Then, if you are really anxious to find the type of girl you want to go out with, maybe you'll meet her.

TERRY.

I'm sure we all agree with Terry that there are loads of nice girls to be found, if boys like Savant will only take the trouble to look around instead of judging all girls by a few. And, as you say, Terry, girls do appreciate a boy who can be a good friend as well as an admirer. What do the rest of you think?

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