

STREET & SMITH'S

# LOVE STORY

APRIL 6

MAGAZINE

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ILLUSTRATED

EVERY WEEK



**FOREVER AND EVER** by **VIVIAN GREY**

**INEZ SABASTIAN • RUSSELL M. CORYELL • ANTHONY CARVER**

**YOUR STARS AND YOU**

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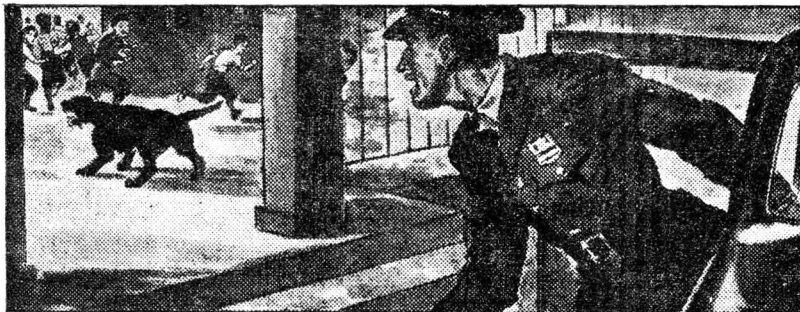
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# "FANGS BARED, THE CRAZED BRUTE CROUCHED TO LEAP"

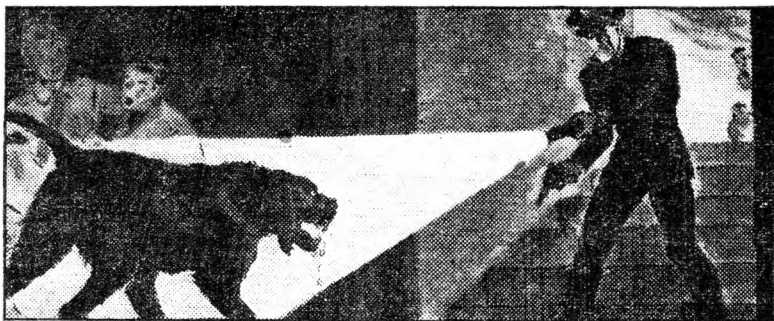


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STREET & SMITH'S

# LOVE STORY

MAGAZINE

TITLE REGISTERED U. S. PATENT OFFICE

CONTENTS APRIL 6, 1940 VOL. CLVIII, NO. 4 EVERY WEEK

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### COVER BY MODEST STEIN

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# LOVE STORY NOTES

**M**AYBE it's something they eat—a matter of calories or vitamins or something—maybe it isn't. But in our philosophical musings we've arrived at a conclusion—these writing folk certainly do get around. It's mystifying how they get the pep to pop around the world the way they do. Why, probably the only place they stay put is in the telephone directory, and very likely it's because they haven't notified the telephone company that they've moved. Anyway, we hooked Dick Moreland between trips, just long enough for him to gasp out the Truth about himself. We learned that he's a Missouri native with a travel complex which newspaper work did nothing to discourage. He's chased police patrols in St. Louis, covered the water front in Honolulu, spent five years in Hawaii, hopped to New York for university study, and then back to Paris in the spring. Life at such a slow pace being dull, naturally, Dick meandered around Munich and Genoa for a while, then decided to call it a day and come home—by way of the Canal and Central America. Now it's California for him with a ranch and hours spent pounding a saddle or a typewriter. Yes, Dick has been writing between leaps and bounds. And even if we hadn't collared him in time for an interview, we would have known this much about him anyway—that he sure knows how to handle this thing called love. His

story, "Girl From The Golden Gate," right in this issue, proves it. Doesn't it?

Now, we contemplate, smiling beneficently, if Vivian Grey hadn't been one of those on-the-go writers, we might never have had the poignant story of Teresia and Dan. Vivian had parked determinedly one year among the miners in West Virginia, and the stories she can tell! All about charming Southern gentlemen and their loves and adventures in the days of long ago, and a certain heavenly hill where she met her hero and heroine. Vivian tells it all in her group of three complete novels, the first, "Forever And Ever," in this week's issue. Miss it? Perish the thought.

What chance does a woman have for happiness when she knowingly marries a man who is still madly in love with his dead wife? He warned her that he was marrying just because he wanted "companionship, someone to look after his motherless daughter," but loving him devotedly, Lyle was confident her love would awaken love in his heart for her. Was Lyle right? Find out for yourselves in this brand-new serial of Jessie Reynolds', "Never A Man But You!" beginning in next week's issue.



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# FOREVER and EVER

A COMPLETE NOVEL

by Vivian Grey



TERESIA backed quickly out of the unlighted room. She stifled the cry that would have come to her lips. She was acutely aware of Adolph Morse, standing near, looking at her, with smiling irony on his unpleasant but undeniably handsome face. She was deeply grateful to Winthrop Lait, who suddenly appeared out of the noisy madness of the party, slipped a gay and friendly arm around her and drew her into a dance.

Teresia wondered if Win had seen what she had seen—those two figures silhouetted against the moonlighted window in that close embrace—and pitied her. She looked up at Win's tall attractiveness and read in his face that he had.

"She's—" Teresia stopped. She hadn't

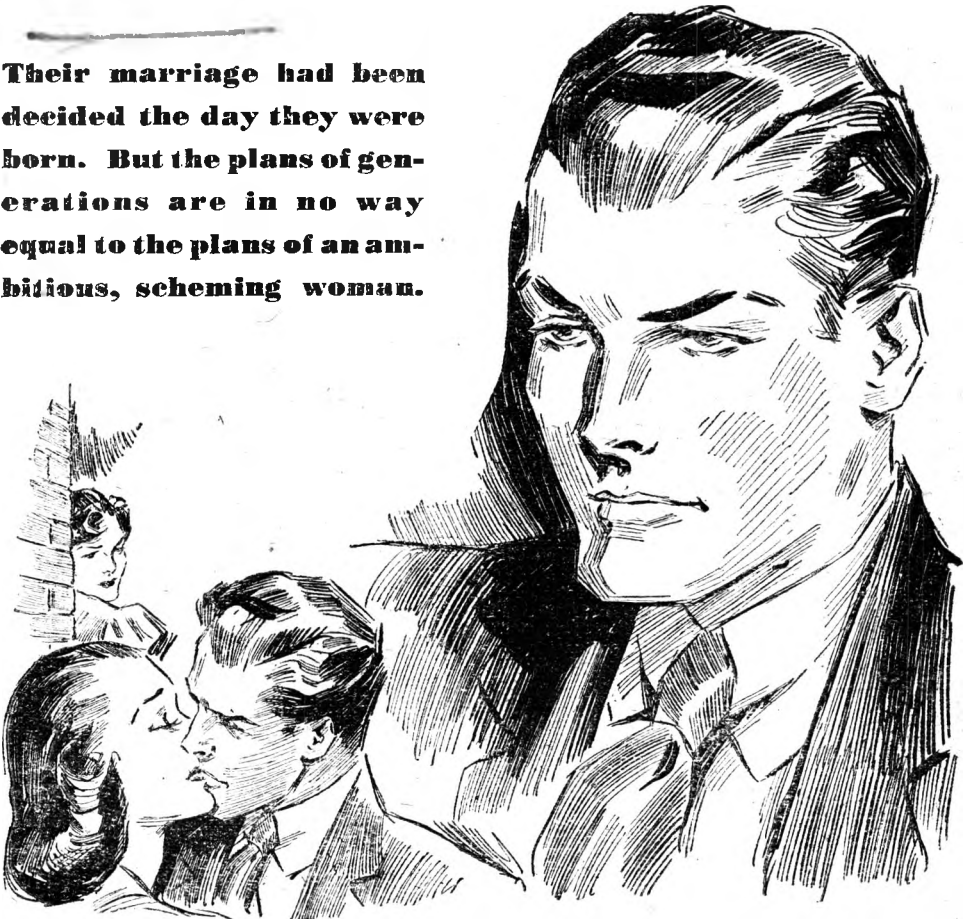
realized how hard it would be to speak evenly, carelessly. It wasn't hard. It was impossible when one cared as much as she did. "She's terribly fascinating," she managed finally.

"Yeah, honey, just like a cobra." Win had spoken gayly, but there had been a note of sympathy in his voice. It was almost Teresia's undoing.

Win had been Dan Ramsay's greatest admirer from kindergarten to college graduation. Dan was a little older, so he'd been a little ahead of Win. Win had been along the night Teresia and Dan had decided it was love. He'd gone with Dan to select the huge diamond glowing on Teresia's third finger.

And now he had seen Dan kissing Leah

**Their marriage had been decided the day they were born. But the plans of generations are in no way equal to the plans of an ambitious, scheming woman.**



Bassett. And Dan had looked so frighteningly in earnest. Kissing at a party that had started at five with cocktails and was still carrying on with Scotch and madness at one was really nothing at all. But there'd been something about Dan and Leah standing there in that tight embrace. Something definite. Teresia was aware of a raw, aching sense of amputation as if a part of her life had been sharply cut off.

Then Win put the thing in words:

"That girl looks as if she never played for fun. It's keeps with her all the time."

Dan suddenly stood beside them. Teresia was glad she didn't have to answer. She knew her voice would have broken and she didn't want Win to pity her.

"Oh, Dan!" she exclaimed, as Win tactfully melted into the brittle gaiety around them.

Daniel Ramsay, tall, handsome in a dark manner, took her hands.

"Why, Teresia," he said, smiling down at her, "you sound as if I'd been away a year!"

"Oh, Dan, I feel as if you had!"

He was near her, holding her hands in his strong ones. Everything was all right again. She felt safe. Secure. She'd been silly to let what she'd seen in the moonlight upset her so. People did things like that at parties.

"What will you do when I leave Monday for Mexico?"

Teresia clung to him for a moment. No one paid any attention to them. The party was milling about them, too interested in its own wild and giddy affairs to see what might be happening to anyone else.

"Die," she said finally. "I'll just die, Dan! I thought I could be sensible and let you go. But I'm not sensible. I'm a girl in love, terribly in love, and I can't be courageous or reasonable or anything fine and heroic."

Dan laughed tenderly. Teresia had been trying to make it sound like fun, too, but her heart had ached terribly under the words. She'd meant them more than she'd wanted it to seem she did.

"Break it up! Hasn't the host some rights around here?" It was Adolph Morse, his voice too smooth, still that glint of knowing irony in his eyes. "Must you monopolize the most beautiful girl at the party just because you're engaged to her? More reason for sharing her charms just a little!"

Dan seemed only too ready to leave her in the hands of Morse, who got her a brandy and, with a double one in his own hand, took her through the wide hall of the old-fashioned hotel to a quiet space on the stairs going up to the second floor.

"Let's talk," he said. "You look as if you could. I haven't heard an intelligent word all evening." He turned to her suddenly, looking up a little for he was sitting on the step below her. "Has anyone ever told you, Teresia, that you're lovelier than any girl should be? You're excitingly pretty."

They talked then and watched the people below them.

Teresia rose happily, glad to get away from Adolph, when Dan hurried toward her.

"Terry, darling," Dan said quickly, "I'm taking Leah to some friends near Harper's Ferry. She really came here to visit them, should have gotten there today! Win'll take you home. See you tomorrow, sweet!"

"At this hour, Dan—" Teresia started to say, but Dan was already on his way.

Adolph laughed easily.

"Leah's like that," he said. "Impulsive. Apt to do anything at any hour. But that's the theater for you. Once an actress always an actress."

"But such an hour!" Teresia's voice was puzzled and hurt. "She wouldn't dare wake people."

"You don't know Leah"—with easy laughter. "But this really is my fault. When she blew into this little hotel this morning she told me she was on her way to these people, but I insisted on a party. You see, I knew Leah in New York, and when I saw her I felt like getting all the old gang together, and made Leah stay for it. So don't blame her. I plead guilty to all the weight of the blame, my dear."

"Win, I don't want you to take me home," Teresia said as he got into the car beside her.

"But I want to, heart-of-my-heart," Win said lightly, but the words were overcast with tenderness.

"Don't, Win!"—unsteadily. She felt she couldn't endure his tenderness just then. She'd break under it.

Win put his hand over hers for an instant.

"Anything you say, Teresia. You know where my heart's always been. Right in the hollow of your little hands. It'll always be there. No matter who you marry or when." He was silent a moment. And then, to break the tenseness that held them: "Where to, lovely?"

"The Hill, Win."

Winthrop turned sharply to glance at her and then started away from the little hotel on the Main Street of Romney and on along a country road to turn in finally at a drive that led up a steep hill to an old Southern colonial mansion, elegant in its draping of shadows.

"Now what?" he asked as he stopped the car in the drive.

"Now good night, Win. And thanks."

"Sure you don't want me to stay here with you? I don't like leaving you."

"No, push along, Win, please. I'd rather be alone."

Left alone on the piazza of the lovely old house, Teresia stood and looked down over the shadowy valley. She and Dan were part of it. They belonged to these

beautiful rolling hills of West Virginia. Their ancestors had fought and died there. Their very blood was part of the soil of that valley.

She and Dan belonged together.

Her father was counting on Dan to be the son he had never had, already regarded him as that. Teresia paused on thought of her father, a loved and respected country doctor, who had always given more attention to curing his patients than collecting his bills.

Lucky he'd married her mother, the only daughter of a well-to-do family, who'd inherited the lovely old family place just at the edge of town. Teresia, looking through the night, almost thought she could make out the shadows of the great trees down there that sheltered the pleasant, comfortable old home.

She knew, and her heart ached with the knowledge, that that house had never seemed the same to her father after her mother died. Theirs had been a real love match. Consequently, Teresia's childhood had been a singularly lovely thing. Ralph Fain had never been much of a money-maker and he had been a perfect lover and husband. He still let money slip through his gentle skilled fingers as if it were valueless.

Lucky, too, Teresia thought, that she had inherited her mother's talent for painting and that the best gift shop on the Skyline Drive thought well enough of her sketches to make a feature of them. Ralph Fain would have been cut to the quick if he'd known that it was largely his daughter's money that kept the pleasant old house going.

He was proud of Teresia's talent, but thought of it only as a pleasant hobby. More than once, when a friend had admired a painting she had just finished, he'd give it to them. Terry, he'd say, was always doing the things; they must have a house nearly full of them by this time!

And Terry would hang onto herself to

keep from crying out in protest because so often the very sketch her father selected to give away was one she'd counted on bringing her the highest price of the next lot she intended taking to the gift shop. No one but the shop owner knew what the funny little insignia she signed her pictures with meant.

So she never said anything. Ralph Fain mustn't be humiliated. Her father's quaint but charming pride must not be hurt. And Teresia managed the house completely, so he never thought of where the money came from. The activity of the house had always centered around Ralph and his needs while her mother lived. Teresia had tried to continue things in that same way.

Yes, she knew the gentle, kindly man sleeping peacefully down there in the big old house in the valley, who lived his life for the people of that valley, would feel terribly upset when Dan didn't marry her. His heart would break with her own.

Standing there alone in the night, she almost felt that mattered most. She could endure her own heartbreak. But not her father's.

She turned and went into the house. It was a tradition that the lovely old front door had never been locked since the day, two generations before, when its being locked kept a beautiful young daughter of the family from getting in to safety before a marauding party caught her and carried her away.

Teresia dropped down in a deep chair in the elegant old hall. There was still a glow from embers on the hearth. The old house wore the deep silence of the early-morning hours gracefully. Peacefully.

It was an instant before Teresia was sure she heard the sound. Gradually, it materialized into steps.

"Oh, Dodie, you shouldn't have gotten up," Teresia said to the slim and not very tall girl who stood before her wrapped in a dressing gown.

"Isn't Dan with you?" Dodie asked.

Teresia shook her head. She didn't dare trust her voice to speak. Dodie bent closer. She was a pretty girl with fine features, pale-gold hair and a very frail look. She straightened with something like amazement in her large gray eyes.

"Teresia, you're crying!" Then in alarm: "What's happened? Dan isn't—"

"No," Teresia hurried to say. "There's nothing wrong with Dan. He's all right." He was, Teresia's heart echoed heavily. It was her heart that was breaking, not Dan's.

"Then why isn't he here?" the younger girl persisted.

"He had an errand, Dodie. And if he comes back and finds you down here, he'll never forgive me for disturbing your night's rest. Trot back to bed, honey."

"But if Dan—" Dodie started to say.

Teresia caught her hands with impulsive tenderness. She loved this frail younger sister of Dan's, the only two left of his family and the sole occupants, save for the servants, of the big house on its heaven-kissing hill.

"Dodie darling, I know how you love Dan. But you don't love him any more than I do. If there was anything wrong with him I'd tell you. So you needn't worry. Go back to bed, like a good girl, so he won't blame me for getting you up."

Dan came finally. Dawn was reaching pale fingers over the hills. Teresia was about to start eagerly from her chair when the sound of the second voice held her motionless. Leah was with him.

They came in the door.

"You must be dead," Dan was saying. "I'll take you right up."

"I am tired. But you've been wonderful, Dan. Any other man in the world would have been wild at making that long drive for nothing. You're sweet." There was a definite caress in the words, like a hand laid on gently.

"Who could be angry with you,

Leah?" Something about the deep overtone in his words was like a knife turning in Teresia's heart.

They hadn't seen her sitting there in the deep chair. They were going straight upstairs.

At the top of the stairs Dan said softly:

"The guest room, Leah. Sleep well!"

The deep silence that followed assailed the girl downstairs like poisonous vapor. She felt as if she must cry out in smothered pain, and yet was powerless to move. She would, she thought, slip away before Dan saw her. He'd never know she'd come there to talk to him. And then it was too late. He was returning to the first floor. She knew he always checked on the fires himself before turning in.

As Dan stepped to the front of the fireplace, Teresia spoke softly.

He started.

"Teresia! But what does this mean? Didn't Win take you home?"

"Oh, Dan, it's I who should be asking the meaning!" Her low tones broke with the weight of emotion they carried. "I thought when you came back to me there at the party after . . . after—" She paused. It was hard, this first difficulty that had ever lay between them.

"Well," she began again and with more courage, "Dan, I wasn't spying, but I saw you kissing her. I couldn't help it. And when you came back the lipstick on your collar—I . . . I hated her for it because I knew it was hers. But I thought you'd come back to me and everything was all right. Now I know it isn't. You haven't come back to me. It's—"

Dan took her hands and spoke gently:

"Look, Terry, you're upsetting yourself over nothing. Leah came down here to Romney to visit friends. Somehow, they missed each other and she went to the hotel. Adolph's been staying there a few days. She met him in New York when she was in a show. He annoyed the life out of the poor girl with his at-

tentions. He insisted upon giving this party tonight and that she stay for it. She is a stranger here alone, probably not too much money, because the poor girl's had to make her own way. So she wanted to get away from Adolph, and when she found—"

"You were sympathetic," Teresia broke in fiercely. "She asked you to take her to her friends. And why didn't you leave her there?"

"We couldn't find them."

"And so you've brought her here to your house!"

"Why not?" Dan, too, was showing a little spirit. "That was the least I could do! Knowing she hates this obnoxious Adolph and I could not take her back to a hotel in a little country town at this hour of the morning."

"Oh, no"—in fine irony. "Her reputation must be spared."

"Teresia, what's gotten into you? I've never seen you like this before! You're not beginning to be jealous, after all our intending to be superior and different and not watch each other as a cat watches a mouse!"

"Yes, I am jealous if you must know! I've got used to seeing you with other girls, but I never will with this one!"

"Don't be silly, dear. She's just a girl who's had a darned hard life and I tried to help her a little. I don't blame any woman for wanting to get out of reach of Adolph. He was a rotter in college and was kicked out before he graduated. I went to his party because I thought he might have changed, but you can see he hasn't."

"And so you're going to protect the poor working girl from him!"

"Teresia!"—in shocked protest. "Now you're showing traits I never supposed you had!"

The girl looked at him silently for a moment.

"Dan, you know all this is a lie. I don't know what she's up to, but if she

had friends around here they'd have met her, or located her. I don't know what her game is—"

"She hasn't any game!" Dan broke in defensively. "Women are vile to each other! Here you are—sheltered, always had easy living, and you go haywire just because I do a little favor for a girl who's been on her own since she was a child!"

"She's done a good job of tear-jerking with you"—coldly. "Anyway, you don't know anything about her. I shouldn't think you'd want her here with Dodie."

"She won't do Dodie any harm, and there's no point in your slurring Leah because she's poor and has to work for a living. A lady, Teresia, is what you are, not what you have."

"A lady!"—in fine irony.

Whatever else Teresia would have said died aborning. A sound at the head of the stairs attracted their attention. Leah stood looking down at them.

The long cloak she had worn to the party was wrapped around her. Instinctively, Teresia knew only very sketchy underthings were beneath it.

"I didn't—" she began in faint confusion that was very becoming to her, "Dan, if I'm making you trouble—"

"Leah, you're not!" Dan's quick answer broke into the caress of her voice. "If we can't befriend someone down here it's just too bad. What's all our well-known Southern hospitality for?"

"You're so sweet."

It was a never-to-be-forgotten moment for Teresia. She felt utterly out of the scene. Leah was speaking to Dan as if unaware of the presence of a third person. Her gaze on him was like a visible caress.

She was beautiful. Smooth and sleek-looking. Dark and daring. Suddenly, Teresia felt utterly helpless. There was a relentlessness about the other girl. A sense of never giving up. Like steel under the lovely exterior of her. What had she, with only her small-town experience, to battle such a girl with?

Teresia turned and rushed from the room and the house.

She was halfway down the drive before Dan caught up with her in his car.

"That was a crazy thing to do," were his first words. "I thought you might have stayed there and been hostess to her. After all, she's a stranger here, and Dodie's too young."

Teresia thought for a full minute. They had reached the gates of the estate.

"All right." Her voice changed somewhat, and there was more certainty, more purpose in it. "I'll stay. Turn around and take me back."

She wouldn't abandon the case to Leah. She'd hold her ground and insist on her rights. If Leah got Dan, it would be only after a gallant battle.

No one would worry about her at home because she often stayed with Dan and Dodie. She went in and out of their place as if it were her own.

Teresia went into the house and straight to the room she always used while Dan put the car away. There was a feeling of satisfaction, at least, in being under the same roof with him. Nothing too startling could happen then.

She tried to assure herself as she waited for sleep that she had made a mountain of a molehill. Dan had merely been trying to treat a lonely stranger with consideration. She had been the foolish one to pay any attention to it. Before her eyes closed in sleep, she had readjusted her world again. And all was right with it. On the next day the girl called "Leah" would vanish from her sphere.

But morning found Dan and Leah on the terrace looking down over the beautiful valley that sun was dappling with lovely shadows.

So absorbed were they, that Teresia had come through the spacious hall and was on the piazza near them before they were aware of her.

Leah's smile was brilliant as she turned to Teresia.



*"Who could be angry with you, Leah?" Dan was saying. The deep overtone in his words was like a knife turning in Teresa's heart.*

"Do you think Danny'll ever forgive me for getting him up early to come out here and see the sun on the dew? God's diamonds! Aren't they?"

So that was it, Teresa thought. See the sun on the dew!

Dan smiled happily.

"Teresia, we've made a plan! A swell one! Leah's going to stay on here with Dodie while I'm gone. Be her companion and see to things in general."

Teresia wondered if her face whitened as her heart seemed to stop beating. Then Leah was speaking, sweetly, happily.

"It's just perfect for me," she said. "Because jobs on Broadway are so hard to find and I need a rest just from looking!" It was too sweet, too innocent.

William, at the door, announced breakfast in his deep tones.

Dan and Leah rose and Teresia knew a moment of terror. Leah was a formidable foe. She knew all the tricks. Even in the morning her clothes were obviously the sort to enchant her masculine public.

Leah caught Teresia's glance.

"Dan and I ran down to the hotel and got my things," she explained with bright innocence that seemed oddly to enhance the sleek, sophisticated beauty of her.

"So it's all over but the shouting! I mean"—Teresia had turned to Dan—"arrangements for while you're gone?"

"Yes, dear. You know I wasn't quite satisfied with leaving Dodie in charge here alone. And I didn't like the idea of burdening you with two places to look after. You know how your dad depends on you."

It was almost as if Leah left them alone purposely after breakfast so they could quarrel. Almost as if she knew they would and wanted Dan to go away with his last memory of Teresia that of an angry, quarreling girl who was selfish and jealous and difficult.

She let Dan light her cigarette and then with a bright glance at Teresia, said, "I'll go up to unpack!"

Dan didn't meet Teresia's eyes immediately. It was the girl's voice that forced him to.

"Dan, why did you do it? Why?"

"Isn't it a perfect arrangement?"—defensively. "I needed someone here and

she needed a place to be. Poor girl, she needs a rest! Broadway's pretty hard on a woman! You don't know. You've always had everything you want and been so sheltered. You've never had to earn your living."

Never had to earn her living, Teresia thought bitterly. That was all he knew. But she tried to speak quietly.

"All right! I've been sheltered! So what? I'm to give up my man just because of that."

"Don't be foolish! Nothing like that's been thought of!"

"Perhaps not by you, Dan! But that girl's thought of it! She's thought of everything! Why, you're as helpless in her hands as an oyster on a half shell!"

"Don't be silly. I haven't said—"

"Don't say that to me again!" Teresia was suddenly a flaming fury. "Don't be silly! That's your only defense! I'm silly because I can read the writing on the wall! That female tiger on the prowl is no person to leave Dodie with! Dodie's young and impressionable, and that girl's—"

"Stop! You can stop right there!" Dan's voice was like a knife cutting through her very soul, cold and steellike. "Don't accuse people of things you know nothing about."

"Isn't being with a person like Adolph enough without any accusations I can bring?"

"She can't help it that Adolph's running after her. He's always been mad about beautiful women. She can't get rid of him. If you had the right instincts you'd want to help me protect her from him."

Teresia felt as if something in her was withering. Then anger died to helplessness. Hopelessness.

She was fumbling at the large diamond on the third finger of her left hand.

"Here," she said quietly. The diamond in its setting of gold lay on the fine



linen. "There's no point in my continuing to wear this."

She had expected him to protest. Instead, Dan Ramsay looked at the ring and then away. Teresia knew he couldn't meet her eyes. She knew he didn't want her to see the relief there. And that knowledge was like an icy hand laying hold of her heart.

Dan was glad to be released from their engagement.

Teresia shivered. Was love like that? Fitful. Vagrant.

Had a thing like that been what held her father and mother together through the years in that beautiful companionship? Was that frail thing what was making her father so lonely now that her mother was dead?

Surely, it couldn't be!

Yet that had been relief she had seen on Dan's face as surely as if it had been written in flaming letters for her to read.

She walked quietly to the telephone, called her home, and asked the colored boy to come for her.

"You needn't," Dan tried to interrupt. "I'll take you."

"With this Leah person sitting in front with you? Or staying here with Dodie? Neither would suit me at all, thank you." The words came in a cool tone.

Sunday. A day that she always spent with Dan, for week ends her father filled their great house with his own friends and didn't need her companionship.

Monday morning, the day Dan was to start on his Mexican trip, she was still upstairs in her room, not sleeping, because sleep seemed to have been permanently removed from her world, when she heard a car in the drive, directly under her window.

Six o'clock. Who could be arriving at such an hour?

She got up and looked out.

Dan was standing beside his car, looking up at her windows.

She wouldn't have needed his gesture to have carried her swiftly downstairs, a silk robe drawn hastily around her.

He was distraught. His handsome face was haggard.

"Terry," he said, something of the old tenderness in his voice, "I had to come. I couldn't go away with that quarrel between us. We've been so much to each other for so many years that I couldn't let things go that way."

"Oh, Dan!" She was leaning against him, not actually aware that his arms, though around her, were utterly unpossessive.

"I can't have a quarrel between us, Terry. Your friendship has been part of my life so long I can't get along without it. I could not leave on this job without your good wishes. But—" He stopped, searching for the right words. "Leah—well, I can't help it, Terry. I don't know what's happened to me, but she's like fire in my veins! Like the very blood of my being, the breath of my life!"

Teresia stiffened and leaned a little back out of his arms. He let her go without protest. She heard the stricken note in his voice and believed him. He was helpless against an emotion that had suddenly come alive within him at sight of Leah. Leah had some sort of magic. She knew things about attracting men that Teresia, with her interest in her painting, her father, and a fine companionship with Dan, had no understanding of.

Teresia put her hands on his shoulders and looked up at him. It was a gesture of renunciation.

"Good-by, Dan," she said gently, tenderly.

He bent and kissed her. And then was gone.

Teresia turned back to the house with eyes blinded by tears she could not keep back.

Dan was gone on a long and uncertain trip to Mexico for a large oil company. He was flying down and might

be gone a week, a month, or a year. Leah was in his house, in charge of his affairs.

## II.

Autumn was splashing at the landscape with the gayest colors on her palette. Her brush was artistically careless.

Teresia loved fall in West Virginia. Especially, the picture it painted in the valley that spread its beauty in front of Dan's lovely old place, the Hill. She missed going there.

She was putting a few new bulbs in her garden for the next spring's pattern of color when Winthrop Lait drove into the yard. She transferred the beauty of flowers to canvas with special skill, perhaps because she loved them so.

"I've come to take you places," Win announced.

"And make me do things?" she asked in smiling good humor.

"Yeah, Terry, you take the words from my lips! And, incidentally, the breath from my life with the good looks of you!"

"Win, how dare you be so young and so smoothly flattering at the same time? And where do you want to take me?"

"To the Hill."

"No, Win"—suddenly serious. "I can't go there."

"Look, beautiful lady, do you realize what a silly thing you've done? You've just stepped sweetly and obediently out of the picture and said without words, to that stunning siren in control up there, 'It's all yours!'" He paused a moment, looking at her intently. Then: "And I think you're being dumb. Forgive me for being so frank."

"But, Win, I just couldn't—" Teresia started to say when Win took her hand, drew her along toward the house, and with young impatience went on:

"Listen, Teresia, make a sacrifice of yourself. I saw Dodie in the family car yesterday with Leah and she looked like

a ghost of what she had been. I don't like the looks of things. There's to be a big party at the Hill today. We'll crash it. Be smart. Pretend the battle's ended and you've put up the white flag. I'll squire you with ardor I don't have to pretend! And we'll see what's making Dodie so ghost-white. And more than that, much as I've always adored you, I think Dan's diamond was perfect for your hand!"

"Win, you've talked so long and so fast you've persuaded me. I begin to see the point in the old theory of out-talking people." She paused for a moment on the thought of Win's interest in Dodie and was grateful for it. Dodie would need a friend if Dan went on with Leah.

"All right! Go make yourself lovelier!"

Teresia dressed swiftly. The party began at cocktail time. When she returned to Win, her mood was as light and lovely as a fern leaf.

"I hope I'm deadly," she laughed.

"You're pretty disturbing in that dress, if you need my humble opinion!"

"Thanks, Win! She made a cross up there that I've been lugging around with me until just this minute. You helped me ditch it."

"And maybe we can nail her to it. It's been done."

The party was swinging along madly as they entered the fine old house.

Teresia, smiling brilliantly and with gaiety, went straight to Leah and offered her hand. Leah was equal to it and Terry granted her an atom of admiration. Leah had something. Maybe her life had been hard, but it had given her a sort of reckless charm.

"Darling! I'm so glad! How perfectly sweet of you! Come, I must get my handsomest man to get you a cocktail. Gil, please!" She went on, lightly, easily, meaninglessly. The while Teresia noted that Leah was beautifully dressed in something designed to swish to the swing of music and the tempo of gay life.

Perhaps she had been having a lean time in New York, but the girl had certainly managed clothes and knew how to wear them. Teresia never had been slow to grant credit where it was really due. Leah was smart. Teresia wondered how much that meant to a man. Her father hadn't needed smartness. All his happiness had found its root in her mother's gentle kindness. And with Dan, Teresia had taken her pitch from that. She wondered if she had been wrong.

A man she had never seen before handed Teresia a drink. He had a fascinating man-of-the-world look. He was polished and smooth and flattering. There were other guests like him, men and women. They must be Leah's crowd from New York. And there were local people. The rather shoddy fringe of local society. People who could always do with a free meal, drinks, and a party. The sort of people you felt a little sorry for even though you didn't like them.

A girl in a swing skirt was sliding down the lovely polished banister to be caught at the bottom by a laughing group of men. A too blond young man was playing the piano, and a tragic brunette sitting on it, singing, in a low, heavy voice.

Leah paused during a momentary lull to say to Teresia in a sweet, almost wistful voice:

"You're so sweet to come to my party."

"You're sweet to let me come."

"I do so want Danny's friends to like me."

Teresia looked after her, thinking: She's smart all right. Pretending she doesn't even know how close Dan and I were to marriage.

"She's a conspicuous beauty," Win said beside her. "And she hasn't been left in the dark about the fact either. She knows it and likes other people to act as if they knew it!"

And Teresia paused on that. It gave her an idea.

LS—2D

"I may want you to tell her that later," she said.

"Anything your little heart desires, lady fair!"

And it was just at that moment that Teresia caught sight of Dodie.

She was slipping out of the dining room toward a passage leading to the back stairs. With impulsive and tender interest, Teresia moved quickly and caught her hand.

Dodie turned a grateful, but, somehow, frightened face toward her.

"Oh, Teresia"—Dodie's voice was sweet—"I'm so glad to see you! I've missed Dan so!"

"Come talk to me, dear." Teresia would have drawn the girl toward the domino sun room, an amusing room done in black-and-white tiles with domino decorative motif.

Dodie drew away.

"I can't! That woman told me to keep out of her party"—with a resentful look toward the front of the house where Leah was hostessing with gay abandon.

"But, honey, she doesn't own the house! You and Dan do. You can do as you like."

"Not with her around. I'm afraid of her, Teresia, really I am! I'm afraid she'll do something terrible to Dan if I displease her. She—" Dodie hesitated as if seeking the right word. Then: "She schemes."

She slipped hurriedly away and Teresia made her way back to Win.

Win had looked after Dodie admiringly.

"She's precious," he said. "Dodie. She looked like something done in living gold leaf standing there with the sun on her hair. No converted Nordic there. Thar's vikings in them thar ancestry!"

"Win, please." Teresia was laughing but her hand on his arm was imperative. "I've got a bee in that silly flower I fasten on over my right eye and that you, darling, call a bonnet! I'm going over and

talk to the glamorous Leah and you've got to be psychic and know what it's all about and back me up. I don't dare take time to explain for fear I'll lose my courage!"

"I'm with you all the way!"

Gradually, they wove through the gay tapestry of color, sound and movement like a firm bright thread until they stood near where Leah was the center of a circle. Her swing skirt high up in her hands, she was dancing and chanting a song. Adolph, at the piano, was picking out the chords accenting her performance.

Dark hair drawn tight back from classic features, full mouth heavily rouged, gray eyes carefully made up, Leah Bassett was something to look at.

As she finished, Teresia's voice sounded above the rabble.

"You were a picture, really! Absolutely the most striking picture! Has anyone ever done you?"

Before Leah, who had turned grateful, pleased and puzzled eyes to Teresia, Win, sure he'd got his cue, broke in:

"Teresia, you're just the one to do it! Why don't you? You must! She'd make the most marvelous canvas."

"Win, she would!" Teresia spoke as if in glad surprise. "Oh, may I, Leah? May I?"

"Paint me?" Leah was trying to cover her eagerness. But it didn't quite jell.

"Yes! You'd be marvelous!"

"All right"—trying to make it casual. But she couldn't help adding: "When do we begin?"

"Tomorrow, if you'll let me. I have it all right in my fingers now and when I feel like that I like to get right at it!"

"Come and breakfast with me at eleven and we'll start."

So it was settled and Teresia was delighted and Win knowing that, somehow, something had been put over, squeezed her hand as they moved into a giddy dance to a popular air someone was playing.

But Adolph, who drew Leah's hand through his arm and took her to the terrace where swift falling night had laid gentle shadows, said:

"You're smart as a mustard plaster, Leah, until someone thinks of that subtle weapon, flattery. And then you fall like the leaves in autumn!"

"Meaning, fresh and handsome?"

"All right! I'm fresh. But so what? You're going to have your picture done by the girl you've wanted to keep out of the picture. And in so doing you've brought her back into the picture. And how!"

"Don't be silly. I can handle that little softie. Haven't I sat myself in a sweet spot here? Wait till I get that other little fool out of the scene. Then it'll be Palm Beach and pearls and ermine! With cars and servants at my command. No more being part of the great public for little Leah! Don't give me a thought, precious. I know what I'm doing. And I'd kind of like to have a painting of myself."

"So long as your vanity isn't your undoing."

"Shut up, will you?"

"Better talk nice to me, lady. I introduced you here, you know. Without me you wouldn't have known where to come to hunt your meal ticket. I was the one who remembered this bird, Dan, from my dear old college!"

"Stop throwing that in my face, will you? Do you want me to spend every minute of my life saying 'thank you' to you?"

"Stop being a little street girl," he commanded.

Leah's hand flashed out at just the moment Adolph was bringing his cigarette to his lips. Her hand flattened the lighted end against his face, burning it and burning her palm as well.

Furious, Adolph struck her. Her cheek took the smart blow.

"Vixen!" he said.

"Don't, Adolph"—the anger leaving



*Once again sounds came, loud and banging against her door, with terrific force. Finally the old panel gave, and then Dan's arms were around her and explanations poured from their lips.*

her voice broken and ragged. "My hand is burned, too. Oh, Adolph, you know I love you, why do we fight so?"

"It's the madness in us that can't find release any other way, darling!" His arms around her were crushing her madly against his heart for as always with lovers their quarrel had drawn them together.

It was at that moment that Teresia, having had enough of the party, stepped out onto the terrace to start home. She drew back quickly. It hadn't been Dan she had seen kissing Leah this time, but Adolph. And as if they meant it. That was something she must remember and work on. Leah's face had been lifted to Adolph's, forgetful of all the rest of the world, and, somehow, softened. When Dan had kissed Leah, Teresia was sure Leah had been aware of everything about them. Teresia had even thought she caught the other girl's eyes on her looking over Dan's shoulder an instant.

Win right behind her saw, too, and turned quickly back to the party.

They would go out another door.

"I think it's a shame Dan left Dodie with a woman like that!" Win was vehement as they drove away.

"It is." Teresia looked at him intently and thought she knew something about Win that he himself did not realize.

When he said, as he left her at the door of her father's pleasant old house, "Honey, you're the sweetest thing in the world to me!" she knew it was prompted only by the lure an older and more sophisticated girl has for a younger boy. And she was glad it was nothing more. She belonged to Dan and would the rest of her life, come what may.

### III.

Leah Bassett was in fine high spirits when Teresia arrived for breakfast and the first sitting.

Leah smiled, pleased with her own humor as she showed Teresia a menu

one of her guests had made out for the meal.

"Kidney stew for stews," Teresia read, and laughed.

William's kidney stew had long since earned him an enviable reputation.

"All the other stews are still in bed," Leah informed Teresia, "but I wanted to get up and enjoy the morning. Funny, I should like country mornings"—thoughtfully. "But I do. There's something fine and clean about them, like starting all over again."

"They're lovely here on this hill," Teresia said. "Lovely. It's so peaceful you can almost hear the flowers grow." And she was struck with something different about Leah—gentle, almost sweet.

"It is really swell."

Teresia's attention was caught by a note of emotion in the girl's voice, as though really some of the fineness of the Hill had gotten under her hard veneer and touched the heart of her.

The sitting was interesting. Teresia was an artist of real ability. And Leah an excellent subject.

Teresia drew the thing out for days, watching all the while for Dodie, hoping for some contact with the girl. But she caught only fleeting glimpses of her. And Teresia dared not ask about her. She sensed that Leah was purposely keeping Dodie in the background.

Teresia was genuinely concerned about the girl who had been an invalid nearly all her life. So much so that she had never gone to school but had been tutored. She'd never learned to drive a car. Never been strong enough to do any of the things most girls did. It had only been within the last year that she had seemed to gain enough strength to live a life that had some semblance of normality. Teresia had been counting on the time when she would be Dodie's sister and could try to help her. She was sure a little attention would do wonders for the motherless girl.

"You know, I think it would be per-

fecily lovely if I did a painting of Dodie when I finish yours," Teresia said with apparent guilelessness to Leah near the end of her work on Leah's portrait.

"She isn't strong enough to stand the sitting," Leah said shortly.

"Oh, I could make it very easy for her. And I'd love to do it. I don't know why I never thought of it before." Teresia was exerting all her sweet charm.

"I wouldn't think of letting the child undergo the strain."

"And," Teresia was inspired, "I think Dan would love a painting of her. He adores her so. It would be about the nicest gift that could be made to him when he comes home. She's exactly like her mother, who died when she was born. And Dan worshiped his mother and has transferred that to Dodie."

As she talked, Teresia was aware of a change in Leah's face. The girl was thinking. She said:

"I'll commission you to do that. That will be my gift to Dan."

"Grand!"

"But I hope you won't disturb her by talking much to her. She's very nervous and I find keeping her absolutely quiet is the only way to keep her well at all."

"I'll be careful."

Leah looked at Teresia intently for a moment.

"You know you are sweet," she said finally, very earnestly, as if admitting something she had been arguing.

"Thanks. And you're very smart."

"I wonder"—thoughtfully.

Leah stayed quite near as the sittings began for Dodie. She found excuses at first to be in and out of the room. And then, boredom making her careless, she gathered her guests and spent most of her time in the little building back of the house, the Western Bar, that was for all the world like an old bar in some such place as Tombstone, Arizona.

Teresia was careful about speaking at first and Dodie made no attempt to re-

sume the intimate relationship which had always existed between them.

But as Leah left them more alone they fell into the habit of talking a little in low voices.

"Dodie, why don't you have lunch with us? You always used to eat with Dan down here in the dining room."

"Leah ordered me not to. She has that Flora person, who's staying here and says she's a nurse, to fix my food. A diet, the sort I need, she says. I hate it!" The words came fiercely from the young girl. "And I hate Leah and Flora, too!"

Teresia paused on thought of Flora—big, dazzlingly blond, by choice, and a reckless type. Not actually bad. But careless. She'd probably do anything Leah wanted her to in return for the generous entertainment she was getting from Leah.

"I'm afraid I don't like them either very much, Dodie, but they're Dan's guests and we have to put up with them."

"Yes, but I don't see why I had to give up my room to that Hazel and Adelita! Of course, it was bigger! But I'm horribly afraid in Julie's room! And I have to stay there all the time, eat there and all!"

"Dodie, you're not in Julie's room?" Teresia asked in unbelief.

"I am!"—spiritedly. "But I'm not going to be much longer. I tell you I won't stay there. If she won't let me change to some other place, I won't stay here! I'll . . . I'll run away."

Teresia had been watching the eighteen-year-old girl and read the terror in her delicate face. Teresia had never been inside Julie's room. It had not been used for two generations.

The story of its being haunted had grown about it after Julie Ramsay, with all the guests waiting below for the large and elaborate double wedding that was to unite her and her sister with their fiancés in marriage, had gone to the room that had been hers since childhood and killed

herself with poison. She did it because her sister was marrying the man she, Julie, loved. Her own stricken fiancé, who had waited downstairs, had been a life-long friend of whom her family approved and had persuaded the broken-hearted girl to promise to marry.

The room, always since called "Julie's room," was exactly as she had left it. The other sister had gone on with her wedding. The story was that every night at midnight, the hour the coach started away with the young married couple on their honeymoon, Julie came back in all her trailing white wedding finery and unhappily paced her room as she must have that night before she killed herself.

Teresia wondered if Leah could possibly know the story, and had known what she did when she put Dodie in that room. Then, of course, she knew Leah had. Adolph was a local boy. He'd known the story and doubtless told it to Leah.

Gradually, as Teresia talked to the young girl, trying to calm and soothe her, the whole situation formed in the back of her mind.

The Ramsay money had been left to Dodie and Dan. It was a lot for one, but only plenty for two. Dodie was delicate. There Teresia tried to shut her mind. She didn't want to go on with the evil thought that shaped in it.

Delicate people like Dodie slipped out of this world easily. They could not bear adverse conditions. Could Leah really be that bad? Teresia tried to call up the face of the other girl. It could be capable of almost anything, good or bad. But all women were that way.

"But there aren't any ghosts, Dodie darling," Teresia was trying to laugh gently at the girl.

"That's what you think! I wish you had to be in that room at midnight! I've tried to make myself think I'm just imagining things, but you can't hear things you just imagine. If she'd let me mail

my own letters to Dan without her supervision I'd tell him!"

"You mean she sees your letters to Dan?"

"She says she wants to be sure I don't write him anything that will worry him or make him unhappy. So she practically tells me what to say. The servants are afraid to mail anything for me." She looked at Teresia a moment, then: "Would it be too unfair to ask you to mail a letter for me, Terry?"

"Honey, I'll be glad to."

Teresia got up then and made a telephone call.

"Don't expect me home tonight, darling," she said to her father when she got him.

She went to her car and tinkered a moment.

She was thoughtful as she turned from the car. It was incredible that a girl like Leah could come into an established household and so quickly turn everything to her own liking.

The sitting over, Dodie slipped back upstairs as she was supposed to do. Teresia dared to go up with her, after assuring herself the customers at the Western Bar were at a height of gaiety.

The room was exactly as it had been except for fresh linens. Even the fading traveling dress, Julie's going-away dress, hung on its tree in the corner. Teresia had the feeling that if she touched it, it would sift to the floor in dust.

It was cruel. Inhuman. And it couldn't be accidental.

She kissed Dodie and patted her shoulder.

"Don't worry, kiddie," she said. "This is all going to come out in the wash if I have to do the scrubbing myself!"

She hurried downstairs then and moved lightly out to the kitchen. She paused there only an instant. But long enough for her delicate nostrils to catch a faint perfume. William, dozing in a corner, had not started dinner, so there



were no food smells. She found the pitcher from which the perfume came and emptied it. Oleandrine—poison made from stewed oleander leaves!

"William, what did you have that for?" she demanded.

"Miss Flora she use it when she fix Miss Dodie soup for noons."

Teresia's face whitened with horror.

"William, do you know what it is? What it does? Why have you let her fix Miss Dodie's food?"

"No'm, I don't know. And I couldn't he'p let fix things. Mr. Dan he tell me do what Miss Leah says."

Oleandrine! No wonder Dodie had been looking even less strong than usual. She was being slowly poisoned! Teresia knew she must do something and do it quickly.

She moved on to the gay party in the Western Bar. Saluted acquaintances brightly and moved straight to Leah, linking her arm through Leah's.

"You've got company," she said. "My car's out of commission. Won't start. So I've pitched tent with you for the night."

Leah was startled and not too pleased.

"But you can have one of the cars here," she offered quickly.

"I've already telephoned home though." But Teresia's words were scarcely audible in the general cry that rose for her to stay.

The more the merrier was the cry with the offer of many beds and as many drinks. The rest of the party liked this sweet, gentle Southern girl.

So Leah had to give in gracefully. But she caught Adolph's disapproving eye and though she didn't understand the situation at all she was uneasy, puzzled and annoyed.

Teresia stayed with the party until it dwindled out and then, a little after eleven, slipped upstairs. She shut and locked from the outside the door of the



room she had been assigned to and then moved softly to Julie's room.

"Darling Dodie, it's Teresia," she said quickly as she slipped inside the darkened room in which Leah had refused the girl a night light. "I've come to be here so nothing can happen to you. I want to show you, dear, that there aren't any ghosts."

The bed was a high, old-fashioned one. Teresia slipped under it and lay there.

She had waited so long that she felt the whole thing had been a waste of effort when she heard the door swing softly back and sensed the swishing of draperies on the floor. Peering from under the bed, she saw something white trailing on the floor, laying for yards like a bridal train. She reached out and touched it. She must have gripped it more firmly than she had intended, for the fabric stayed in her hand. The steps moved on. The door opened and closed again. Teresia found herself gripping a muslin sheet.

"I'm going and it's all right. Dodie. I'll see you in the morning. Pretend sleep." She whispered the words quickly, had the sheet bundled under her arm and

then slipped across the hall into her own room. She dared not turn on the light, but slipped into bed and lay there, motionless. She knew almost anything might happen.

She knew the secret of Dodie's ghost. She knew, too, that Leah was prepared to go any limit to get Dan and the Ramsay money. She must do whatever she could quickly. Cable Dan? But she discarded the thought. Under the circumstances it wouldn't do.

She was gay next morning at breakfast, but wondered if she saw something different in the way Leah looked at her. And as she had passed through the kitchen, William mentioned Leah's having discovered that she had emptied the pitcher.

Before the others were through with cigarettes, Teresia rose to go. She wanted to get home and think the thing out. Should she get Dan's address and appeal directly to him? Or was there some better way? She was in a terribly difficult position as a discarded love, but there was no time to lose and her pride must give in to necessity.

"Before you go, Teresia darling, I want you to see something." Leah's voice was smooth and cordial. "There's an old frame upstairs that I think would be swell for my picture. Come up, I want your opinion."

"I really should get on home," Terry hesitated.

"But this will only take a minute. You can't give any reasonable excuse for having to get away so soon after spending the night here, darling. Anyhow, your car isn't fixed."

"It is. I discovered a loose wire this morning," Teresia said quietly.

She wondered if there was more behind the words than was apparent on the surface. But she found herself walking along with Leah. They went to the unused third floor. There Leah opened a door. The two girls walked into the

room. The frame was in the closet, Leah was saying.

"Across the room, darling."

Then Leah turned quickly, was out of the room with the door locked behind her.

"Now," she said through a slit in the door and so Teresia could hear her quite plainly, "there'll be no more tricks. You'll stay here until I decide what to do about you. You're not going to throw a monkey wrench into my plans."

And Teresia knew that stay might be quite a long one because if someone called and told her father she was staying on for a visit that would be all right with him, gentle, unsuspecting soul that he was. She'd always done as she pleased. Win might wonder about her, though. Win, she decided, was her only hope. He would get suspicious eventually and do something. His very interest in Dodie, of which he didn't seem aware himself, would drive him to action.

She was impatient with herself for having forgotten this room with its sound-proofed walls and barred windows which had, some twenty years before, been the place an insane old Negro servant had been kept by the family, who felt that was kinder than to put him in such an institution as would accept him. Plumbing had been led to the room, he'd been fed and cared for, got air from a window cut just under the roof and manipulated from the room below. He was safe from mistreatment, but was in no one's way.

The day seemed interminable to Teresia, so used to activity. Night brought the beauty of stars. Teresia was aware of their loveliness, worried as she was.

She was desperate two days later as she stood at a barred window looking down over the hill the drive came up. Yet it was a desperation that could do nothing.

She heard a car come up the drive.

She didn't bother to look at it, so intent was she on her thought. The memory of that poison in the kitchen worried her. She must get out and do something quickly.

She thought she heard activity on the floor just below, but it would do no good to pound on that thickly padded floor. The sound would never get through.

Then she started up. Someone was at the door of her prison. Her name called in—could it be a familiar voice?—came to her faintly. Then all was still for a space. She must have been wrong. Must have imagined things out of her anxiety.

Then once again sounds came, loud and banging against her door with terrific force. Finally, the old panel gave. Dan stood here with a heavy crowbar in his hand. Dodie, her delicate young face vitally alive with happiness, was just behind him.

Explanations poured from each three pairs of lips, but the thing that mattered most was that Dan's arms closed around Teresia with earnestness and passion. It was a wire from Win that had started him by plane from Mexico. He'd landed in Washington just that morning.

"Oh, my darling, my darling, what a fool I've been!" he said. "Dodie's told me everything, even to the ghost business and the sheet you pulled off Leah that night. Leah dazzled me, darling. It wasn't until I was away, alone, that I knew you were the girl I wanted—you're my kind."

Dodie had considerably left them, but Teresia giggled hysterically:

"She must have been wild when she got back to her room and found her train gone! She hadn't pinned it on very tightly! I mean Leah when she ghosted!"

Downstairs, William told them Leah had not come in yet from an all-night party.

When she did come with Adolph and her troop of house guests, she stopped at sight of Dan and Teresia sitting on the

porch as if it was she who finally was seeing a ghost. But she was fearless and gallant. She stood smiling and unflinching before them.

"All right, I'm ready for the payoff," she said. "What are you going to do about it?"

Dan spoke calmly, while Teresia sat silently beside him.

"Nothing, Leah. Just pack and be on your way. If you need one of our cars to get your party to town, the chauffeur is at your service. I know about you and Adolph and that you came here to trick me. A chance meeting in town told me that. I'm sorry for you. Sorry for you. Only that."

"My car'll hold them," Adolph said quickly, as if wishing to get as far as possible from the Hill and as soon as possible.

Leah was the last to leave the terrace when they came down with their baggage.

"I should say"—she was smiling faintly—"thank you for everything. Most people would have made this painful, more painful than it is."

Adolph started down the hill, his hands on the wheel, his face sternly straight ahead.

It was then Dan turned to Teresia.

"Honey," he said, holding out the diamond she had once worn.

Teresia held out her hand and he slipped it into place.

Then she looked at the car winding along the road in the valley below them.

"She had a sort of gallantry," Teresia said in a low tone. "I could have liked her."

Dan knew she was speaking of Leah, but he only glanced at the car that was carrying her away.

"Look, Terry," he said. "I have something I want you to see."

He took her in through the hall to the living room where one of her own paintings stood on the mantel.

"I stopped at the gift shop over on Skyline Drive for a cup of coffee. This sketch of our place attracted me. Its technique looked so familiar. And then I was sure it could only have been done by someone who knows the Hill and loves it. Then I unraveled this insignia and knew. All the while I've been away, I've thought and thought about you and your bravery and courage. Teresia darling, why didn't you tell me things were that bad?"

"That's not bad, Dan," Teresia said, her voice not quite steady. "I love paint-

ing. I've never minded doing it. And I've been so glad they were good enough to sell."

"And, all along, I've been thinking you were sheltered and cared for and didn't know about hardships and life. You're the gallant one, darling, because you've been doing all this and saying nothing. Teresia, I thought 'I loved you. Now I know'"—his voice deepened with emotion—"that I worship you."

And Teresia knew that he meant it forever and ever, and her heart was once more content.

*The second in this series of complete novels by Vivian Grey is the story of Leah—Leah who had no thought for anyone but herself. Whose one desire in life was to fill both hands with the good things life had to offer. You won't want to miss it—"Faith Eternal"—in next week's issue.*

### A SPRING THOUGHT

It's winter by the calendar  
And yet, outdoors, it's spring.  
I saw a pussy willow tree  
All silver blossoming.

The wind is blowing from the south,  
The sky's as blue can be,  
The maple tree's a silhouette  
Of red-brown tracery.

The air is full of whispering,  
Of tender, waking things;  
On the elm's bare, sunny branch,  
An early robin sings.

I feel the tang of melting snow,  
The stirring of the sod;  
A happy striving upward,  
Obedient to God.

GERTRUDE HAHN.



**Imbued with masculine scorn  
of a woman except as a play-  
thing, what did he know  
of the heart of a young girl?**

“Oh, for the courage to go out and hold up some rich man and take his fat roll away from him! Surely, there must be ways to hold up a rich man besides actually pointing a gun at him.”

Beverly Gary stopped pacing the small hotel room to listen for sounds in the adjoining room. She sighed with relief when none came.

"How like Mellie to fold her hands and meekly die when things got too much for her! To dump her burdens on me as she has done all her life!" But Beverly looked far from cross over these particular burdens.

She picked up the evening paper and once more scanned the want ads, then dropped the sheet in despair to walk to the window.

Directly across the street was a club which bore the name in dignified script "The Padrooms." Only millionaires belonged, so the maid had said.

"A smart girl would think of a way to extract a living from one of those men," she thought angrily. "Mellie always said I should have been a pirate girl, I looked so much like one. That must be why I get such notions. I wish I were."

The window glass threw back a picture of a slim girl in smart black, her dusky head covered with roughened black curls which earlier had been sleek waves.

Beverly turned away restlessly to walk to the bedroom doorway and look in. Two babies slept there in one bed, two black heads on the single pillow, a girl of three, a boy of eighteen months—children of her dead half sister, Mellie Woodward, all that were left of the Garys, Beverly's own family.

Mellie had known for several months that she wasn't going to live. The first word Boy had spoken was "mommy," but it wasn't addressed to his mother—it was to the big photograph on his mother's dresser, Beverly's picture.

Beverly had been stunned when the death message brought her to Mellie's shabby apartment, to have both children apparently recognize her and address her as "mommy."

Mellie was clever when it came to looking out for herself and her possessions.

She had known that her half sister couldn't put her two babies into a home, once they had clung to her and called her by the loving name their mother had taught them. She knew Beverly would love them on sight, and Beverly had. Mellie had learned long ago that the heart beneath Beverly's smart clothes was not as hard as the world thought, so she had made her plans to appeal to that heart.

When Boy developed fever on the train near the junction, Beverly had got off. She chose a small, cheap hotel near the depot, in which to stay until he recovered.

One place was as good as another in which to divide nothing by three, and it was practically nothing that Beverly's purse revealed.

Suddenly, her black head lifted and she laughed wickedly. "There is a way to hold up a rich man without a gun, and where better than right here as neighbor to plenty of them? It's as much for me as for them." But it wasn't. Beverly would have starved before she would have lifted a finger to get such help for herself, but for the babies—well, she would endure everything rather than have them miss a meal.

She went to the desk and wrote busily. The third draft suited her:

Wanted: Wealthy philanthropist to finance training for young, widowed mother of two children. Will repay debt from salary after completion of training. Am young, very intelligent and rather desperate.

Beverly looked in once more on her sleeping charges, then put on her hat and short sable jacket and went out.

As she passed the club, brief black skirts swinging to reveal slim, gossamer-clad legs and even a hint of knee, more than one man craned his neck after her. She had no trouble finding the newspaper office and left her ad, taking the box number given her, No. 27.

"Wonder why I keep feeling that I'm being followed?" she thought nervously, then shrugged away the foolish idea with a low, scornful laugh. "Don't go Mellie on me, Beverly Gary. Mellie was the gal who forever had men tagging her."

She reached her two-room suite again. "Now, what kind of training, Beverly Gary, would you fancy?" she asked herself mock-seriously.

That was a poser, for Beverly had never expected to have to work. When Mellie was five, her father had married again and Beverly had been the child of that union. When her mother had died, little Beverly had gone to live with her maternal grandmother, who, at her death, had left a fortune to be hers when she was twenty.

It was this fortune which Mellie had planned that her fatherless, motherless children should share, without knowing that the estate had been wiped out like so many others. She had received her last check the week just before Mellie died.

So Beverly had come to her half sister's funeral with a small fall and winter wardrobe and very little in her purse. Until she had concocted her ad, she'd had no idea other than returning to her home city with her charges. Now it came to her she need not go back. This was as good a place as any. Why go back and face the false sympathy of fair-weather friends?

It was fun having someone to love, even though they were Mellie Wayward's children. They were all Gary, with no trace of kinship to their blond mother or the father they could not remember. He'd killed himself while abroad, after a last bitter quarrel with his young wife, who was as wayward, Beverly suspected, as the name he had given her.

Beverly opened the fat envelope from the newspaper, the second day, and her eyes twinkled merrily. Two offers of

marriage, and one of a position which, even on paper, sounded dubious. The fourth letter was on thick, creamy paper with the Padroons Club insignia on the flap. This she had saved till the last, and now she laughed at herself because her fingers shook as she opened it.

I have a proposition which might interest you. If you will meet me on the mezzanine of the Palmer House at three, I'd like to present it to you. Use the inclosed to buy yourself a corsage composed of one gardenia encircled by rosebuds. PADROONS.

Beverly's eyes sparkled wickedly. "So you're going to look me over, Mr. Padroons, before you approve of me! Very good. It shows your suspicious nature. Well, I'll be almost ten dollars to the good if the inspection fails."

She hurried to the el entrance and bought two thirteen-cent gardenias and six rosebuds for fifty cents.

She returned to dress little Mellie Jean in the dress she had brought her, a quaint black velvet replica of her own gown. Matching velvet berés carried out the idea. Little Mellie Jean was fascinated by her dress and twin corsage.

The maid took Boy into her charge and Beverly set out with Mellie Jean for the hotel, well aware of the picture they made. She was very proud of Mellie Jean, who was a quaint, old-fashioned child and extremely lovable.

The usual crowd of shoppers filled the comfortable chairs and davenport, but a tall, bronzed man made room for the two on a davenport near the entrance.

Beverly looked at him from under long, black lashes, sighed inwardly because he was so exactly right to be fooled by a desperate girl, and turned her attention to the people coming and going.

She remained very conscious of the man beside her. He had removed the light-gray, snap-brim felt he wore, and held it on his knee, so she had a good view of bright-chestnut hair, quizzical

dark eyes and fascinating, whimsical mouth. There was a deep cleft in his chin, she noticed, on her second glance. His suit was a well-tailored gray, and his shirt matched. A blue tie and blue flower in his lapel relieved the gray.

He was a man she wouldn't trust alone in a taxi, she decided, and looked away restlessly because his eyes held a mocking invitation.

"Music, mommy," Mellie Jean discovered.

"Yes, it's from the cocktail bar."

"I want to see," insisted Mellie Jean firmly.

"Yes, let's go to see it," the tall young man suggested in a voice which held a faint trace of accent, like an almost forgotten strain of music. Then, as Beverly's head lifted haughtily: "You're No. 27, aren't you? Well, I'm Padrooms. Don't you think we could talk better over a Tom Collins?"

Beverly grew white, then flushed. "Since Mellie Jean loves music, it will keep her entertained," she said more calmly than she had hoped, and rose.

They went into the cocktail bar and were seated at a ringside table by a plainly flustered attendant.

"You really must be somebody, you create such a flurry," Beverly observed amusedly, lifting sparkling black eyes to the man's twinkling gray ones.

"Quite"—his tone was careless. "All right, what is the story? Make it a good one. I was raised on Arabian fairy tales."

Beverly looked down, grinding her fingers into her lap. She wanted to get up, slap his face and leave; but Mellie Jean, listening bemusedly to the music, reminded her of the task she had set herself.

"That's a better idea," the man said insolently. "There is a child, you know."

"Two children!" flashed Beverly, almost blind with rage. "A boy eighteen months old."

"You must have been very young."

"It was a runaway marriage of two fool kids. He—Tom—killed himself abroad after a terrible quarrel. He never knew about Boy, who was born six months later. There wasn't any money—we're the last of our name. I came here hoping to find work"—Beverly lifted slim shoulders expressively—"but I have never worked, you see, so I must learn how from the start."

"What?"

"I don't know," Beverly said defiantly. "I thought I might work at whatever thing my . . . my benefactor was interested in. I need advice about that."

"No other alternative?" he asked meaningfully. "You are strikingly lovely, you know."

Beverly's eyes blazed. "I loathe men!"

"Hm-m-m, yet you appeal to one for aid," the stranger reminded her.

"Because I am desperate."

"I wonder how desperate," mused the man. "Your name is Wayward, isn't it?"—for she had taken Mellie's name as well as the babies.

Beverly's great black eyes were wide with amazement. "They told you at the newspaper! How unfair!"

"Well, mine is Savary—Christopher Savary—so now we're even once more," said the surprising man.

"Yes, Mr. Savary, and what have you in mind?" Beverly asked coolly, though there was an undercurrent in the air which made her uneasy.

"I've just come from a lifetime abroad, Arabia. I am a total stranger to everyone. I have a great deal of money, I'm sorry to say, for it has not brought me the disinterested companionship I've wanted." His mouth curled scornfully. "So, since where I come from, one can buy such companionship—" He left his suggestion hanging in the air.

Beverly stiffened and her eyes flashed, while scarlet crept into her cheeks even to her slim, winged black brows.



Christopher Savary's low, mocking laughter hushed her furious works before they left her mouth.

"After all, my dear, what did you expect? You want security for your children, comfort for yourself, and you admit you have no special talent for work. You haven't even tried to decide on an occupation for which to train. You expect a man to take care of you just as your husband did. Well, I will do it, even to buying sable for that very lovely figure. Our arrangement may last a year, and it may not last two weeks. I don't know just how attractive and interesting I'll find you."

"Don't go on." Beverly picked up her purse and white gloves.

Mellie Jean slipped a soft little hand into her aunt's. "Don't let's go yet. I'm sleepy, mommy." She yawned widely.

"Here, lie down on this cushioned seat, Mellie Jean," Christopher said, and motioned the waiter to bring a cushion.

Beverly watched him make Mellie Jean comfortable, his deeply bronzed hands very gentle. Grave doubts were in her mind. She hated him more than any man she'd ever met, yet he had presented her case fairly. At least, she could hear him out.

He came back and ordered again for them, then coolly resumed their conversation. "Unfortunately for the immediate carrying out of our plans, my aunt is with me. During that time you'll pose as a very good friend. She'll probably assume I mean to marry you. I hope she does, for her peace of mind."

"Yes?" Beverly asked in a stifled voice as he paused.

"I will give you a weekly salary, and settle an income on the children of fifty a week until the baby is eighteen. Surely, that is very generous from a man who does not know whether two weeks or two years will terminate our agreement?"

"Oh, very generous," Beverly said sarcastically.

Christopher nodded his head and studied the glass between his hands—hands, if he had been raised in Arabia, as his accent testified, which had broken many a wild horse. Would they break Beverly Gary's spirit?

"It is more than generous," he told her briskly. "After all, you may bore me. Beautiful girls usually do."

"And I suppose you won't bore me!" Beverly cried hotly.

"If I do, you won't let me guess," he drawled. "It wouldn't show good taste, or good sense, either."

"When your aunt goes—" Beverly said harshly.

He leaned forward and studied her face. "Let's jump that hurdle later. Meanwhile, I'll want you to go dancing with me and for rides, mornings in the park, as soon as I find you a suitable saddle horse. Whenever I need a girl I shall call on you; but, as a rule, your days will be free to do as you like. Perhaps I may find that I do not care for your company at all, in which case you may go where you please, and the income goes with you, with my blessing," he added, laughing at the expression on her face.

"Your blessing would be a curse," Beverly retorted fiercely. "I won't do it."

"I didn't think you would. You looked like a soft give-me girl, who wants everything at no cost to herself. The ad read that way."

"But it said I'd repay what my training cost from my salary," Beverly reminded him indignantly.

"And the man who could afford to finance your training wouldn't need the money repaid, so the offer wouldn't attract him," Christopher said coolly. "Come, let's dance to our better understanding. You needn't decide now. I'll give you a week."

Beverly rose, glad to be moving about. Anything to forget the audacity of his proposal.

Christopher's arms held her securely against his strong body. He had a free, swinging glide which made her forget, for the time being, why she was here in his arms. His face, as he turned her, was cool against the rose fire of her cheek.

"You fit my arms," he said gayly, and it seemed to the overwrought girl that he gathered her closer and possessed her completely—mind, spirit and body. Her heart beat against his, her blood ran fast because his fired it, her lips parted because his willed them to do so, and his eyes were demanding that she lift her mouth to his. He was a magician, because she found herself lifting her face. With an effort she broke the spell, for it had to be a spell, one he'd learned in his country, to hypnotize a girl into doing his will.

Beverly spoke fiercely. "You needn't give me a minute to decide what my answer will be. It's 'no'! Now, if you'll call a taxi, I'll go back to my hotel. I told the maid I'd be back within two hours."

"You're afraid," he taunted, but he freed her and went to Mellie Jean and lifted her in his arms. He put them into a taxi and gave the driver the fare and her address, but he did not get in as she feared. He was one to command but never to beg, so he did not beg her now to reconsider.

Beverly looked back at the tall gray figure as the car carried her away. He was smiling oddly, but she did not guess the doubt and perplexity behind that smile.

"The little boy is much sicker, ma'am. I took the liberty of calling a doctor. He's in there now with him," the maid chattered in a frightened voice. "Maybe you'd better see what he says."

Beverly went quickly, to find a stranger bending over Boy.

"He must go to a hospital immediately. I'm afraid it is serious," the doctor said

briskly. "I've sent for an ambulance."

Beverly stared at him in horror. "Are you sure?"

"Quite." He looked at her expensive gown. "He must have a private room and day and night nurses, perhaps an oxygen tent. There's an epidemic of infantile paralysis in the city."

"All right, arrange for everything," Beverly said harshly. "I'll take care of everything and follow you right to the hospital."

They took Boy away, and when he was gone and Mellie Jean sleeping, Beverly drew a pad forward and wrote to Christopher Savary, then tore up what she had written and called his number at the club.

"I've reconsidered, as you must have known I would," she said, when his rich, deep voice answered. "I will need a thousand dollars at once, so that I can put Boy into the hands of a competent nurse in the country. Mellie Jean is old enough to require little attention from me, but I realize that you would not want me tied down by a baby when you need a dancing partner."

"I'll get it to you by special messenger at once."

Beverly hung up, and leaving Mellie Jean in the care of a maid, she went to the hospital. She'd never tell Christopher Savary why she had accepted his offer. He wouldn't ask why she changed her mind. In Arabia men bought girls to amuse them, and he thought he could do the same here. Well, he could, because a cruel fate decreed it.

When she came back from the hospital, the money was already there in the hotel safe, waiting for her. There was a note for her:

We'll look after the apartment for you tomorrow. Probably you were wise about the boy, though I did not ask it of you, remember. I'll see you at eleven. C. S.

Beverly's night was sleepless. She lay wide-eyed, staring into the darkness out-

*"I've made a swell mess of things, haven't I?" Christopher said, half angrily. "And now I've lost my head and heart over you." Beverly's sparkling black eyes fell.*



side, and it was no darker than her thoughts.

"Wouldn't Mellie get a kick out of this! She always hated me." Beverly thought, "because it was my grandmother who was rich. She'd also call me a fool for not putting the children into a home, but, after all, they are my own blood, and I love them more than she ever did. Mellie was silly and cheap in her affairs, but they were never more than crushes. Oh, dear Heaven, what is this going to be?"

When Christopher arrived at eleven, Beverly already had been to the hospital. She'd left Mellie Jean there, too, on the advice of the doctors, for observation. It was expensive, but might save the child's life if she had been exposed to whatever Boy had. Boy was in an oxygen tent, though the dread plague had not developed as yet.

Beverly had rouged her pale cheeks and reddened her mouth so that it was a gay, audacious challenge. She wore a gay scarlet wool gown with a very wide matching leather belt, and a smart scarlet hat on her black curls. A single great red stone weighed down her slim white hand. She had pawned every other jewel she owned for the trip West to get Mellie's children.

"I farmed out Mellie Jean for the day," she said gayly, the tragedy in her great dark eyes hidden by the long curved lashes. "I knew you'd be glad. I've seen Boy off to . . . to the country. I want to be all settled before Mellie Jean comes back."

"You modern American mothers continue to amaze me. You send your children out of your life as easily as you'd board a pet dog at a kennel while you vacation," drawled Christopher.

Beverly flushed and bit her lip to keep from telling him the truth. Instead, she resolutely turned the talk to something else. When she made the effort, Beverly

could sparkle conversationally, and she made the effort now. Nothing must destroy the safe world she was creating for the children through her bargain with Christopher Savary.

He already had found a furnished apartment. It was a luxurious place, a penthouse on the roof of a tall building, with a separate suite for the children, looking out on a grassed terrace. The exquisite luxury of it made Beverly gasp.

"I've found a nurse for the children, too, one I used to have," Christopher explained. "She isn't a gossip and is quite used to the life a wealthy Arab lives. While I am not an Arab by birth, I am one by upbringing and tastes."

Beverly flushed and turned away to look out the windows. Her nails dug deep into her palms, but she did not notice the pain until Christopher lifted one of her hands and unclenched her fingers. He looked at the four red crescents her nails had made and his face became crimson.

"Do you hate doing this, that much?" he asked oddly.

Beverly grew frightened, remembering the sick baby whose every breath of precious oxygen was costing this man so much. She lifted her head proudly. "No, I don't hate doing it at all. I think you really have something there, bringing Arabian ideas into American homes. By and by every single, rich man will have a bought slave girl of his own."

His brows lifted in surprise. "I can't quite picture you submissive enough for that."

"You've no idea," murmured Beverly.

He lifted her face in his cupped hand. "Kiss me, Beverly."

An agony of rich color rose in Beverly's cheeks and her long black lashes came down, veiling her eyes, shutting out the terror in them. Her lips were submissive as Christopher's, like a scorching flame, were pressed to hers.

"I said kiss me!" he commanded.

Beverly's lips trembled into response, and he pulled her closer and kissed her until she no longer needed his command to bring her response. She was shaking from head to foot when he freed her. She sank into a chair and covered her face with her hands.

The room was so still, she felt sure Christopher could hear the throbbing of her heart. When she looked at him he was staring down at her, doubt and perplexity clouding his face.

She couldn't go on—she was afraid of him, afraid of herself. But she had to—the lives of two babies depended on her keeping this man in good humor. Raised in a savage land, imbued with an Arab's scorn of a woman except as an amusing toy, what did he know of the heart of an American girl?

"Sorry," said her red lips. "I didn't expect you to upset me so."

"Shall we go?" he asked, his voice harsh, his bronzed skin still flushed.

Beverly rose and quietly went with him.

In the taxi he gave her a bank book. "I'll take care of the rent and nurse's wages, and open charge accounts for you at the stores," he explained, breaking a silence which had lasted for blocks.

"I don't need anything for myself, and fifty dollars a week will more than supply the children's needs and buy our food." Beverly's voice sounded stifled. "Need we talk any more about business? I have no head for it, really."

A pleased, relieved smile crossed Christopher's face. "No, of course we needn't. I don't want you to worry about anything except looking beautiful and being a perfect companion to me."

They had lunch at a downtown café. Christopher was a charming companion and exerted himself to make her forget everything which would remind her of the bargain they had made. They went out to stables and looked at horses.

Christopher chose one he thought might do for her, and was pleased to find she could ride well. After that, he left her at her hotel to pack and move to the new apartment.

Here she found a motherly woman in charge who announced she was Dotty, the children's nurse. It was hard not to confide in Dotty, whose broad bosom seemed just right for pillowing a weary black head; but Beverly shut her secret within her, and merely explained that the children were away for a few days.

She skipped her own dinner to go to the hospital, where she found no change in Boy's condition, but Mellie Jean showed no symptoms of illness of any kind.

Christopher did not return that evening, but Beverly slept little and the lavender shadows under her eyes were deep when she came out to eat the breakfast Dotty had prepared for her.

There were flowers from Christopher, orchids as exotic as the country from which he came. Beverly pushed them away with a shudder.

Dotty was full of talk of Christopher. "He was born in Arabia. I was his mother's nurse, and when they thought she might be better over here in her own country, I brought her home, but she died. Christopher was brought up by an ayah who filled him with her heathen notions, and he couldn't speak English when Mr. Savary sent for me to come back. He was a bitter, cold man after his wife died, and didn't have any love for his lovely little son. I had to come back here finally and never saw Mr. Christopher again until he sent for me last week and said he had three babies for me to look after."

"Three?" Beverly said faintly.

Dotty laughed comfortably. "He said the babies' mother was no more'n a baby herself. He didn't know you very well, maybe. He said he hadn't seen you yet, that you were a little thing with no busi-

ness sense. I wouldn't say this, only that isn't like you at all."

Beverly studied the nurse in bewilderment.

"Maybe, compared to his height, you do look little," Dotty hurried to say, noting Beverly's expression.

The telephone rang. It was the hospital. Boy was worse. Perhaps she'd better come.

Beverly hurried into street clothes. "If Mr. Christopher calls, tell him I'm out shopping," she said shortly and hurried away.

Boy rallied at last, and Beverly returned reluctantly to the apartment. The hospital and Boy's quiet room seemed like a corner of heaven, but she must not forget who furnished that corner in heaven for the little sick boy.

Beverly straightened her slim shoulders under the smart scarlet wool dress she had worn because Boy loved its brightness, and drew the sable jacket closer, for she seemed chilled the moment she entered the penthouse.

Christopher was pacing the floor, his face dark and angry. He whirled on her. "Where have you been? Dotty said a man called you and you fairly threw on your clothes and went to him."

Beverly looked at Christopher, head back, her black eyes defiant and a little afraid.

"Yes, it was a man. When you made the bargain with me you did not say I couldn't have other men friends."

Christopher pulled her into his arms. "And I didn't say no other man might hold you like this, but I say it now. No man has any right to hold you and caress you. I demand such a promise from you."

"Oh, you may have it!" Beverly cried fiercely. "The men I know have too much respect for me to touch me."

"And I have none at all," Christopher said softly, though he had the grace to

flush, "for a girl who drove her husband to suicide over her affairs with other men."

Beverly jumped as though he had wounded her bitterly, and Christopher's laughter came, low and mocking. "You didn't think I knew that, did you?" His mouth seemed to scorch hers as it came down demandingly.

Beverly was close to fainting. The past few days and the sleepless nights had been too much for her, but Christopher's kisses roused her to life, against her will. The ringing of the telephone made Christopher's arms fall.

When she would have caught up the instrument, he took it instead. "Who is it?" he demanded arrogantly.

"Dr. Gregg Tweedy," the voice on the other end of the receiver replied.

"And what do you want, Dr. Gregg Tweedy?" Christopher asked insolently, his bitter smile flashing as he heard Beverly gasp.

"I'll tell Mrs. Wayward my business—No, perhaps you are a friend of hers," Beverly heard Dr. Tweedy say reluctantly. "Are you?"

"Much more than a friend. Please feel free to speak," Christopher mocked.

"Then break it to her that her little boy is sinking fast. If we could have that children's specialist, he might still be saved."

Beverly caught up the hat Christopher had pulled from her head when she returned, and jammed it on.

"Get him. We'll be there at once," Christopher said in a queer voice. "Never mind what his fee is, get him! Is there anything else?"

"No. Mrs. Wayward arranged for everything else the day the child was stricken."

Christopher had to run to catch up with Beverly in her dash for the elevator. He put her into his car when they reached the street and directed his chauffeur to the hospital she named.

"Now you know why I changed my mind and accepted your offer," Beverly said dully. "They told me, when I returned to my rooms that day, that it might be infantile paralysis. That's where I've been all day. Dr. Tweedy is the specialist in charge of Boy's case. That's where Mellie Jean is, too, for observation."

"Why didn't you tell me? Just what sort of inhuman monster do you think I am?" raged Christopher, his face very white.

"Sickness isn't amusing, and I was to amuse you," Beverly said tiredly. "I'm sorry."

"Oh, stop that!" Christopher's voice was husky. "You don't think I meant half that rot I talked, do you? I was out to give you a scare. Your husband killed himself at my home in Arabia, so I set myself to avenge him. Unfortunately, my detective didn't catch up with you until you took reservations on the train under your maiden name of Gary. He never lost sight of you after that. He followed you to the newspaper office and bribed the girl to give him a copy of the ad you inserted and reported it to me."

At that moment, the chauffeur opened the door and Christopher had to hurry to keep up with Beverly's flying feet.

The new crisis was past when they reached Boy's room. The great surgeon had been in the hospital and had come at once, but Beverly had a chance to see a wealthy man in action. Despite her bewilderment over Christopher's explanation, she had to admire the way he made nurses and doctors step around.

She did not blame him for the way he had treated her, now that she knew how Mellie had used her husband, had driven him to his death by her many cheap affairs. They'd been cheap affairs before Mellie married, so they would continue to be that, since now it seemed she had kept on having them after her marriage.

"We can take Mellie Jean home with us," Christopher reported smilingly at last, coming to where she sat, almost asleep in a big chair. "Boy's case is not infantile paralysis. It is double pneumonia combined with measles which have not come out as they should. He'll get along all right, now that they know what to treat. I'll bring Mellie Jean to you."

The ride home was filled with Mellie Jean's chatter, Christopher drawing her out and encouraging her to talk.

When Dotty took the child away, Beverly went into her room, bathed and changed to a soft scarlet housecoat of crisp moiré. Her hands shook as she fastened the golden zipper and perfumed her lips, hair and the hem of the trailing housecoat, but her curly head was high when she joined Christopher at the windows of the living room.

"I didn't expect you out again tonight," he said gruffly, turning to look at her. "Beverly, Tom had you all wrong, or else you grew up after his death. Any girl who would go through the private hell I put you through, for the sake of those kids, is pretty worth while in my estimation. Let me look after you until the boy is well; then we'll make plans for your future—plans that will please you."

Beverly looked at him steadily and shook her head. "I can't. You see, I am not Mellie, the children's mother. I'm Beverly Gary, their aunt. Mellie taught them to call my picture 'mommy,' thinking I'd be so touched I'd share my grandmother's fortune with them. Only there wasn't any fortune. I was almost as penniless as they. It didn't matter—I loved them from the start. I'd almost have done murder for them, but not until Boy became so ill did I know I'd do worse than murder, if I had to, for them." Beverly's voice failed, and she looked appealingly at Christopher, begging him to understand.

"I've made a swell mess of things

with my Arab ideas of revenge. haven't I?" Christopher said, half angrily.

"You've been splendid to help me as you did," Beverly corrected, flushing. "You couldn't know—"

"I knew you didn't want to kiss me, but I made you. I watched you struggle not to respond and was glad I could force you to forget you didn't want to. Oh, I was thoroughly despicable, and as jealous as the devil when Dotty told me a man called you and you rushed away," Christopher admitted with a wry smile.

"But now you know I'm not a widow, so you won't feel that way—jealous," Beverly said soothingly.

"I'll feel worse," grumbled Christopher. "I've lost my head and heart over you. I didn't intend to. I didn't know it until I heard Dr. Tweedy ask for you over the telephone. Then I knew."

Beverly's sparkling black eyes fell. "It's because you don't know many American girls. We are really rather nice, given a chance."

"If there were thousands of girls, you'd still be the one I love, so proud, spunky, beautiful and thrilling," corrected Christopher. "Don't you need me to help you bring up the children, Beverly?"

Beverly looked up at him, waves of color flushing her face.

"I need you, yes," she admitted honestly, gloriously flushed. "but not for the children. You do have a way of

crashing through to a girl's heart and taking it right out of her." The last was half lost against Christopher's shoulder as he held her so closely she could feel the heavy thudding of his heart.

"Darling, darling, I'll often be a beast, but all you'll need to do to make me humble will be to say 'Mellie,'" promised Christopher.

"I couldn't endure having you humble," flashed Beverly, "so I'll never mention the name."

"What will you do when I'm arrogant and overbearing?"

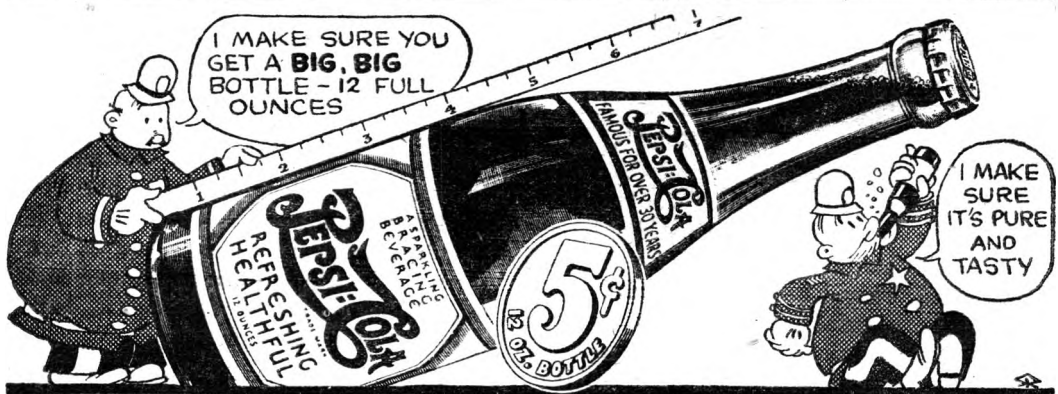
Beverly drew his face down to hers. "This"—touching her lips lightly to his.

"It will be enough!" exclaimed Christopher, and returned her kiss with tenderness, then with increasing passion.

He was a masterful lover. He held her away at last and, cradled in his arms, his cheek against hers, she listened to him plan their future.

"It can start at once, darling. My aunt was a myth created for your protection, just as I installed Dotty here. I live in the rooms at my club," confessed Christopher wryly. "We can be married in three days and live here part of the time, in Arabia the rest, unless you have another choice for a home."

Beverly listened contentedly. She didn't care where they lived. Just being with Christopher was exciting, but to belong to him would be heaven.

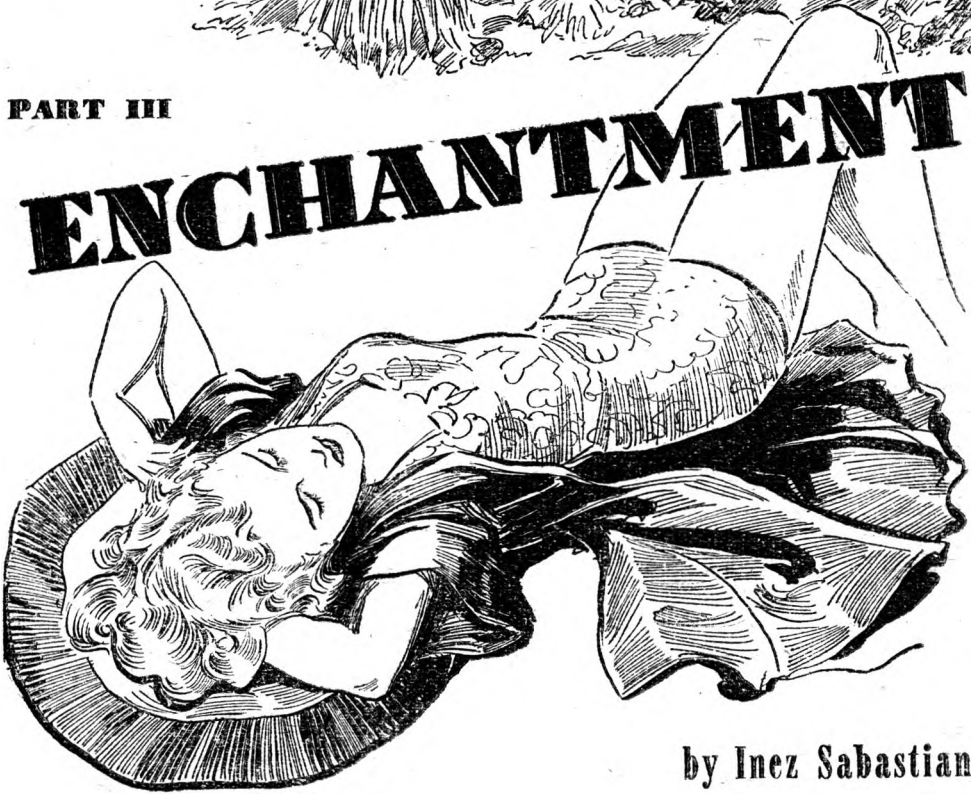






PART III

# ENCHANTMENT



by Inez Sabastian

**Diantha finds that her world has ceased to think of her as a deb; to most of them she is just "the woman" in the Wayburn case.**

## THE STORY SO FAR:

Diantha Knight, who is ready to make her début, and Alan Kendall are madly in love with each other. However, with no money, Alan cannot marry her, although he begs her to elope, saying

they can live with his brother and sister-in-law. At her coming-out party, Diantha's mother is very angry with her, and Diantha, as a deb, is pretty much of a flop until Giles Wayburn, married and

very wealthy and social, singles her out. She immediately becomes the belle of the ball. Lynn Ames, a deb of the year before, warns Diantha against Giles, telling her that each year he picks a deb to rush, then when the season is over, drops the girl and picks a new one. Lynn confesses that she had been his last-year's girl and that she is in love with him. Giles takes up so much of Diantha's time that she sees less and less of Alan. She has an engagement with him but he breaks it because he had to take his sister-in-law to a party. He and Diantha quarrel, and Diantha consents to go with Giles on a cruise to Hawaii. She realizes that all society is talking about her affair with Giles, but she does not care.

#### V.

DIANTHA had told herself that she would blot Alan out of her heart, tear all thought of him from her mind. But she could not do that; she might as well have tried to stop breathing. But she did succeed in drugging herself with the luxury and gaiety and excitement that Giles provided. Whenever she found herself thinking, "I must remember to tell Alan that," or "I wonder what Alan's doing now," she turned instantly to Giles.

She knew that she was playing with fire; Giles' hot, eager eyes told her so. He was no longer the smiling, rather complacent man whose world lay in his grasp. His infatuation for Diantha had made him tense, unsure of himself when he was with her, and she deliberately encouraged him, because playing the dangerous, thrilling game gave her no time to think about Alan, and wonder if he was with Betsy.

She felt like a masquerader, a stranger to herself, as the long, lazy days drifted by. She wore the clothes that Mona had bought her in New York—loose slacks of lime-green, primrose-yellow, dull-ame-thyst; shirts of soft red, aquamarine, sapphire-blue, deeply open at the throat.

Sun baths turned her body a golden tan that was like a garment in itself. She was temptingly, languorously beautiful. Mona, looking at her proudly, would cast speculative glances at Giles, and smile contentedly.

For Giles openly feasted his eyes on Diantha. He wanted to be near her always. He could not resist trailing his fingers along her bare arm, smoothing her hair, making any excuse to touch her, though it was only to grasp her hands and pull her up from the cushioned deck mattress where she liked to lie.

The others were not blind to Giles' adoration. But they were good guests, experienced in the art of paying for hospitality by seeing only what they were meant to see. Diantha didn't know any of them very well, and knew little about them. Kitty Treves was rather beautiful, with great black eyes and black hair that lay in wide, heavy waves about her oval face; it was her mouth that spoiled her beauty, the lips were too thin, the mouth too mercenary.

Lisa Morecambe was a little blond thing, with a fashionably pretty face that was all clear-cut planes and angles. She made a practice of saying things that other people did not dare to say, of being outrageous, impudent, and then smiling so sweetly that the victim felt sure she hadn't meant what she said. Her one gift was rather a contradictory one, a singing voice so beautiful that it might have made her famous if she had been willing to work on it.

The men would never have interested Diantha at home; here they were acceptable as pleasant companions. Stan Harley had played football with Alan at college; she felt closer to him because of that. But Stan had been trying ever since graduation to cash in on his fame as a football hero, hoping to marry a rich girl. He had played about with older men who had admired him as an athlete, and flirted discreetly with their wives,

thus assuring himself of plenty of invitations. But one of the flirtations had gone wrong, suddenly, and the scandal that resulted had made this cruise a convenient way of getting away for a while.

He was big, broad-shouldered, with a heavy, handsome face. His looks had brought him more than one offer of a screen test, but Hollywood and the hard work that it meant were no part of his program.

Tony Hamilton was one of those attractive, homely men who can be irresistible when they care to. Tony didn't often care to. He had money enough to live on comfortably; he had a charming apartment and gave delightful dinner parties, and avoided marriage as if it were the plague. A few bad guesses in the stock market had made Giles' invitation more than welcome, even though Lisa was a fellow guest. Lisa had made no secret of wanting to marry him ever since she came out, the summer before.

The third man, Phillip Seward, was the sort of man who is always asked to fill in when someone else drops out of a party. He was short, pleasant, rather plump, and had no visible means of support. People said that he made money by spying on his friends and sending his information to the gossip columnists. There was something about him that Diantha didn't like, so she made a conscientious effort to be nice to him when she could not avoid him. But when Giles drew her down on the arm of his chair and made her sip his cocktail before he tasted it, she always had an unpleasant feeling that Phil was watching intently and taking mental notes.

She did not like those apparently innocent, casual caresses of Giles'. On the surface they were harmless, of course. At first she had drawn away abruptly when he put his arm around her, or kissed her good night.

Then, one evening when she was dressing for dinner, Lisa had come to her.

"I suppose you know that you're em-

barrassing us all by the way you're behaving," she'd remarked, curling up on the foot of Diantha's bed and lighting a cigarette. "If you don't stop it, I'll jump overboard or something."

Diantha, sitting at the dressing table, met Lisa's eyes in the mirror. "What do you mean?" she asked, uncomfortably.

"You know very well what I mean. Pulling away when Giles touches you—"

"I don't!"

"You egg him on, tipping your head back and laughing at him from under your lashes, wearing dresses that have practically no waist, doing all that sort of thing, and then you stiffen up and look like somebody's maiden aunt the instant he touches you," Lisa went on relentlessly. "You give significance to what the rest of us take for granted. If I happen to be sitting on Phil's knee I leap up, feeling like—well, I won't say what, for fearing of shocking you. You grew up in schools in Europe, didn't you?"

Diantha nodded; the hand with which she picked up a bottle of perfume was trembling.

"Then I suppose it isn't your fault. You haven't been brought up with a crowd of boys and girls, as the rest of us have. You can't help being self-conscious if a man touches you. Don't you realize that it doesn't mean anything? Last night when I was playing bridge and Tony passed my chair, on the way to make himself a drink, he tipped my head back and kissed me. Then he went along and got his highball, and I finished sorting my cards. It didn't mean anything to either of us, except that it was rather pleasant. When Giles kissed you on the cheek, when you were saying good night, you turned fire red."

Diantha opened her lips, closed them again without speaking. She couldn't explain to Lisa that Giles' kissing her wasn't like that careless kiss of Tony's; that it had been eager, demanding.

"Now you dislike me more than ever, don't you?" drawled Lisa as she rose and

*"I don't suppose I can convince you that I'm not what you think," Diantha said bitterly. "I've accepted Giles' hospitality. I like him. But as for taking him away from his wife, I've done nothing of the kind."*



sauntered toward the door. "But I tried to give you good advice, Dian. You're luckier than you know, having Giles interested in you. But don't look at him with that Cleopatra look in your eyes if it doesn't mean anything!"

As the door closed behind her, Diantha buried her face in her hands. She was afraid of what was happening to her. Against her will she found herself responding to Giles' caresses; something urged her to go on, just a little further, as if she were skating on thin ice and couldn't stop.

She tried to tell herself that Lisa was right; that she'd been silly and self-conscious over something that had no meaning. Kitty would lie for an hour on the sun deck with Stan or Tony, wearing the scantiest of bathing suits, seeming not to notice if the man beside her flung his arm over her bare shoulders. But Stan or Tony might give her a boisterous, friendly push as he got up; Phil holding Lisa on his lap, was quite likely to rise suddenly and dump her to the floor, starting a bit of horseplay that involved everyone before it was over. She could have rioted about with them like that and thought nothing of it. But when Giles drew her close to him as they walked the deck, or paused behind her chair to lean over and lay his cheek against hers, there was nothing idle or impersonal about it.

Mona made things doubly difficult for her; she acted almost as if the yacht belonged to her, as if Giles were her son-in-law. She ordered the servants about as if she had been in her own home. When the yacht stopped at Havana, a few days after leaving New York, she insisted on arranging everyone's plans so that Diantha and Giles could be alone. She was no longer the quiet, well-bred woman she had been in New York; ridiculously, obviously, she had become the managing mother seeking to marry her daughter to a wealthy man.

In Havana, Diantha had done what she could to offset that. As they passed a

jeweler's, Giles had insisted on going in; he wanted to buy her a present, he said, a diamond bracelet.

Diantha shook her head. "I don't want it," she replied. "Don't try to spoil me, Giles, by giving me diamonds now, when I'll be leading a rhinestone life after this cruise is over."

"There's no reason why you should; you know that," he protested. His eyes were on the delicate hollow at the base of her throat, and she turned away, remembering how Alan had loved to fit his lips to it. "Dian, you know how I feel about you, you know that—"

"I know that I'd love to have those moonstones," she interrupted. She couldn't let him ask her to marry him, not just yet, not when her lips still quivered at the memory of Alan's kisses.

So he bought the lovely, blue-white stones, set in fine links of beaten silver; his hands were hot against her bare flesh when he fastened the necklace about her throat and clasped the bracelets on her wrists. When they returned to the yacht a boat was just leaving for New York; with all her heart Diantha wished that she were on it.

Giles' keen eyes noted the wistfulness in her lovely face. "Honolulu's going to be fun," he told her, as if he were dangling toys before a fretful child. "Its people are marvelous—really, Dian, you've never known anyone like them." "The natives, you mean?" she asked. "I'm crazy about their music—it does something to me, tugs at my heart, makes me want to laugh and cry, and . . . and love somebody, very much."

"Hope I'm that somebody, Dian," he answered quickly. "No, I didn't mean the natives, you infant! I meant the kind of people we'll see a lot of, old friends of mine. They're the descendants of the missionaries who went to Hawaii so long ago, and they look down on most of the so-called aristocrats in New York, just don't bother with them. They're charming and intelligent and sophisticated,

rather conservative— Oh, you'll have to wait until you meet them to see what they're like. Of course, the average traveler never encounters them; they're frightfully clanny."

Diantha did not reply immediately; her deep-blue eyes were fixed on the steamer that was slowly edging out to the sea. "Giles, isn't it sort of foolish for us to go off on such a long cruise just now?" she asked presently. "I mean, with the war on, and—"

He laughed indulgently. "Don't you realize that a thing like that can't make any trouble for me?" he replied. "Dian, when we get to Hawaii we don't have to stay in Honolulu, you know. I could take a house on one of the other islands, away from everybody. Wouldn't you like a house that faces a deep-blue bay, shaped like a crescent, with flowers growing right to the door? Wouldn't you like to sit on its big veranda with me, at night, and listen to the native boys singing those songs that tug at your heart?"

"It would be heavenly," she answered, and heard the sharp intake of his breath. "We'd make Lisa sing with them," she went on, as if she hadn't realized what he was proposing, as if she thought he planned to take the others, too. "And did you know that Tony plays the steel guitar as well as a professional? I'm sure they'd all enjoy it ever so much, Giles."

"Yes," he said dryly. "Yes, no doubt, they'd all like it."

Diantha kept her eyes fixed on the pavement. She was becoming expert at fencing with him, she told herself bitterly. Suggestions like the one about the house had frightened her at first, leaving her embarrassed and tongue-tied. Now she could parry them with ease.

During that first week of the trip she was constantly on her guard when she was with him. But as they went on, through one delightful, sunlit day after another, she began to take things more easily. Giles was sophisticated, she told herself; he didn't mean anything when

he made the remarks that sounded so suggestive to her. At first she'd minded when he strolled into her room to breakfast with her, although her silk pajamas and robe fully covered her; now she'd grown accustomed to it.

It was so much pleasanter not to be on the defensive all the time, when really there was nothing to defend herself against.

Giles was in no hurry to reach Hawaii, so they dawdled along, lazily, and more and more often Diantha and Giles were alone. Diantha would have liked to join the others at deck tennis or water polo more often, but Giles didn't care much for games. He wanted to sit with her hand in his, talking, telling her stories of famous people whom he knew, making plans for their stay in Honolulu.

"I want to give a dinner dance for you, immediately," he told her one evening when they were sauntering along the deck together. "Of course, there'll be a lot of informal parties for you; you'll like the tea houses where a good deal of the entertaining goes on."

Diantha was not listening very intently. It seemed dull, suddenly, to be walking there with Giles, instead of having fun with the others. Lisa and Tony were singing a lot of old songs, Lisa's velvety contralto carrying the melody, Tony's clear tenor weaving a plaintive minor strain through it. Last summer she had danced to those same tunes with Alan, under the stars. She had almost succeeded in putting him out of her thoughts until the music brought back the feeling of his arms pressing her close; the memory flashed through her like hot, searing pain.

"Oh . . . oh, Giles!" she exclaimed, meaning to go on with a request that they join the others and get up a bridge game, or some of the slightly naughty charades at which Kitty and Phil were so good.

He turned and saw her, standing there in the moonlight. The thin lace of her



*Everyone on the veranda was staring at them, but Diantha was too miserable to care. She put her head down on the table and broke into loud sobs.*

frock fitted her body closely to the hips, and then flared out in a cloud of misty, airy ruffles, and his moonstones glimmered on the scented, satiny flesh of her throat and around her slender wrists. Driven by recklessness by the desire for Alan, she was provocatively lovely.

Giles knew that that loveliness was not for him, that the yearning, tremulous look that he had seen before she lifted

her head defiantly had been inspired by another man. But what Giles wanted, he took, and he had wanted Diantha since first he saw her.

He crushed her in his arms, ruthlessly, his lips seeking hers; he was relentless in his determination to kiss her, holding her so that she could not turn away. For a moment Diantha struggled; then, with a little sobbing, murmuring cry, she yielded to him, letting him press her head back and cover her mouth with his.

But after a moment he released her and stood back looking at her, puzzled. He had won, yet, somehow, he had lost. The realization was a challenge that was unbearable to him, because never in his life had he known defeat. There had been no response when he kissed her; no flame had leaped into being at his touch.

His face darkened. "Dian, tell me the truth," he commanded, and his voice was harsh. "Are you still in love with that fellow back in New York, that Kendall chap?"

Mutely, she nodded. She could not have spoken then even in reply to Alan's voice.

"I won't have it! I— Why, Dian, I love you. Do you know what that means? I've never said it to anyone before. I've never begged any woman to care for me. And now, you, lying in my arms limply, letting me kiss you only because I was too strong for you!" He stared at her in angry helplessness, frowning, bewildered by his own inability to inspire her love.

She lifted her head proudly. "What right have you to try to make me love you?" she asked. "You're married, you've never considered asking your wife for your freedom."

"But I . . . I've done everything for you, given you everything," he exclaimed.

"You've given me everything but the one thing that a girl expects from a man who loves her," she answered wearily. "Let me go now, Giles. I can't talk to you any longer, I don't want to argue with you. I'm not asking anything—I

don't want to marry you. Please remember that. But remember, too, that all that you've given me can't measure up to what Alan offered, before I knew you."

As she turned to leave him, Giles strode after her. "I'm not giving up," he told her sharply. "I want you now more than I ever did before. I'm willing to give up everything else for you. If I do that, if I get in touch with Edith, wherever she is, and arrange to have her divorce me, will you marry me? Will you forget Kendall and let me teach you to love me?"

She smiled ruefully. "I can't answer that," she said. "I don't know. I've tried to forget Alan on this cruise, but tonight I realized that I'd failed. I can promise that I'll go on trying. And if you can make me love you, then I'll marry you."

## VI.

Her first glimpse of Honolulu delighted Diantha. A liner from San Francisco was docking, and gay crowds waited on the pier; native girls held up garlands of flowers, a band played "Aloha Oi," and Lisa sang it softly. Diantha walked away, and Giles followed her. Since that night on deck she had closed her mind and her heart against everything that could make her feel deeply; love had come to her once, and gone, and now she must school herself to accept its substitute.

"It's going to be a bother, having people insist on entertaining us," Giles told her, smiling at her affectionately. "Of course, it will be fun—moonlight picnics, surf bathing, house parties on their ranches—but I've had you to myself for so long now that I don't want to share you with other people." He looked thoughtfully at the crisp, pale-green linen of her suit. "I want to buy you a lei of gardenias, if the girls haven't sold them all to those awful tourists," he said.

"The tourists didn't look awful to me," answered Diantha. "Those girls who



were rushing down the gangplank looked as if they'd just been living for the moment when they got ashore. As if they might have been saving up for the trip for a long time, wanting so awfully to take it that they could go without things they really needed."

He laughed indulgently and patted her shoulder. "Quite a little philosopher, aren't you, Dian?" he commented. "Well, you'll never have to save up for anything you want, my dear. Yes, Mona?"

Diantha's mother had come along the deck bustling importantly. She smiled despite the annoyance in his voice.

"I'm going ashore at once, and I don't know when I'll be back," she told him. "But you and Diantha won't care, will you? An old school friend of mine, Shiela Gibbs, lives here, and I want to look her up. Her husband's name is Courtland or Courtney."

"Never heard of him," said Giles indifferently, as if the man could not possibly be of any importance in that case. "Come, Dian, we might as well start."

She went eagerly, looking forward to exploring the island. Perhaps they could go swimming this afternoon, if Giles' friends didn't keep them too busy.

He took her to one of the hotels, a great, coral-pink building set in acres of tropical gardens, with the sea almost touching its walls, and left her waiting while he did some telephoning. A girl and a young army officer sat nearby. Evidently, she had come on the San Francisco boat, and he was sitting very close to her, leaning forward a little, holding both her hands, looking straight into her eyes.

Diantha looked away quickly. She knew so well the enchantment that such a look could create for a girl. It trailed clouds of glory around her, made her feel like a goddess. She shivered, thinking of the hot, insatiable hunger that filled Giles' eyes when he looked at her.

Diantha knew instantly that Giles was annoyed when he came back to her. A

muscle at the corner of his mouth was jerking, and the hand that held his cigarette trembled. Before he left her to telephone, he had said that probably Jeff Liscombe or the Trainors would hurry to the hotel for them, as soon as they knew that he had arrived.

"There's always a party on at the Trainors'," he'd added. "Their house is farther along the shore, a beautiful place. It has a long flight of steps cut into the rock, leading down to the water, and the gardens are famous; ferns and jungle trees and hibiscus, marvelously landscaped. You'll like it."

So now she asked him, idly, whether they were going to the Trainors' that afternoon.

"No, certainly not!" he replied irritably. Then, after a moment, he went on in a quieter voice, "I talked to Beth, and she seemed to be involved in so many things that I told her I'd drop in some other time." He gave a mirthless, annoyed laugh. "Beth's the strangest person, so strait-laced at the most unexpected times. I told her today that she ought to be a missionary herself."

Diantha tried to put two and two together, and couldn't quite make four. She had never seen Giles so disturbed before.

"Well, shall we go back to the yacht?" he asked presently.

Diantha's eyes widened in amazement. "But why?" she asked. "Now that we're here aren't we going to see the island? The view from the Pali, and—"

"You talk like a tourist, Dian," he said impatiently. "I had no idea that you had a passion for sight-seeing!"

"There are lots of things about me that you don't know," she retorted. "Tourist or not, I want to see the things I've been hearing about ever since we left New York."

"Well, some other day."

So they returned to the yacht. After spending so much time on it, Diantha was heartily sick of it. She looked about

her as she went to her cabin, and wondered at the change in her own feelings. It had seemed so luxurious, so perfect, when first she came aboard. It was still as beautiful, but now it seemed like a prison. She stripped off her linen suit and tossed it aside for the maid to look after, and threw her lingerie after it. The scarlet silk robe that she put on was cob-web sheer, and she lay back in a long chair, hoping that no one would interrupt her before she had had time to think things out.

She had said nothing to anyone about her conversation with Giles that night on deck when he had asked her to marry him. The news would have delighted Mona, of course, but Diantha could not bring herself to confide in her mother. To tell her would make it seem true, and she could not bring herself, just yet, to believing in the possibility of marrying Giles.

At first she had thought him one of the most delightful men she ever had met. But during the cruise she had learned to know him, and had realized how much of his charm was due to the fact that life was always shaped to please him. When he played games, Giles must always win. If he could not excel everyone else in whatever he did, he wouldn't do it.

He had fenced with her, in the little gymnasium, until he learned that Stan had been intercollegiate fencing champion when he was at college. Stan had innocently given Giles a few pointers—after that Giles wouldn't fence again. He said contemptuously that it was a rather silly sport, so pointless. Yet only the day before he had declared that it was the best exercise in the world.

One by one, Diantha went over the other things that she had learned about him; he had many likable traits, of course—he was charming, considerate, generous. But he was selfish unless his generosity gave him pleasure.

"And none of that would matter if I loved him," she told herself at last. "I

don't. I never can. And the way he looks at me, the way he kisses me—he's like a starving man in sight of food!"

Kitty knocked on the door just then, and opened it before Diantha could speak. She strolled in, looking startlingly lovely in her white dress and big white hat, with a lei of scarlet carnations around her neck. She also looked extraordinarily content, which was surprising.

"Have a nice time on shore?" she asked as she sat down. "And did all Giles' friends rally round and besiege you with invitations?"

Diantha shrugged her shoulders. "No, we didn't see any of them," she replied. "They were busy or something, and we came back here almost at once."

Kitty smiled maliciously. "Sort of brushed Giles off when he called them, didn't they?" she asked. "That must have been a new sensation for him. But, after all, he should have expected it."

Diantha straightened up in the long chair. "All right, tell me what it is that you came to tell," she urged. "Why should Giles' friends avoid seeing him? And why do you think that he should have expected it?"

Kitty shrugged her shoulders. "Really, Dian, you seem almost simple-minded sometimes. Or didn't you know that Edith, Giles' wife, is here?" Diantha shook her head. "Well, she is," Kitty continued. "She couldn't very well stay in France with a war on, so she came here and took a house. Of course, Giles' friends are hers, and she's very popular, entertains a lot and all that. So, naturally, when he arrives with you—well, you see how it is."

"Meaning just what?" asked Diantha crisply.

Kitty raised her beautifully arched eyebrows. "Really, Dian, you're so dense!" she exclaimed. "Surely you know that a wife's friends don't usually fall over themselves to be pleasant to the other woman." And then, as Diantha stared



*Diantha steeled herself against him. "Not you and I, Giles, ever again," she said. "Let me go now, or I'll make a scene."*

at her blankly: "Or hadn't you realized that you're the other woman in this case? If you haven't you're the only person who hasn't."

Diantha was so shocked and angry that for a moment her mind went blank. She could not see, could not think. Unconsciously, she leaped to her feet, the scarlet negligee twining around her slender body and trailing off across the polished floor.

"I . . . I—" Her mind cleared suddenly. "I don't suppose I can convince you that I'm not what you think," she said, and her own voice fell strangely on her ears, it was so hard, so bitter. "I've done nothing wrong. I've accepted Giles' hospitality. I went around a lot with him in New York. I like him. But as for taking him away from his wife, I've done nothing of the kind."

"You've given an excellent imitation of it," drawled Kitty. "I was at the Trainors' today when Giles telephoned, and Beth was furious at his presumption. She'd heard all about his chasing around with you—so has everyone in Honolulu—and she said—"

"What she said means nothing to me!" Diantha broke in, that first icy control gone, as the full force of Kitty's accusation struck her. "It didn't occur to you to be loyal enough to tell them the truth, of course? You just sat there and smiled and agreed with every horrible insinuation. When Giles hears of this he'll have you put off the boat—"

"He'll have no opportunity for that," interrupted Kitty, rising languidly. "I just returned to have my things packed. I'm leaving at once, to stay with the Trainors."

She sauntered out of the room, and Diantha sank down in her chair again, bewildered, quivering under the blow that Kitty had struck. She tried to tell herself that it was merely Kitty's way of revenging herself because Diantha didn't like her. At the beginning of the cruise Kitty had tried to take Giles away

from Diantha, and failed ignominiously. Oh, of course, she was just being disagreeable because she wanted to get even!

Yet, Giles had been decidedly disgruntled when he returned from telephoning the Trainors. And he'd said nothing more about giving a party for her at once, so that she could meet his friends. She was sure that he hadn't known that Edith was here, or he'd never have come. Yet she couldn't see why Edith should mind his taking someone else around; according to Lynn Ames, there'd always been a new girl, year after year—

She stopped suddenly, clenching her hands. She was fitting herself into the class with them—she, Diantha Knight! She'd just had fun with Giles, been a good companion, accepted the excitement he could arouse because it was like a drug, making her forget Alan, and now she was one of his girls, so far as the world was concerned, and nice people wouldn't receive her.

"I'll show them!" She was on her feet again, walking up and down, the scarlet robe fluttering out in a vivid cloud at each step. "I'll make them realize that I'm not like those other girls. Why can't they understand that all Giles' money doesn't mean a thing, compared to Alan's love? As if I wanted to be Giles' wife!"

She was still pacing the floor, resentfully recalling the things that Kitty had said, when Giles sent word by one of the stewards that he'd like to have her dine in Honolulu with him. She decided that she'd have to go; probably he wanted to spike the rumors by having her appear in public with him, to show that there was no need for either of them to be ashamed of their friendship.

She tried to be skillful about the business of dressing, but it was hard. The maid whom Giles had engaged for her had gone ashore, and Mona had not yet returned; there was no one to help her, and she had got out of the habit of dressing herself. Her dark hair was unruly; it had been trimmed for a special hair-

do. a garland of soft curls, and in her hands it stood out like a halo. She spilled a bottle of perfume down the front of the lace frock that was perfect with her moonstones, and tore the diaphanous black tulle that she put on in its place. At last, impatiently, she slipped into a red chiffon frock that she knew Giles didn't like; it was the only one she had that did not need some bit of mending.

The moonstones were all wrong with it. Recklessly, she caught up some costume jewelry, a wide collar and three bracelets of simulated gold, obvious imitations. Giles would hate the way she looked, she told herself. He wanted her to be sensational because of her beauty, not because of her clothes. She looked as if she wanted to attract attention; her dress was very low, daringly cut, meant for someone older and more brazen than she was.

"If his friends see me, they'll believe the worst!" she told herself gloomily.

They had cocktails on the veranda of a delightful hotel, where the moonlight made a golden path across the sea straight toward where they sat, and the soft air drifted on a lazy breeze, heavy with the fragrance of tropical flowers. A native orchestra was playing softly, its music poignantly sweet. Diantha had to steel herself against it, for fear that the self-control to which she clung would snap.

Giles had just ordered their drinks when a pretty, amber-haired woman who sat alone not far from them smiled and beckoned to him.

He muttered something under his breath. Then he turned to Diantha. "You've never met my wife, have you?" he asked. "It's she who waved to us. Come over and speak to her."

"Oh, must I go?" asked Diantha, drawing back.

"Certainly. With all these people around here watching us, with people talking—of course, you must come. Do you want them to think that I'm ashamed of you?"

So Diantha walked at his side, across the veranda where the tall palms rose, whispering, on either side, knowing that curious eyes were upon her. She was very conscious of her scarlet frock and untidy hair, and more conscious of the unpleasant position in which she had found herself so suddenly.


Edith Wayburn greeted Giles warmly, and acknowledged the introduction to Diantha with exactly the right amount of cordiality. Diantha could see that she must have been very beautiful as a young girl; she had the assurance of that beauty still. Her black frock was perfect, and the emerald that hung around her throat was worth a king's ransom.

Diantha sat down, irritated by the very perfection of Edith's grooming. The

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**CURTISS**

# Butterfinger



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SALTIEST  
LAKE IN THE  
WORLD?

IS RICH  
IN PURE  
**DEXTROSE**  
THE SUGAR  
YOUR BODY  
USES  
**DIRECTLY  
FOR ENERGY**



DEAD SEA:  
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polish on her own fingernails didn't match the scarlet of her frock; Edith's nicely shaped nails were colorless. Diantha had a feeling that lipstick had smudged when she drank the pineapple juice that Giles had ordered for her just before they left the boat; Edith's lovely mouth was only faintly tinted. Diantha felt badly dressed, brazen, thoroughly uncomfortable.

Edith and Giles were talking. She was telling him about her house, with its gorgeous garden and beautiful view of the sea.

"I'd ask you to stay with me," she said, prettily apologetic. "But the Keenes are here from London, and Mary Davenant and her husband. He's so afraid that he'll come into the title, poor dear, with this war likely to finish off all the cousins that stand between it and him. He just doesn't want to be an earl! He's on some kind of official mission that's headed for China."

"I like Clive Davenant," said Giles. "I'd like to see him."

"He was asking about you," said Edith smoothly. "I'm sorry that my house is so full of guests and that—" Almost imperceptibly her long gray eyes slid toward Diantha, and back to him. "And that there isn't time to rearrange my plans," she went on in the same pleasant, reserved voice. "The Davenants are to be here only two days longer, and we're dining with the Trainors this evening. I'm waiting here for them now. I had to be here a bit early, to see Mrs. Vandare; she's sailing early in the morning. So, you see—"

The little, graceful gesture of her hands said everything—that she couldn't very well include him in her entertainments when everyone knew that he'd been indiscreet and brought his latest indiscretion along with him. He'd just have to be ignored, socially.

"Oh, well, I may go along to China myself. I'll see Clive there," said Giles, almost belligerently, as if to show that he

didn't mind the situation at all, and could see anyone he pleased if he cared to.

Edith smiled. "Yes, of course," she said, dubiously. "But here are your drinks, and my lemonade. Let's drink a toast to Mary and Clive."

Giles had ordered a whiskey sour for himself, but the waiter placed it in front of Diantha, and gave him her pineapple juice. Defiantly, she lifted it and drank before Giles could correct the mistake. She was the other woman, was she? All right, she certainly wouldn't pause at a sip of whiskey!

Giles' brows drew sharply together in displeasure, and Diantha laughed. She had eaten very little that day, and the liquor went straight to her head, giving her a feeling of release from the discomfort that had made her so wretched.

"Oh, I forgot that you don't know the Davenants, Miss . . . er . . . Miss"—Edith Wayburn turned appealingly to her husband, then quickly back to Diantha. "Miss Ames!" she said triumphantly. "For a moment I forgot."

Diantha's face flamed. "I'm not Lynn Ames, Mrs. Wayburn," she said curtly. "I'm Diantha Knight. I'm the new model, the one that came out this year. Lynn was last year's 'Giles girl.'"

She hadn't meant to say it. She had not the faintest notion of why she had done it, except that Edith's calm superiority had goaded her into wanting to be outrageous, to spoil it if she could.

"Dian!" Giles exclaimed, furiously.

"Why shouldn't I be frank, instead of beating about the bush as Mrs. Wayburn did?" she retorted. "She knew quite well that I'm not Lynn Ames. She wanted to embarrass me. She's heard the gossip about us, and believes it; she doesn't know there's not a word of truth in it."

"I . . . I think I see Beth Trainor looking for me!" Edith exclaimed, and was gone, swiftly, a slender, graceful figure, walking with her head held high, a woman who would never allow herself to be involved in an unpleasant situation.

"Really, Dian!" Giles' voice held an irritable, uneasy note that Diantha had never heard before. "Heaven only knows what Edith has heard and then for you to be so brash, so . . . so—I don't see what were you thinking of! Giving her the idea—"

"I didn't give her any idea that she didn't have already!" exclaimed Diantha, angrily. "I haven't done anything wrong, and she has no right to think I have. But she does, and so does everybody else, and it isn't my fault. Oh, the whole thing's so dreadful, having people talk about me, and your wife suspect me— It's unbearable, and I won't stand it!" And, to her own horror, she broke into loud sobs.

Somehow, Giles got her out to the car and back to the yacht. Lisa and the three men guests stared at her curiously, but Diantha did not care. She stumbled away to her own cabin, hating them, loathing herself. She should have known better than to get involved in this ghastly situation, of course, but she'd got into it before she knew what she was doing, and now she couldn't get out.

Lisa hammered on her door about an hour later, when Diantha had finally managed to stop crying. "I've brought you some food," she announced as she came in, followed by a steward with a tray. "You simply must eat, you know. Want to hear the latest developments?"

"No," said Diantha firmly.

"Giles is fit to be tied," Lisa continued, curling up on one of the big floor cushions, the skirt of her crisp black frock billowing about her. "The poor dear just can't stand it that Edith is entertaining a lot of bigwigs and he's beyond the pale. So he's suddenly decided that he ought to turn this boat over to the government, to be done over in case we get involved in the war, and is going to ship us all home tomorrow, like a lot of servants. Only none of us are going. Mona's been invited to stay here with her old school friend. She and a nice, gray-haired man named Johnson appeared for a few mo-

ments just before you got back, to break the news. Kitty took the boys to a cocktail party this afternoon, and they were such a success that they're practically certain of being invited to stay somewhere. And I just flatly told Giles that I wouldn't go home, and that if he didn't make it possible for me to put up at a hotel and get passage home when I wanted it, I'd talk, and talk, and talk until he'd wish he had. Call it blackmail if you want to—a girl on her own has to think of little things like that if she's going to get along."

Diantha stared at her drearily. "Grade B," she was thinking, hearing Lynn Ames' cool, contemptuous voice saying it.

"So you'll be sailing away all by yourself," continued Lisa, with her impish smile. "Because, unless I'm mistaken, Mona intends to marry the nice Johnson man and live on his pineapple plantation in luxury for the rest of her days. But, of course, Giles will make it all right with you—"

Suddenly, Diantha could stand no more. "I wish you'd get out of here and leave me alone," she said curtly. "You've told your news, and I'm not going to tell you what I think of it. So there's no reason why you should stay."

"Ah, but there is," retorted Lisa, not moving. "Be a good sport and do just one little thing for me, even though you don't like me. There's a reporter here, wanting a story. He's heard that you and Edith and Giles had a little session together today, and that you wept after Edith had left you. He thinks he knows what happened, but he wants your side of it."

"Lisa, if you don't get out—" cried Diantha, beside herself with fury.

"Well, I told him I'd ask if you'd see him," replied Lisa, undisturbed, as she rose gracefully to her feet. "You're making an awful fuss over nothing, Dian. If you'd just use your head you'd come out of this whole thing very nicely."

After she had closed the door, Diantha

sat on the bed, staring at it. She hadn't used her head ever since she met Giles, she told herself. She'd just gone on, accepting what he offered, playing a dangerous, foolish game because it was fun, because it helped her to stop thinking about Alan. Giles had been only too willing to play it with her, and her mother had urged her on.

Impulsively, wanting only to end it, to sever every connection with him, she jumped up and began to pack. She took only the clothes that she would need most—the provocative evening frocks. The soft silk shirts and slacks, she left for Mona. Mona could wear her clothes, and would want them, if she was engaged in husband-hunting.

Diantha could not make plans for the future; she knew only that she must go home, and that she could not go on Giles' boat. There'd be some other way, and in the morning, when she wasn't so exhausted that she couldn't think, she'd find it.

She got up so early that none of the other guests had risen yet, and went ashore, her suitcase and jewel case in her hand. She walked the sunny streets until she found the shop that she wanted; in its cool interior she poured the moonstones and the diamond-and-pearl bracelet that Giles had given her onto the counter, and waited to hear how much they would bring.

To her amazement she found that the moonstones were more valuable than she had thought. She had taken them, that day in Havana, because they were semi-precious stones, the kind of gift that she could accept from Giles. The money that they brought would take her back to New York.

The ship from San Francisco was sail-

ing that morning for home. Diantha was walking up the gangplank when someone laid a hand on her shoulder. She knew that touch so well that it did not need Giles' voice to tell her who had stopped her.

"Dian!" he said reproachfully. "Surely you wouldn't run away without letting me know. Don't be impulsive and childish, dear. Wait and hear what I have to say."

Diantha steeled herself against him; even now his touch could excite her. She had been feeling helpless and forlorn; it was a temptation to lean on him once more, to let him manage things.

"I don't want to hear what you have to say," she answered, walking steadily onward, up the incline leading to the deck. "I've been a fool; you've helped me, but it wasn't all your fault. I should have known better. I'm not going to make the same mistake again."

He laughed indulgently. "Don't be dramatic, darling," he exclaimed. "You must forgive me for yesterday, and the nonsense I talked to Lisa and the others last night. I can manage Edith, and you and I—"

Diantha turned to face him squarely. "Not you and I, Giles, ever again," she said. "Let me go now, or I'll make such a scene that you won't ever be able to hold up your head in Honolulu."

She had known that that would make him step back. But the sudden widening of his eyes told her that she had said and done the one thing that would be sure to make him want her more than ever. Giles always wanted most the thing that he could not have.

"I'm not giving up, Dian!" he told her as he turned to go. "Nobody in the world can take you from me."

*Is Diantha at last free of Giles or will he follow her, completely ruin her life as the life of any single girl who permits her name to be coupled with that of a married man's is ruined?*



# Streamlined disguise

by Eve Benyas

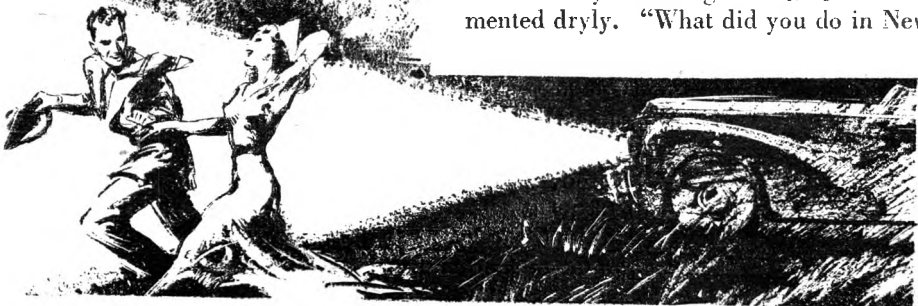
**New York glitter? It can intoxicate a girl until nothing matters but the lure of a love that knows no rules.**

THEY were sitting in a parked car, smoking cigarettes, and the moon had bathed Cornelia's face into an enticing pattern of silver lace.

Joel said, "You've been different, Corny, ever since you got back from New York. That cynical pose doesn't become you. I don't like it."

"It's not a pose, I tell you," Cornelia cried resentfully. "I hate this small town with its smugness and prim conventionality. There isn't a soul here I can talk with."

"Not very flattering to me," Joel commented dryly. "What did you do in New



York that you can't do here? If you're such a free soul why should this town be able to fetter you?"

Cornelia's tragic blue eyes swept his face, and her lips smiled in faint scorn. "It's just the people, not anything I did. You have a little private world of your own when you talk to people who speak your language."

"And I don't? Tell me why you think so."

"Oh, I don't know exactly," Cornelia admitted with a sigh. "I suppose it's because you are such a solid young man and everyone thinks we ought to get married. Your profession means everything in the world to you. Your father thinks you're wonderful, the town thinks you're wonderful. You may be a good doctor, Joel, but you don't understand women like me."

Joel's eyes narrowed. "A pretty speech, my dear," he returned coolly. "Now it's my turn. If you found yourself a more constructive job to do, something that would tax your mind a little more than working prettily in your father's drugstore, and stopped thinking about your unhappy state, you'd be a more cheerful specimen. So I don't understand women like you? Half the neurotic women who come up to my office are women like you who are trying to find the meaning of life."

Cornelia's quick rise of anger left her suddenly. Joel was a handsome, exasperating devil and his pug nose and sensitive mouth gave him a little-boy look. His eyes were almost black and magnetic in their intensity, and she could easily understand why half the women who came to his office sought the meaning of life from him. She had a sudden impulse to push back that stray lock of black hair drooping over his forehead.

There was no use prolonging this discussion. "Well, darling," she said, "I think it's time to retire."

"My, my," he mocked, "you don't want to do anything so conventional as retire?"

Can't you think of something more exciting?"

"Oh, shut up," she told him sullenly.

He pulled her to him suddenly, kissed her lips roughly. She made no objection, but remained stiff and unresponsive. She would not, she told herself fiercely, settle down and become just a wife for even so attractive a man as Joel. She wanted fun, laughter, excitement, and love that knew no rules.

Cornelia, in her drugstore uniform of blue percale, wondered how she could bear this gnawing dissatisfaction much longer. She'd have to get away again, anywhere, out of this awful town. When she'd lost her job in New York, mother and dad had insisted on her coming home. Oh, it hadn't been much of a job—dad had augmented her salary with a monthly check—but working in that bookstore was such fun and such grand people came in. Then mother and dad had insisted that she'd had her little fling and they were lonesome and wanted her.

She approached her father. "Couldn't we straighten stock today, dad?" she asked. She wanted to work—work hard so that there wouldn't be time to think. That's what Joel, the righteous, had told her last night. If she had let herself go, if she hadn't steeled herself against him, there was no telling what might have happened. It wasn't easy to be with him and not succumb to him as she felt the warmth of his lips and the throbbing of his heart against hers.

She felt a little ashamed of the speech she had given him because it hadn't been exactly on the level. He understood women all right. The only thing he didn't understand about them was their dishonesty. She didn't call herself dishonest, exactly. It was just that sometimes her imagination got mixed up with facts.

Cornelia, on her knees, began to rearrange the cosmetic shelves. After a

while, she straightened her aching back with a groan.

"Could you wait on me, please?" a male voice asked politely.

A little embarrassed because of her obviously crippled state and the groan which he must have heard, she said, "Sorry, but being down on your knees for any length of time cramps your style. What can I do for you?"

Her breath caught sharply as she looked at him. She had never seen him before. A stranger in town? A salesman? He wasn't at all good-looking. His nose seemed to have been broken, and his dark hair looked a little thin. His eyes were disconcerting, a clear gray, almond-shaped, almost Mongolian. He was frankly staring at her.

His lips parted in a slow smile, showing well-matched and very white teeth. "I've almost forgotten what I wanted. Oh, yes, shaving cream. I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Lee Biron, the new man on the *Chronicle*."

"Oh, yes!" The new man on the *Chronicle*. Then he was going to live here! "I'd heard that someone bought an interest in the paper. I'll introduce you to dad—"

"No, wait. Who are you?" His voice was intimate, suddenly.

"Me?" Cornelia's blue eyes widened. "Nobody very much. Nobody at all."

"Oh, yes," he said softly. "Yes, you are."

"Here's dad," she announced lightly. But her heart was racing.

Introductions made, the men shook hands. "Hope you like us here, Biron," her father said heartily. "From New York, aren't you? You and my daughter, Cornelia"—inclining his head toward her—"ought to get together sometime. Guess she finds us a little dull."

Cornelia reddened. Poor, darling, blundering dad, practically throwing her into Lee Biron's arms. "Will you excuse me, please?" she murmured. "There is a customer waiting."

Angry resentment swept through her, although she couldn't have said exactly why. The man's conceit was colossal. Probably looking for amusement.

She waited on her customer with extraordinary fidelity. Finished, she found him waiting.

His eyes held hers for a long minute. "Don't you think we ought to get together sometime, very soon? Tomorrow night?"

"I—" she began, and found reason deserting her.

"Please," he urged softly.

"All right," she whispered.

Just before closing time, Joel dropped in. Cornelia welcomed him gayly. "How's the big doctor man today? Still smug?"

Joel whistled softly, peering at her with exaggerated curiosity. "Well, the little lady is bathed in radiance, or something. Tell papa."

She turned on him more vehemently than the occasion warranted, a tart comment on her lips, but noticed that he looked tired and drawn, and relented. She asked, "Did you have a hard day, Joel?"

He nodded briefly. "I'm worried about one of my patients."

"Oh, I'm sorry," she said. Impulsively, she placed her hand on his arm.

He smiled ruefully. "I can't make it tonight, but tomorrow night?"

Tomorrow night? She'd been about to accept and then she remembered. Lee Biron. Joel wouldn't like it. And she knew instinctively that Joel wouldn't like Lee.

"Not tomorrow night. I'm sorry, but I have a date."

"A date? Well, some other time." He looked away from her, unhappy and defeated.

There wasn't any reason why she should explain anything to him, and yet — "I—" she began, and faltered a little. "The new man on the *Chronicle* came in

here. He's from New York, and I thought it would be fun."

"Oh? He doesn't believe in wasting time, does he? Well, have fun. Be seeing you," he said morosely, and was gone.

She looked after him, but her mind had dismissed him already. She was still exalted by the triumphant certainty that Lee Biron was going to speak her language.

Mrs. Bronson approved her daughter's costume of eggshell crêpe. Cornelia was lovely, with her glistening brown curls baby fashion on the top of her head.

"What's Mr. Biron like, Cornelia? As nice as Dr. Joel?" her mother teased.

Cornelia laughed. "Not as nice-looking, is he, dad?"

"Hm-m-m," her father grunted. "Might be all right. Hard to say."

Cornelia thought, "The old darlings! They are so afraid I'll be tempted away from Joel if I go with anyone else. They're suspicious of anybody new."

Her heart jumped at the ring of the doorbell and, as she ran to answer it, she knew she was looking her loveliest.

She heard his deep, intense voice saying, "Good evening," and led him to her mother. Mrs. Bronson acknowledged the introduction with frigid courtesy. "Of course you wouldn't like him, mother!" Cornelia thought. "He isn't frank, open, and solid! He isn't dull and stupid!" A fierce protectiveness swept through her. They, Lee and herself, were two against the righteous town.

She sank down into the cushion of his roadster happily. He said, "Where to?"

"Let's just drive. Maybe stop for a sandwich at the Green Blazer later."

"Cornelia," he mused softly. "I like it. May I call you Nelia?"

"Of course." Strange that he should want to call her that. Only the gang in New York had called her Nelia.

"I can't believe my luck," he said. "I came here prepared to live like a monk,

and I find you. Tell me about yourself. You don't belong here, do you?"

"No. I'm going to get out as soon as I can."

"Not so fast! Remember me? I'm the man who is going to keep you in my life as long as I can. Tell me, no sweet-hearts in town?"

What a ruthless approach he had—stripping her of everything right away! But she liked it. She liked everything about this man so very much that she was afraid she must be blazing the information to him like a neon sign.

"I object, your honor. This is not a courtroom," she said banteringly.

He laughed. "It doesn't matter. You're the most adorable thing I've seen in or out of New York. What did you do there?"

"Worked in a bookshop. Writers, poets, and intellectuals came in. Oh, it was fun. I shared a tiny Park Avenue apartment with a girl. Some of the gang lived in broken-down studios."

"Bohemian, eh? You outgrow it. I did."

He veered off the road suddenly and parked the car. "I want to look at you when I talk," he told her, lighting a cigarette.

He lit a cigarette for her and held the flame near her face. Her eyes looked enormous. He said huskily, "You're a beautiful child, and unhappy. I think I could make you happy."

"I think you could, Lee." A quaver in her voice betrayed her.

She met his eyes and was lost. In his arms the world was blotted out. "Darling, darling," he whispered.

Joel and Cornelia decided to try the new Chinaman's place for chicken chow mein.

"Have a nice time last night?" Joel asked with a casualness almost studied.

"Yes. He's interesting," Cornelia said. She was possessed by sweet and terrible longings for Lee. Joel seemed to have



*Joel was an attractive man, but he didn't understand Cornelia. Before she settled down to being just a wife, she wanted fun, laughter, excitement.*

something on his mind. Could he possibly know what had happened to her? Of course, Joel could see it and she was a fool to think she was able to hide a thing like that.

Joel was drawing a fantastic design on a piece of paper. He said, "I met Lee Biron this afternoon. I wasn't prepared to meet anyone I had known at the university."

Cornelia gave him a quick glance. "You knew Lee at school?"

Joel met her glance with a long, direct look, like a diver about to take a plunge. "Quite well," he said. Then, "He's married, Corny."

"I don't believe it," she blazed out at him. He was jealous and, fair means or foul, he was trying to hurt her!

"Corny," he said gently, "don't be a little fool. I asked him how his wife, Helen, was and he said fine. She's working in New York now and may come here later."

Her eyes met his, defiantly blue. "I don't know what possible difference that could make in our friendship," she told him coldly.

Joel retorted mockingly, "None at all, my dear, none at all. Friendships with married men are always beautifully platonic."

Cornelia's cheeks reddened. Her one consuming desire was to lash back at him. "Now that you've fulfilled your duty, will you take me home, please?"

She saw that Joel's shoulders drooped suddenly, and his face looked tense and tired.

After Joel's bitter disclosure, Cornelia lay awake half the night, tossing in a sea of self-accusation. A free soul, was she? What a laugh! Intuitive pricks of doubt assailed her as she thought of Lee. What, after all, did she know about him?

It had been such fun in New York, running around with the assumption that you were sophisticated. But there had been no actual test. Nothing like this.

She wondered what she would do when

she saw him again. She remembered his lips on hers, and was frightened at the intensity of feeling that swept over her.

Scarcely conscious of the people she waited on, her ears strained to catch the voice that would quicken her pulses.

"Good morning, Miss Bronson," he said.

Hot color rose in her cheeks. "Good morning," she answered a little breathlessly.

"A package of cigarettes. I love you, darling," he whispered.

Cornelia answered in fierce delight, "Idiot! Be careful. Dad's watching."

"I don't care. I want the world to know it. You're keeping tonight for me?"

She nodded, her face sobering. "I want to talk to you. Please go now. I hate all these people staring."

Later, in his car, Cornelia watched Lee light a cigarette. There was strength and grace, a quick sureness in all his movements. She asked, "Lee, what did you do in New York before you came here?"

"Reporter. When I got this chance to buy an interest in the *Chronicle* I thought maybe I could make some money."

Cornelia's mouth made a round O. It was ridiculous to sit here beside him and wonder about his wife and feel afraid to ask him. She said, "Tell me about yourself."

"Nelia, there was nothing in my life until you came. I hope you're not going to turn into one of those moral women. Please, darling, don't."

"Lee, you're married." She had said it now, in a hushed, shocked whisper, and her heart was suffocating her.

He faced her squarely and in silence for a long minute. "You are afraid, aren't you? You're afraid of the fundamental meaning of existence. You're unaware of perfection, of beauty. Nelia, don't run away."

How many times she had spouted the same phrases! They had rolled off her tongue with the greatest of ease. Why,

then, did this perverse feeling grip her? Was she really a puritan in streamlined disguise?

She was unable to stop herself from asking him, "What's she like, Lee? Your wife?"

He smiled at her indulgently. "Helen is very tall, blond, and very much like a nice new refrigerator."

A wave of jealousy engulfed her. Now, she thought bitterly, she was going primitive. "Is she pretty, Lee?"

"Yes, I suppose she is. Like a piece of classic sculpture. Nelia, I don't want to talk about her. Don't feel sorry for her, because she's a very self-sufficient sort of person."

Gradually, her fear subsided. "We can be friends, can't we, Lee? I love to talk to you, and sometimes I'd like to read you some of my poems. We can be awfully good friends, can't we?" Oh, Lee darling, we must!

"Of course, my dear. Your slender white hands will guide our friendship." He added, in a lighter tone, "My legs feel cramped. What do you say we get out of the car and race down to the beach?"

"Oh, fun!"

He swung her out of the car and held her against his heart for a brief moment. "Adorable child," he whispered.

September brought a brief brilliance to the quiet little town. The trees, Cornelia thought, had never been more exquisitely colored. The maples on the streets were arches of red-gold flame. She was aware of a new sensitiveness toward beauty. Tears came to her eyes very easily these days.

She had taken to walking alone a great deal. Her family had encouraged it. "We're not busy in the store and it will do you good to get out."

Her mother's eyes had looked at her with hurt in them. Of course, she must seem like a callous child to them, but

what could she tell them? She couldn't say, "Mother, I am in love with a married man. We are awfully good friends."

And Joel—every time he saw her, he carefully avoided the subject of Lee, as if it were poison. It was none of his concern what she did with her life, was it? He had no right to stand by and moralize.

She scuffed her flat-heeled oxfords through the masses of fallen leaves, angrily. Maybe she ought to run away, leave town. A lovely friendship with Lee was rapidly becoming impossible.

Long blasts from a horn warned her of an approaching car. Looking up, she saw it was Joel. He drew up to the curb and stopped.

"Lady out walking," he said. "Lucky girl. I'd give anything if I could join you."

"Well, join me in spirit if not in body. On your way to the hospital?" she inquired.

He nodded. "I was up all night and I'm practically dead for sleep. Would you care to go to the Military Ball with me, Corny?"

Cornelia hesitated. Lee might ask her. She heard herself saying, "Thank you, Joel, I'd love to."

His pleasure was so obvious that it warmed her, and Cornelia laughed. She waved as he went on to the hospital.

Cornelia grew introspective—something she had not done for a long time. She saw clearly that she had not wanted to flaunt her friendship with Lee upon the town openly. And that if Joel went out of her life completely, she would not like it. But Lee! The mere thought of him was like a drug.

The moment she saw the girl, she knew. Very tall and blond, and a stranger. Lee's wife! Cornelia suddenly felt ill. She wondered if it were her imagination, but the girl seemed to be appraising her, carefully and warily.

"Are these on sale?" she asked. Her voice was low, cultivated.

Cornelia held the perfumed bars of soap in her hand. "Yes. Three for a quarter. Have you used this brand before? It's lovely."

"Yes," she answered. Her eyes, a clear amber, continued to look straight into Cornelia's.

Cornelia felt her breath quicken as rebellion rose in her, a strong tide. Why had she come here? What right had she to come back and destroy his life?

Cornelia wrapped the package and took her money. She said, "Thank you." The blond girl smiled at her, a sweet, gentle smile. But not until she had left did Cornelia realize with shock that what she had seen in the clear amber eyes was hatred.

For the first time Cornelia was angry with Lee.

"How can you say it won't make any difference? I don't care at all about being a back-street wife. She knew about us, Lee. How did she know?"

Lee shrugged. He said sullenly, "I told her. She's not going to like living in a small town and I told her to go back to New York. She had a good job there, and I don't know why she didn't stay."

"You don't suppose," Cornelia asked slowly, "it's because she loves you?"

"Sure, she loves me. And hangs around my neck like a noose. But what difference does that make?"

This was a Lee she had not known before. With unbelievable clarity he had defined for her his code. Nothing made any difference except what he wanted. She knew, now, why his wife had looked at her with such hatred. Not because she hated her. How can you hate a person you don't know? It was because Cornelia, in her eyes, was simply another woman. Lee's wife must have endured a succession of them. Perhaps those clear amber eyes had once been gay.

Cornelia felt tired suddenly, and realized that any argument with Lee on the subject of his wife would be futile. She made no accusation against Lee, only against herself. She remembered what Joel had said to her, "Half the neurotic women who come up to my office are women like you who are trying to find the meaning of life." And she had chosen Lee as her guide.

She knew what she must do now. "Lee, I'm not going to see you any more."

"You can't be serious!" he flared. "Nelia, darling, you don't know what you're saying. Oh, I suppose I must look like a rotter in your eyes, but I love you so terribly. And when a man's in love with—"

She couldn't bear much more of it. His words were meaningless. All the magic had gone. "I'm sorry, Lee. I'll chalk it up to experience."

But he wouldn't believe her. "Think it over. You'll change your mind, and I'll be waiting."

How smug he was, how absolutely sure of himself!

And for a solid week he tried desperately to see her. The next week he had transferred his business to another drugstore. There was a pretty girl in that drugstore, too.

Cornelia had no desire to go to the Military Ball with Joel. But she would go, only for the sake of pleasing mother and dad. They hadn't said anything, but their relief at the departure of Lee had been so obvious. Poor darlings.

Cornelia looked lovely in a dress of soft black crêpe, molded to her slender figure, and topped with a glittering gay sequins bolero. Looking impatiently at her wrist watch, she saw that Joel was already late. You never could depend on a doctor. The minutes dragged on, Cornelia's fury mounting because he had not telephoned. She would give him five more minutes.



The telephone rang sharply, and Cornelia ran to answer it. With a keen stab of disappointment she recognized her father's voice, but in the next moment she had forgotten everything except what her father was saying. His voice trembled with excitement. "Can you come down to the drugstore right away? There's been a terrible train wreck about five miles out of town. Hospital wants a lot of stuff . . . need help . . . calling for volunteers. Make it as fast as you can."

Flinging a coat over her shoulders, Cornelia made the store in exactly three minutes. Her father was nervously trying to get together the huge emergency order the hospital had called for—bandages and antiseptics.

"They say about fifty people were hurt, a few killed. I don't know how they're going to take care of them all," her father said brokenly.

They piled the supplies into the car and Cornelia drove to the hospital. A block from the hospital she saw that the street was thick with people, and that they were obstructing her passage. Blowing the horn of her car furiously, she inched her way through.

Inside the hospital, emergency cots had been set up in every available inch of space. People were moaning and screaming in their pain.

Cornelia's eyes sought frantically for Joel. She found him on the second floor, caring for the more serious cases. He nodded at her curtly. "Take the supplies to the supply room. And take off your coat. I can use you here."

Cornelia obeyed like an automaton. Scrubbing her hands, she went back to Joel. She obeyed his curt orders hour after hour, until she thought she would drop from exhaustion. While Cornelia's mouth trembled so that she could not control it, Joel had a smile of assurance for each mangled patient. He was an irresistible force, a mountain of strength, and his patients adored him with their pain-filled eyes.

In the bright glare of the hospital lights, Cornelia saw the emptiness, the uselessness of her life, and humbly she prayed for forgiveness. She was still wearing the gay bolero of sequins and now it glittered falsely. She might have gone through life glittering gayly like that. Some people did, like Lee.

Dawn was breaking before Joel felt he was no longer needed. Silently, they made their way out of the hospital together.

Joel ordered. "Get into my car and you can pick yours up later."

"I'll make you a cup of coffee. I could use one myself," Cornelia said shakily. She felt faint, and hoped desperately that she would not disgrace herself. Joel hadn't given her a word of praise. But as soon as the thought had crossed her mind she was ashamed of it. Joel was the one worthy of praise, saving all those lives!

Joel sat wearily on the davenport in the Bronson living room, his long legs stretched before him. "We'll be able to move some of them out tomorrow. That'll give us a little more room," he said. There was a worried frown between his eyes.

A compassionate look came over Cornelia's face. "Darling, why don't you lie down and rest until the coffee is ready? Relax, and you'll feel better." Tenderly, she pushed a stray lock of hair from his eyes.

Joel looked at her as if he were seeing her for the very first time. "Corny, you —" His voice choked, and he opened his arms to her. Their lips met and clung together until she fought for breath above the crazy beating of her heart.

Her eyes lifted to his, her red lips tremulous. She had found it now, this thing she had been so desperately seeking.

There was a sort of shining quality about her as she said. "I think the coffee is boiling over. Shall we see?"

# TWO ON A MERRY-GO-ROUND

and going round and  
round and getting nowhere



by Martha Ellen Wright

THEY had tiptoed up onto the front porch, as usual, at three o'clock, and Blossom had kissed Ted in the pale, misty light of morning and sent him away, and then she had picked up the milk and brought it in.

Now she had taken off her flowing black skirt and her red, gold-embroidered

jacket and hung them in her closet, had religiously cold-creamed her face and put on a woolly robe and fuzzy bunny slippers, but she was still not very sleepy. It did not seem a particle of use to get into bed while she was in this wakeful mood, so she switched on the little lamp at her desk, sat down and drew a leather-bound book from the drawer.

She uncapped her fountain pen and wrote the date first. Then, after a glance at her desk clock, she wrote, "3:22 a. m." She began to write rapidly:

We've had a lovely week end. Ted is such a sweet, considerate guy! I do love him so much! He met me at the train when I got home Friday night and we had dinner at the Pirate Ship. Then Bess and Sam came in and we all went to the Stardust Room. We ended up at the diner for bacon and eggs at 2:30. I slept till noon. Shopped in the afternoon and got that red jacket I liked so much. Ted came for me and we had dinner at the Ruby Room and then went to the Carousel Bar for drinks, and Clare, Dick, Polly and Duncan were there and Bess and Sam came and we went on to the Hawaiian Room to dance.

She wrinkled her forehead a little to remember where they went next and then she wrote, "We all went onto the Pirate Ship, but they were just closing, so we went to the diner for bacon and eggs—"

This sounded strikingly repetitive, so she looked back to make sure she wasn't mixed up. No, that was right—Friday night they had dined at the Ship, Saturday morning they ate at the diner, also this morning, which was Sunday.

Purely in a spirit of research, she began flipping the pages over in her book to see if she could distinguish one week end from another. After a few minutes she closed the covers of the diary and stared at it with a sense of shock. Their routine included only five places, at the most six or seven, if you counted the diner. And that routine dated as far back as the beginning of this diary.

How many hours out of her life did that make that she had spent sitting at little tables? So many that all the places

LS—5D

were blurred now in her memory. She could only recall the Carousel Bar with its twinkling mirrors and red-and-white-striped awning going round and round. And all the faces that were reflected in those mirrors were the same ones, only six or seven of them, too—the old crowd, all going round and round with them on the merry-go-round!

She stood up and thrust the diary into the drawer. She must have had too many cocktails last night. She felt a little dizzy. She went over to her bed and lay down across it, trying to remember how Ted's face had looked across from her at one of the many little tables. She couldn't make it come clear. She cried a bit then, because Ted looked like a stranger in her mind. And then she fell asleep, still in her robe and furry slippers.

When she woke it was very late and she knew, from the silence in the house, that everyone had gone to church. She went into the bathroom, bathed her face in cold water and looked at herself critically in the glass. She was surprised to see how fresh she looked—clear blue eyes with long brown lashes tipped in gold, blue smudges under them this morning, though. Delicate skin, as fresh and scrubbed-looking as one of her third-graders, tumbled golden-brown hair—Blossom Wayne, known to thirty noisy, bouncing youngsters as "our Miss Wayne."

"I wonder," she thought, "what you'd think of your Miss Wayne if you saw her in a night club at two o'clock in the morning?"

She turned away from the mirror then and went downstairs. She found a note from her mother on the kitchen table.

You were sleeping so soundly, I didn't like to wake you. There's cereal on the stove and milk in the ice box.

Blossom opened the ice box and got out a pitcher of tomato juice. Nibs, the cat, whose full name was His Nibs, came

strolling out just to get acquainted with her again and see if she could spare a drop of milk. She poured some into his saucer and sat down on a stool, sipping from her own glass. The hazy, half-hysterical misery she had known this morning early was gone and in its place was order and clarity.

"Ted and I," she told His Nibs, "have gotten on a merry-go-round and we don't know how to get off. We began it—I don't know when—but it was as soon as we were old enough to think night-clubbing was smart and it was disgraceful to come home before two. Now we're in the groove and can't stop. It's got to the point where I never see my parents any more. They're strangers who write notes to me. And Ted's a stranger, too. We're never alone any more until the sun comes up in the morning."

His Nibs finished his milk and purred around her legs. She said, "This isn't a new idea, Nibs. I think it every Sunday morning, and then every Friday night Ted meets me and I say, 'What's doing?' and he says, 'We're rounding up the gang,' and we end up at the diner at 2:30. We've got to stop it, Nibs! It's ruining us!"

She slid down off the stool and ran into the hall. She picked up the telephone and gave a number. Presently, a woman answered.

"Mrs. Allison," said Blossom, "I'd like to speak to Ted a minute."

"Why, he's still asleep, Blossom. If it's important—"

"It is. Very!"

Ted came to the phone presently, mumbling and yawning, "Yeah?"

"Ted, this is Blossom. Can you come right over? I've got to talk to you."

"Now? What's wrong? What's up?"

"Please come, Ted. The folks will be back from church pretty soon and I want to talk to you alone."

He galloped up the front steps presently, his unshaven chin faintly blue, his eyes worried.

"So that's what he looks like!" thought Blossom, loving him with her eyes. Tall, and with an athlete's build, wide shoulders and practically no hips, curly black hair that he usually tried to subdue with much brushing and oil, but which lay in tight kinks this morning, a nice mouth that never laughed too much or too loudly, but that could kiss— Oh, how he could kiss!

He kissed her now, scratching her cheek with his morning beard. "What's up, Cherry Blossom?" This was his pet name for her, used only in their most intimate moments.

She pushed him into a chair. "I want to read you some of my diary."

"Holy smoke! What is this—black-mail? Is it written in purple ink?"

"Be still and listen. See if you can hear a single new place we've been or a single different thing we've done for two years."

She began to read passages selected at random, "July, the Pirate Ship, August, the Ruby Room, September, the Hawaiian Room, October, the Stardust, November, the Ruby Room, December, the Carousel Bar—" She looked up finally. "What does that say to you?"

He shrugged. "Sounds to me as though we've had a lot of good times."

"Oh, Ted!" she cried, exasperated. "Did we ever really have a good time at any of those places? They were all alike—the same faces, the same wisecracks, the same mediocre music, the same old drinks."

His face flushed a little. "I thought you were having fun. That was mostly why we did it—to compensate for you having to be stuck in that little town all week, not able to take a drink or smoke a cigarette because of the school board. I've certainly spared no expense to show you a good time!"

Blossom didn't realize that she had hit him without warning, using no technique at all, and that he was naturally resentful and abashed. She went on heedlessly,

"That's another thing, Ted—how much it's cost. When you stop to count up all we've spent for drinks, for taxis, for cover charges, for dance tickets, with Tom Collinses at forty cents apiece, figuring several hundred of them—why, Ted, we could have been married and had our house and a car—"

"You talk like a schoolteacher all right," he cried. "Why don't you put that problem up to your kids on Monday morning—how many highballs at forty cents apiece make a marriage?"

Blossom looked at him and was suddenly furious. How could she have meant this sullen, stubborn, unshaven man when she had written "dear, sweet, considerate guy"?

She said, very evenly, "That's just it, Ted. It doesn't add up to a marriage. It adds up to just the opposite."

He would not let her see how she had hurt him. He jumped up, very proud, stiff and angry. "If that's what you got me over here to tell me, you could just as well have sent a note and let me get my sleep out! It adds up to the fact that you're bored with me. That's it, isn't it?"

It was not that at all, but Blossom's throat was so tight she could not get a word out. He grabbed his hat and rushed out the front door, almost colliding with her family, who were coming up the steps.

Her mother asked, "What was the matter with Ted? His face looked so funny and he didn't have a word to say to us. You two haven't quarreled, have you?"

"No, mother," said Blossom wearily. "We've just called the whole thing off," and she dragged herself upstairs to put the diary away in the desk.

In spite of the finality of her statement, she felt a little sick when Ted did not call, or come to take her to the station. She spent the most miserable hours of her young life as the train crept slowly

down to Milltown and deposited her and her overnight bag on the platform.

As soon as she was back in Milltown again, she knew what had changed her. It had not been anything Ted had done or said. It had not been the gang—they were really swell people and she was fond of them. It had been living in this quiet, sleepy town where the corner drugstore was the most exciting place to go, where there was a street called Clover Lane lined with honeymoon cottages and where wives, no older than she, brought pink-cheeked boys and girls to kindergarten. Here in this town young people her own age were expected to be cozily settled down, raising a family. Rank envy of all the occupants of the little white bungalows had turned her against her life as it was now.

She wanted to write something of this to Ted, but a girl has her pride. He had stamped out of her house like a spoiled child and it was up to him to write first and apologize. Of course, he didn't. He was just as stubborn as she was and he was hurt, too. As the next week end drew near without a letter or telephone call, Blossom began to feel desperate. When Joe Field, the math teacher and basketball coach in the consolidated school,



asked her to stay in Milltown over Sunday and go on a hayride with him, she nearly knocked him off his feet by accepting.

"I'm going to have a wonderful time here," Blossom wrote her mother. "This is the kind of week end I've been needing—something simple and unsophisticated."

She was wrong. She was thoroughly miserable from three o'clock on Friday when she dismissed her pupils, until nine o'clock Monday morning when they trooped in again. Joe was nice and he tried hard to lift her out of her blues, but it was no use. Monday and the return of her wild, squealing, spitball-throwing urchins came to her like a reprieve. Tuesday she had a note from Bess. Blossom picked up the square blue envelope with a sense of foreboding, because Bess never wrote letters unless it was an occasion.

Bess wrote:

Darling, we missed you so much Friday night. We went to the Hawaiian Room, and who do you think was there? Ted Allison with—of all people!—Miriam Tyndall. She had on a spiff new dress, all black, laced up in gold! How I envy her for having no tummy! Ted was a scream! I never saw him riding so high before. We simply howled! Darling, I hope you won't mind my telling you all this, but I thought you ought to know—

"My best friend—the little cat!" cried Blossom, crushing the fragile blue paper in her hand. But a sudden chill went through her. Miriam Tyndall was a new girl in town and she was both vivacious and beautiful. For the first time in her life, Blossom was afraid of her power to hold Ted. Perhaps he never intended to call her again. Perhaps—and this was a terrible thought—perhaps he was as tired of her as he thought she was of him! If it was true, as Bess had said, that he had been having such a good time with Miriam, that really frightened her. For she knew now, beyond any doubt, that Ted meant more to her than anything,

more than any principle, more than any way of life.

Tears sprang to her eyes as she smoothed out Bess' note and reread it. "Oh, Ted," she said, turning his picture on her dresser so that it faced her, "those things I said Sunday morning weren't so important, really. I just thought they were. You're the only thing that's important. I'll go around on a merry-go-round the rest of my life, if I have to, but I'll never let you go again."

So on Friday she packed her overnight bag once more and took the train home. It seemed strange to have her father meet her at the station, as if he knew Ted would not be there. She went home and took her newest dress out of its paper cover—the baby-pink dress with the little quilted jacket that zipped up the front, and the soft blue turban with the enormous bow that she had been saving for Easter.

Her mother came to her door as she was putting on her lipstick. "Is Ted coming by for you, Blossom?"

"No, I don't think so, mother. I'm going out alone."

She had never done anything like that before, but she felt very calm. She knew exactly where to go and what to do. At the Pirate Ship she asked the manager, "Has Ted been here yet tonight?"

"I haven't seen him, Miss Wayne. Miss Sparks and her young man are over there at a table."

"Thanks, I'll sit with them."

Bess greeted her effusively, "Darling! I thought you'd be showing up! Where's Ted?"

"I don't know. He doesn't know I came home."

"Stick with us, Blossom," invited Sam generously. "We're making the rounds. He'll be somewhere along the line."

"Thank you, Sam, you're sweet," said Blossom.

He wasn't at the Ruby Room, but Clare and Dick were. Nor was he at the

Hawaiian Room, but they annexed a third couple there—Polly and Duncan. By the time they came into the Carousel Bar, they were quite a little party. And there was Ted, sitting alone at the twinkling, revolving bar. He did not know anyone was watching him and he looked so utterly forlorn that Blossom forgot all her carefully rehearsed speeches and simply slipped down on a stool beside him and said, "Hello, Ted."

He turned around and his eyes were incredulous. "Blossom!"

And then they both asked, right together, "Are you alone?"

They stopped and looked at each other, laughing, and Blossom said, "Needles!" and Ted said, "Pins!" and then he cried, "Oh, why go on with it? Why make a wish? My wish is answered right now! If only you knew how I'd been wanting you, Blossom!"

She said, "I do know. I've been wanting you, too."

He groaned, "And I'd been thinking about you running around with that muscle-bound basketball coach—"

She asked, "Miriam couldn't come to-night?"

"I didn't ask her. She was a good sport last week end, Blossom, but she was smart enough to see I was only putting on an act. We both knew she was just a substitute." Suddenly, he stood up. "Let's get out of here, honey. We've got

things to say to each other that can't be said in public like this!"

"All right, where shall we go?"

"We could walk in the park."

"I'd love to!" she cried.

They hadn't walked very far in the park before they found a bench, and when they had had their lovely, heart-shaking kiss of reconciliation, Ted said, "This is nicer than any night club in the world, Cherry Blossom, and do you know what I've decided?"

"No."

"We're going to get married in June, as soon as your contract's up, and we're going to settle down. No more night life for us, unless it's some special celebration with the gang. Because, you see, Blossom, I made a discovery while I was sitting there all alone tonight, thinking about us. I found out we'd been on a merry-go-round, just like that bar that goes round and round and never gets anywhere. And I thought we were having fun, and we were, because we were together. But when you got off, it wasn't fun any more, and so that means it's you for me, forever and forever. Do you see what I mean?"

"Yes, dear, I see," said Blossom. "And it's the same way with me." But she didn't tell him the merry-go-round had been her idea, because she'd learned that a man likes to think he's worked everything out all by himself.





# HOLLYWOOD

## *stand-in*

by Russell M. Coryell

### VII.

RUTH didn't lose her head in the crisis. As Miss Natishka's stand-in, she had learned the necessity for quiet, prompt obedience to commands. A star might have a fit of nerves or temperament, but a stand-in had to be without emotions. She was supposed to do what she was told. And that was all. So Ruth pre-

pared herself quietly for the flight to Hollywood.

• She was supposed to be an invalid suddenly stricken with an agonizing attack of acute appendicitis and being rushed to the hospital. So Ruth washed off all make-up, put shadows under her eyes, and used plenty of powder.



**The conclusion of this novel revealing the innermost secrets of a Hollywood movie studio.**

By the time Louise reached her state-room, Ruth was lying on the bed, face contorted with pain. She spoke in brief gasps, faintly, then gave the alarmed woman a brave, pained smile.

"Don't look so frightened, Louise," she said. "I'm going to be all right."

"I know you are," Louise answered with a sob. "And you're so wonderful—the way you take it. But I wish I could go with you. Captain Nielson says I can't."

"Louise"—Ruth bit her lip, and she didn't have to feign distress now—"if Mr. Norris comes—I don't believe he will because he's just been called down to Buenos Aires—but if he should come—Louise, tell him not to worry. Tell him I said he mustn't. Tell him I'm all right, really."

Louise was crying now.

"I will, Miss Natishka. I will," she said.

"Louise, tell him I love him. Make him understand that I couldn't write or explain. But that everything is all right."

"Yes, Miss Natishka. I will. I'll tell him," Louise wept. And there was such tragedy in the poor woman's voice that Ruth knew she was sure her mistress was about to die.

Oh, if only she could tell Jim the truth! Tell him now! If he were here she would tell him. But she daren't write it. She didn't even know how to reach him in Buenos Aires. Why hadn't she told him today? If she had known the complications that were going to arise, she would have. But she hadn't known and she had done what she had to do. It wasn't her secret and her future at stake. It was Miss Natishka's and the studio's—and her loyalty belonged to them.

Captain Nielson came to say that he had arranged for the plane and it was a

good thing for Ruth that she wasn't actually stricken with appendicitis, for if she had been she could never have stood the strain of Captain Nielson's surprise announcement. Plus the shock of seeing Señor Aguilerra standing close behind him!

"You don't mean *his* plane?" Ruth gasped. "Not Mr. Aguilerra's?"

"Yes." Captain Nielson looked his bewilderment. And why shouldn't he be bewildered? Why should she look so upset at the idea of going in the plane of the man to whom, according to the newspapers and the posted notice at the city hall, she was engaged?

Ruth realized all that the moment she had gasped her alarm. She and Jim and Aguilerra, himself, and the two drivers of the cars were the only people who knew that Aguilerra had tried to abduct her and that the much advertised engagement was just hokum, anyway.

"I can't go in Mr. Aguilerra's plane!" Ruth said emphatically and then remembered to have an acute spasm of abdominal anguish.

"But, Miss Natishka!" the captain dared to protest, knowing that the anguish was just excellent theater. "There is no other plane that can be chartered. Mr. Norris took the only one there was."

"Oh!" Ruth said weakly. Her eyes went beyond Captain Nielson to the swarthy, handsome face of Aguilerra. He didn't look villainous. He looked deeply concerned. Penitent. Anxious to serve.

"Knowing how urgent it is for you to leave at once!" Captain Nielson said significantly.

Then Aguilerra came timidly forward. Honesty, good faith, and innocence radiated from him. His big black eyes with their heavy lashes were liquid with sympathy.

"Please," he said earnestly, "I understand how you feel, Miss Natishka. And my plane is at your disposal with any pilot you care to have fly it." He bent close to her and his voice was low and pleading. "Let this be my apology and my attempt to atone. I would give much to be friends again."

Ruth searched those dark, soft eyes. He sounded sincere. But she wondered. These Latins were not to be judged by American standards. Swiftly, her mind clicked off all the possibilities. If by any chance he had surmised that her appendicitis was feigned, he might do anything. Once in the air he could take her off to his ranch. But if he believed her attack was real, then he might actually choose this way to try to win her back.

"Señor Aguilerra," she said slowly, gasping the words, and she knew how essential it was with this astute Argentine to speak her lines convincingly, "have you considered the responsibility? I mean . . . I might"—she gave her brave little smile—"I might not arrive . . . alive. You might be held responsible . . . after . . . this morning."

"I am not afraid," he said swiftly, but she saw his cheeks pale. "But if you think yourself in such grave danger, why do you not go to one of the hospitals here in Caracas? Our South American surgeons are skilled. Our hospitals fine."

"I must go to my own surgeon," Ruth answered weakly. "There are complications," she added mysteriously.

"Let me fly you there then," Aguilerra begged. "I can make the trip in one nonstop flight. Any commercial plane you could get would have to refuel."

For just a second longer, Ruth hesitated. Then she nodded.

"Thank you. I accept." To Captain Nielson: "Wire the studio I am leaving at once in Mr. Aguilerra's plane, and to meet me with an ambulance."

"At what time do you think you will get there, Mr. Aguilerra?" Captain Nielson asked.

"At noon tomorrow," Aguilerra said promptly.

After that, everything moved swiftly and efficiently. A stretcher was brought. Ruth was shifted onto it with infinite care. She was carried up to the deck and across the gangplank to shore. Aguilerra's plane had been brought as close as possible, but even so it was necessary to be rowed out to it and hoisted into the cabin. Ruth wondered whether she could have stood it all if she really had been ill. It was hard enough on her nerves as it was.

Her courage almost left her when Captain Nielson said good-by and the cabin door was shut after him. She was so completely in Aguilerra's hands now. The feeling of helplessness doubled when the plane's motor roared and she felt the vibration as it began to scud along the waters of the port. Each little wave striking the underbody was a miniature shock.

"Oh-h-h!" she moaned, and saw the Argentine's head turn to look at her, his eyes worried.

"We'll be off the water in a moment," he said, "and then it won't be rough any more. But I can't take off here. It's too crowded."

"It's all right. Never mind me." Ruth smiled wanly, then bit her lip. "I can stand it," she gasped. She wanted to be sure he was convinced of the seriousness of her condition.

In a moment, as he had promised, the banging stopped. Ruth knew they were in the air. She had the sensation of circling, for the plane tipped. She wished she could be sure they were really headed toward Hollywood. But she must lie still. She mustn't do anything that could arouse the suspicions of the shrewd Argentine. Probably, she thought, she should pretend to doze, remembering, however, to groan at intervals. Then, suddenly, it struck her that she must guard against actually falling asleep. She might roll and toss in her dreams, and

*"Louise"—Ruth bit her lip and she didn't have to feign distress now—  
"if Mr. Norris comes, tell him not to worry. Make him understand that I couldn't write or explain. And tell him I love him."*



that would be a give-away. She knew enough about real appendicitis to remember that the patient will sometimes scream just at the idea of being touched.

Darkness fell. She had become accustomed to the vibration and the droning of the engine. She knew that Aguilerra turned on the riding lights and the lights on the dashboard. She heard him use the wireless several times, talking in Spanish. But the hours passed slowly.

"Where are we now?" she kept asking at intervals; and she wondered with gathering panic whether he was telling her the truth when he reported their progress up the coast of Venezuela and then Columbia.

"We'll be passing over Colon in a few minutes," he advised. "Then we'll be in the Pacific. Are you in pain?"

"It isn't any worse," she answered. "It's my thoughts that are the hardest to bear."

It was shortly after that that she caught a fleeting few bars of music as he tuned in the next signal station.

"Can you get music on this?" she asked. "Oh, then would you? Something gay, please."

"I can pick up Hollywood," he said.

"Please."

It wasn't quite so monotonous after that lying there, and it gave her a feeling of confidence to hear American music and American voices, announcers whose voices were familiar. She thought surely they must be headed for Hollywood, since they could pick the broadcasts up so clearly. Then suddenly, in the midst of a program, the music was stopped and the announcer's voice broke in:

"We have just had a bulletin flashed in to us from Barranquilla, Colombia," he said. "They report that Miss Wanda Natishka has been stricken with acute appendicitis and is being rushed back to Hollywood by airplane. The plane has just been sighted over Barranquilla and has been identified as that of the South American millionaire, Kurt Aguilerra, to

whom Miss Natishka was recently affianced. We know that all her friends in Hollywood and elsewhere will be greatly concerned. Her condition is quoted as grave. She is expected to arrive about noon tomorrow."

Aguilerra turned the radio off abruptly.

"I am sorry that you should have heard that," he said. "But you will know that news bulletins must always exaggerate."

"That's all right," Ruth told him quickly. "I am not frightened about myself. I do not intend to die. And, please, tune the station in again. It is nice to hear the voices of friends."

Yes, it was nice. Especially it was a relief to have their location confirmed. Aguilerra was taking her to Hollywood. Her heart clutched with dismay, however, at the thought of Jim possibly hearing that broadcast. He'd go crazy, she knew.

Poor Jim! Hour after hour, Ruth lay thinking of him. He wouldn't have reached Buenos Aires yet, she thought. He must have been somewhere off the Brazilian coast when the Hollywood broadcast was sent out. He might not hear about her until he saw the papers. And what would he do?—she asked herself. Would he radio the yacht at Caracas? Or would he radio the studio at Hollywood? She tried to imagine what she herself would do if she heard that Jim was terribly ill. She couldn't think of anything more awful than to be five thousand miles away from Jim when he needed her.

At midnight Ruth heard Aguilerra speaking in English. He was giving someone a report on their position. Off the coast of Mexico, he said. Then he said he thought Miss Natishka was sleeping. And Ruth's heart jumped.

"No!" she cried. "I'm awake. Who is it?"

"The studio," Aguilerra told her.

"Tell them I'm all right, no worse." She closed her eyes then and her heart

gradually got calm. She had thought it was Jim.

The studio kept in hourly communication, thereafter, and Ruth's anxiety for Miss Natishka grew. The studio wouldn't be so preoccupied about Ruth's arrival if the star's condition wasn't critical.

### VIII.

Daylight came finally. Then those last strained hours before the Argentine announced that they were there.

"I will come down as gently as I can," he promised. "I see a launch waiting for us."

Ruth's heart was in her throat when they were down at last and she was being lifted out on the stretcher. There was a crowd gathered. Press cameras clicked. A newsreel cameraman was shooting hundreds of feet of film. Then Director Kivici was bending over her, shielding her from too close inspection, expostulating with those who crowded in.

"Cover your face with your hands," he whispered urgently, and Ruth did so, making the gesture seem like one of agony.

They were in the ambulance at last. She realized she hadn't even thanked Aguilerra. They were moving now. The siren was blowing. Kivici sat beside her. An interne was taking her pulse.

"Please," she asked, using the proper tone of pain and exhaustion, "may I see Mr. Kivici alone for a few moments?"

The interne took his place up front with the driver.

"We thought you'd never get here!" Kivici said. He acted as if it was Ruth's fault, as if she had delayed. She heard the strain in his voice.

"How is Miss Natishka?"

"Very bad! Ruptured appendix. Peritonitis. Expected to die any minute. What a mess! I wouldn't go through this again for a million."

"Oh! Poor Miss Natishka!"

"Yeah!" Kivici said. "And me with the picture half done! The biggest thing we ever did! What a mess if she had died with you down there! You certainly kept yourself in the news!" he cried. "Wanda dying up here and you pulling an abduction down there!"

"Did that get in the papers?" Ruth gasped.

"Of course it did! With pictures! Did you go nuts? Nobody knows what happened, nor what to believe. We give out that you're dying of appendicitis and you crash through with an abduction. Then that's contradicted by news you're gonna be married to Aguilerra. Then he's flying you up here. One paper says one thing and one another. Who's this guy Jim Norris?"

"He's my husband. I married him yesterday." Ruth shook her head in bewilderment. "I don't understand about the abduction pictures. He oughtn't to have used them."

Kivici was staring at her as if she'd gone crazy.

"Your husband!" he gasped. His hands went to his hair. His eyes threatened to pop from his head. "Wait! Wait!" he pleaded. "This is a gag! This must be a gag! You married a newspaperman! You gave this story to a newspaperman?"

"No!" Ruth cried. "No! I didn't! He thinks I'm Natishka."

"He thinks you're Wanda?" Kivici was shouting in a whisper.

"Yes."

Kivici tried to speak and couldn't. He was strangling. Ruth couldn't speak either. She was petrified.

"What happened?" he demanded, when his imagination had evidently reached the limit of further imagining.

Ruth began from the beginning, and told her story, Kivici stabbing into the tale with sharp, fierce questions. She could see that he had no understanding of her point of view. He was only vision-

ing the tangle of complications as it affected the company and himself.

"What a mess you've made of this!" he kept saying. And: "Oh, you little fool! So your husband, Jim Norris, the newspaperman, thinks he's married Wanda Natishka? And you imagine that he's gonna keep quiet about it? A reporter is going to keep a good story like that? Why, you little fool, he'll have that splashed all over the front pages of his paper."

"No!" Ruth cried. "No! Jim won't do that!"

"Won't he?" Kivici was bitterly ironical. "He used the kidnap story and pictures, didn't he?"

"Yes," Ruth admitted weakly. "But—"

Kivici dropped his face in his hands and groaned.

"Wait till the big boss hears this!" Then he straightened up. "Well, look, I may as well explain what we're going to do. And for Heaven's sake don't mess this up! You're being taken to Wanda's own home. None of the old servants are there. New ones. And two -trained nurses. The ambulance will be dismissed just as soon as you've got into the house. Then the gates will be closed. Nobody will be allowed inside except cars from the studio. They'll come and go all day, some with curtains drawn. No questions will be answered. Big mystery. Nobody knows what's going on. And one by one the servants are sent away. Finally, you and I will leave at night in a closed car. Then tomorrow morning, Wanda's sanitarium calmly issues a bulletin, saying she's been operated on for ruptured appendix. Condition critical." Kivici shook a gloomy head. "Unless she's already dead," he added.

"Oh, how can you talk like that?" Ruth cried with a sob, her throat all knotted up. "She mustn't die! She mustn't!"

"You're telling me!" Kivici muttered. "Me, with everything at stake! A picture half finished. A half million dollars al-

ready spent." He groaned. "Oh, what a mess! All we need now is to have that husband of yours release the story of your shipboard marriage down at Caracas."

"He won't!" Ruth cried. "I know he won't!"

"He released the kidnap story!" Kivici reminded her. And Ruth could only shake a bewildered head. How could she know that it wasn't Jim who had released that story? How could she guess that in the flurry of departure by airplane, Jim's photographs had become mixed up and the wrong ones sent to the newspaper and the story supplied by the taxi driver?

Her heart was a great, solid ache all that afternoon as she lay in Miss Natishka's home. She was still standing-in, still playing her part for the benefit of two baffled nurses who were only too glad to be dismissed from the nursing of a petulant, temperamental movie star who refused even to let herself be touched.

Late that night, Ruth and Kivici slipped quietly out of Miss Natishka's house and drove away. No one saw them go. No one saw Ruth arrive at her own mother's house.

"You're Ruth Tilden again," Kivici said. "You can tell your mother that you came back with Wanda. But tell her to keep her mouth shut. And listen, I've figured out a way to shut up that husband of yours. You're to put in a long-distance call to him tonight in Buenos Aires. Make it a person-to-person call, never mind the expense. The telephone company can locate him through the American consul or the Press Club. When you get him on the wire, tell him the truth, just enough to satisfy him, that you're Ruth Tilden, stand-in for Wanda. Tell him she was on the yacht, too, but it was your job to handle newspapermen. Get the idea?"

"Yes," Ruth cried breathlessly, her heart leaping. "And then can I go down there and join him?"

"Sure!" Kivici said. "I don't care



*"You'll never get a cent of that ten thousand dollars now! Besides that, you're finished in Hollywood. You're fired!" The receiver went down with a bang, and Ruth sat stunned.*

what you do, only tell this husband of yours that you don't get one cent of your ten thousand dollars if he spreads just one whisper that'll hurt Wanda. Tell him to keep his mouth shut—and shut tight. See?" Kivici looked at her grimly. "And you won't get a cent of that ten thousand, either," he warned, "unless you do keep him quiet. Remember that!"

"Oh, Mr. Kivici! Don't worry! If you knew how relieved and happy I am to be able to tell Jim now, and how happy Jim is going to be."

"Yeah? Well, I hope so. But remember he's got to believe Wanda was aboard the yacht. See?"

"Yes, all right." Of course, that was still a deception, but it was so much better than having to pose as Miss Natishka. And when she saw him she was determined to tell him the whole truth. There mustn't be any deception between them. And she was sure Jim would understand. "Good night, Mr. Kivici. And thank you!" Ruth's heart was singing as she let herself quietly into her home. Everything was all right now. Her mother was going to be so overjoyed to have her home again. And Jim was going to be so happy to learn that she wasn't really ill and that she would soon be with him. "Mom!" she called softly, and turned on the light. "Mom, it's Ruth! I'm back."

There was a startled, joyous cry from her mother's room. Then a nightgowned figure rushing to meet her. They were in each other's arms.

"Oh, mom! I've got so much to tell you!" Her voice trilled with excitement. "Listen, mom! I'm married and he's down in Buenos Aires. He's wonderful! Jim Norris! I adore him! And so will you. I've got to telephone him right away. Or at least put a call in for him. It will take them hours to locate him."

Ruth was so excited that she could hardly tell a coherent story to the long-distance operator. But finally it was done, and she could settle down to a comparatively reposeful tale of explanation to

her mother. None of the real truth about Miss Natishka—for that still wasn't her secret to tell. But she could tell about Jim and how Jim still thought she was Wanda, but that Mr. Kivici had said she could tell him the truth.

"Mom, I know he's been just crazy if he's heard I was rushed home for an appendix operation. And poor Miss Natishka! They found the appendix ruptured. Peritonitis has set in."

"Oh, heavens!" Mrs. Tilden cried. "That's serious!" She shook her head. "That's real serious, Ruth. She should have gone to the hospital down there in Venezuela. She shouldn't have tried to fly back here."

Ruth nodded. She hated not telling her mother everything. But she had no right to. Of course, she wouldn't really have a right to tell Jim, but it was almost like telling herself to tell Jim. And thank goodness, it was all over now. Or would be soon. Just as soon as Jim could be located. They had said they would ring her as soon as they had him. But they had warned that it might be nine or ten next morning.

"I'm dead for sleep, mom," Ruth said. "You go back to bed, and I'm going to lie down here on the couch by the phone." Then she grinned. "I'm so excited my stomach is turning upside down. I can't wait to hear Jim's voice. I never imagined I'd ever love anybody like this. Did you feel like this, mom, when you were first married?"

It was nine o'clock when the shrill ring of the telephone brought Ruth upright, her heart hammering.

"Hello?" she said, swallowing the lump of excitement that was climbing into her throat.

"Hello. Is this Ruth Tilden?"

"Yes." She could hardly answer. It wasn't Jim's voice, but—

"This is Kivici!" It was grim, hard, furious.

"Oh! Oh, I thought it was my husband," Ruth gulped. "What is it, Mr.



Kivici? I've been expecting Jim's call from Buenos Aires."

"Well, you can stop expecting it!" This was a snarl now. "He isn't in Buenos Aires! He's here in Hollywood. And he's done everything he shouldn't do! Everything!"

"What do you mean? Where is he?"

"I don't know where he is, and I don't care, but you can tell him for me, when you see him, that he's cost you ten thousand dollars. You'll never get a cent of that money now. And he's done Wanda and the studio more harm in five minutes than we can undo in five years."

"Oh!" Ruth gasped. "What has he done?"

"He flew in here from South America last night. Must have been right on your tail as soon as he heard Wanda was taken with appendicitis. He went straight to Wanda's home. Some newspaper guy, friend of his, told him Wanda was there. So they go there together and they find the place closed. Then they decide you've been taken to a hospital and they start looking. And they locate Wanda, somehow. And your friend husband says he wants to see her. They tell him she can't see anybody and they spill the news about the ruptured appendix, peritonitis, and critical condition. Well, Norris gets white as a sheet and tells them he's Wanda's husband, married her down in South America."

"Oh. Mr. Kivici!" Ruth groaned. "Poor Jim!"

"Poor Jim, nothing! He keeps on saying he's got to see her. And they tell him he can't. They know, of course, that she hasn't been down in South America. They think he's a crank. But they finally agree to take a note in to Wanda from him. She sends out word that she never heard of Jim Norris. And Norris gives 'em an earful. Says they never delivered the note. So they try to put him out. Well, your friend husband goes haywire. He knocks about six doctors and orderlies unconscious and throws a few dozen

nurses out of his way while he locates Wanda's room."

"Oh! Oh!" Ruth gasped. "Poor Jim!"

"Well, he busts into her room, gets one look at her and sees she's right on the brink of death. He stops fighting and begins to cry. Wanda gives him one look and tells him to get out, says she never saw him before in her life. So Norris tiptoes out. He thinks she's delirious, didn't recognize him. He refuses to leave the hospital."

"I'll go right away!" Ruth said frantically.

"To do what?" Kivici snarled. "He's not there now. But before he left he told everything. All the papers have the story now. They know all about Wanda's marriage last Christmas to Grant Conway over in Las Vegas. And so does your husband! He thinks you married him bigamously!"

"Oh, no!" Ruth wailed.

"Oh, yes!" Kivici yelled back at her. "Grant Conway, himself, showed up at the hospital while Norris was still claiming to be Wanda's husband. And Conway loses his head. He says he's Wanda's husband. Norris punches his face for him. But Conway proves he is her husband. And your husband pulls in his horns then. He gets the color of chalk. He asks is Wanda getting a divorce maybe at the end of six months."

"Oh, poor Jim!" Ruth sobbed. "I told him I had a secret, but would explain in six months."

"Yeah, well Conway explained, too. Explained that Wanda was having a baby in six months. So that finished Norris. He left the place in a hurry, but his friend, the newspaperman, heard everything. It's the worst scandal that ever hit Hollywood!"

"Oh, Mr. Kivici, I'm sorry!" Ruth was crying. "I'm sorry! Poor Jim! Where is he now?"

"I don't know and I don't care! I only called you to tell you that you'll never get a cent of that ten thousand, and that

besides that you're finished in Hollywood. Your contract as stand-in for Miss Natishka is wiped out. We don't ever want to see or hear of you again. You're fired!" The receiver went down with a bang, and Ruth sat stunned.

"Mom!" she gasped at last. "Mom!" Then she broke into wild sobs. But in the midst of her crying she got up and began to put on her coat and hat. "Mom! I've got to find Jim! Oh, mom! He must hate me! He must think I'm the lowest thing on earth. Oh, poor Jim!"

Even with her heart breaking, Ruth kept her head. She knew that the only lead she had as to Jim's whereabouts was the reporter friend who had gone to the hospital with him in search of Wanda. She didn't know his name, but he was easy to locate through the newspaper which had first published the story. He looked her up and down sharply when she went to him.

"Haven't I seen you before?" he demanded.

"I don't believe so," Ruth answered quietly. "But I look a little like Wanda Natishka. I'm her stand-in, Ruth Tilden."

"Oh, yeah?" The sharp eyes became shrewd. "What's on your mind, sister?"

"I'm a friend of Jim Norris'. I want to find him. He's been trying to locate me, too. It's very important for us both." Her voice broke and she had to bite her lip to still its trembling.

"Want to see Jim Norris, eh? Something to do with the Natishka story?"

Ruth caught her breath. She must be careful what she said. She didn't want to be the cause of more trouble to Miss Natishka. She mustn't let it be known, either, that Jim had imagined she was the star herself.

"Well, I have an angle on it that Jim"—her voice broke again and tears flooded her eyes—"Jim would like to know about."

"Yeah?" The reporter's shrewd eyes betrayed his indifferent voice. "Well, if

you want to leave a message I'll give it to Jim when I see him."

"Then you're going to see him?" Ruth's heart clutched. "Please tell me how I can find him."

"Don't know myself, sister. He looked pretty low. Guess he was headed either for a hotel bed or a saloon. He hadn't slept for forty-eight hours. What's your angle on the Natishka story?"

"If you're Jim Norris' friend," Ruth said with tears in her eyes and bravery and desperation in her voice, "you'll tell me how to locate him. I've got to find him!"

"How long you known Jim?"

"Aren't you going to tell me where he is?" Ruth cried.

"I don't know. It's a fact. I really don't." Then, as if relenting because of Ruth's obvious distress, he said: "Have you tried the Los Angeles office of his paper? He'd report to them probably."

"Thanks! Thanks a lot! I hadn't thought of that." She started to go, but the reporter stopped her.

"What'll I tell Jim if I see him?"

"Tell him Ruth Tilden wants him. And my telephone number is Wilshire 6-5902. Please tell him!"

"O. K. I sure will."

Ruth took a taxi to the office of the New York *Press-Examiner*. It seemed to her a taxi had never been so slow. Her heart was beating fast as she entered the office.

"I'm looking for Jim Norris of the New York office," she said to the secretary. "Has he reported here?"

"Who's asking for him, please?"

"I'm Ruth Tilden, Miss Natishka's stand-in."

That got her in to the manager immediately. But it didn't get her any information about Jim. Jim hadn't reported to them. He ought to have, and probably would. But all they knew about him was what they had read in the other papers.



*She pushed her way through the crowd. Ran into his outstretched arms.  
And then she was crying and laughing and clinging to him.*

"What did you want to see him about, Miss Tilden?"

"It's personal."

LS--6D

"Oh." He gave a slight shrug that showed Ruth he wasn't interested in personal matters.

"It's an angle on the Natishka marriage that would interest Jim," Ruth added then.

"Oh, yeah. Well, what is it?" He was alert.

"I can't tell anyone but Jim."

"How can he get hold of you?"

Ruth gave her telephone number.

"He's pretty sure to call us, but wait!" He picked up his phone. "He may have got in touch with the New York office. I'll call them. This is a direct wire."

Once more Ruth's heart began to beat with hope. Now that they thought a news story was behind it they would soon locate Jim for her. But as she listened, her hopes wilted. Jim evidently hadn't been in touch with the New York office, either.

"Well, listen!" the manager said to the New York office. "Just as soon as Norris contacts you, tell him Ruth Tilden is looking for him. Wanda Natishka's stand-in. She's got a new angle for him. Her telephone number is Wilshire 6-5902." When he had hung up, he turned to Ruth. "It's funny Norris hasn't called either them or me."

"He hadn't slept for forty-eight hours," Ruth said. "Maybe he went to a hotel and is sleeping."

"Yeah, but he should have reported to us first. He's supposed to be down in Buenos Aires, anyway. No business up here at all. He must be off his nut. What do you know about his saying he's married to Wanda Natishka?"

Ruth's heart stood still. Yes, Jim might be off his head. She knew what it would do to her if she discovered—or thought she discovered—that Jim already had a wife when he had married her. He might have gone and got drunk. Or he might have done something worse. She wouldn't want to live if she imagined Jim had done to her what he thought she had done to him.

"Know anything about this marriage?" the manager was asking.

For a wild moment Ruth felt like telling him everything. Then she knew she mustn't. She just nodded her head.

"Yes. I do know something. But I can't tell anybody but Jim Norris." Tears were blinding her again. Her throat was tight with fear. "He felt—pretty badly," she said brokenly. "He might have gone and got drunk." She bit her trembling lip. "Something may have happened to him."

"I'll check with the police and the hospitals," the manager said. "I'll have someone check the hotels, rooming houses and saloons. And, meanwhile, you'd better tell me anything you know."

Ruth shook her head.

"I'll be looking for him, too," she said, and it sounded like a sob.

"Will there be someone to answer your telephone? Just in case we locate him. Or if he tries to call you."

"Yes." Then Ruth hurried out. Anxiety was a heavy lump in her heart. Something had happened to Jim. Or—this was something she didn't want even to consider—Jim had made something happen. She was crying as she took the next taxi and asked to be driven to police headquarters. Jim thought she had married him when she was already married. He thought she was just a low, thrill-chasing awful person.

Oh, poor Jim!

The police knew nothing. But they told her men didn't often commit suicide over a woman. Women did that, but men went out and got another woman. Men killed themselves over financial worries. They said they'd get in touch with her if they heard of Jim.

It seemed awful to go home and do nothing but wait. Wait for the telephone to ring. But she knew now that there was nothing more for her to do. And if she wasn't home when they called— Or when Jim called.

She sat on the couch beside the telephone. And every time it rang the noise seemed to pierce her heart. Hope and

dread! Her heart would clutch and stop. Her throat would tighten up so that she could scarcely speak. Just a gasping, "Hello."

And then hope would be killed.

There was no news of Jim. He had disappeared. But Jim's reporter friend and the agency for Jim's paper kept calling to see if she was ready to tell them what she knew.

Her heart was breaking. Where was Jim? What had happened to him? What was he thinking of her? Or had he stopped thinking?

All that day, she sat by the phone. Hour after hour. Waiting. Hoping. Starting with every shrill ring.

"Mom!" she sobbed, when night had brought no news. "Mom! Something has happened to him!"

It was four o'clock that morning when the telephone shrilled through the house.

Ruth awakened instantly and was out of bed with heart hammering. They wouldn't call at such an hour unless they had found Jim.

"Hello?" she said faintly. She had lost her voice.

"That Ruth Tilden?"

"Yes." She was trying to be calm.

"Who is speaking?"

"The New York *Press-Examiner*, Los Angeles office. We've just had word that Wanda Natishka died half an hour ago."

"Oh!" Ruth gasped. "I thought it was news about Jim Norris." She put her hand against her thudding heart. "Oh, I'm sorry!"

"We thought you'd like to know. Thought you might like to say something now, give us your angle on her and her marriage."

"No," Ruth said. "No. Of course I'm dreadfully sorry. I was very fond of her.

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She was always very good to me, very considerate."

"We'd be glad to pay you for whatever you happen to know, Miss—"

"No!" Ruth interrupted. "I can't tell anyone but Jim. Haven't you any news of him?"

"Well, we know he hasn't gone down to Buenos Aires. That's all. He hasn't reported in to anybody for over seventy-two hours. Something is cockeyed."

"Oh, do you think so? Do you think something has happened?" Her voice broke and the sentence ended in a sob.

"You were pretty fond of Jim Norris, weren't you? I think if you'd confide in me, I might be able to help you."

"Thank you. I haven't anything to say except to Jim." She hung up and sat crying quietly. "Miss Natishka is dead, mom," she said. "She died about half past three. They haven't heard from Jim."

Ruth lay awake, crying into her pillow. Crying for Jim and crying for Miss Natishka.

The morning papers said the star's funeral would be held Sunday. Her close friends and relatives could see her at the Fulton Funeral Parlors. Ruth shook her head and closed her eyes. She didn't want to see her. She wanted to remember her as the vivid, alive person whom she had known. She didn't mean, even, to go to the funeral, but Kivici called her up. All Miss Natishka's friends from the studio would be there. Transportation would be provided for her, if she would like to join them. A floral wreath was being presented. They would like everyone to be there.

"I'll come, of course," Ruth told him. "Thank you."

It was nice of him to have called, she thought. The last thing in the world she would have expected. Why should they care about her? Ruth Tilden was nobody. Most of the studio didn't even know her name. Well, it was nice of them anyway, whatever their reason was.

Neither the New York *Press-Examiner* nor the other newspaper called Ruth again all day Saturday. Now that Miss Natishka was dead, the news value of her angle on the marriage was dead also. They showed very little interest when she telephoned them. She also telephoned the police. There was no news of Jim, however. All they said was that they were still keeping an eye out for him and his disappearance would automatically be turned over to the Missing Persons Bureau in another twelve hours.

"Do you think he's dead?" she asked.

"As far as we're concerned," the answer came, "nobody is dead till we have the body in the morgue. And Norris' hasn't turned up yet. We'll let you know when it does."

Ruth felt herself go cold.

When Sunday came and the studio sent a car to pick her up, she wished she hadn't said she would go. Her heart was too heavy with grief for Jim to be able to go through the ordeal of the long cortege of mourners. There was too much of the grand display in it. The studio was trying to live up to its reputation. It was a spectacle. Ruth didn't believe Wanda would have wanted this kind of show. But she was a part of it now. She had to see it through. So she sat, white and wretched.

Ruth's heart ached. She had loved Miss Natishka. But she couldn't think of her now without thinking of Jim, too. For Jim thought he was married to her. Jim thought he had married Wanda out on a freight steamer, beyond the three-mile limit.

"Oh, he must have known I loved him!" Ruth thought. "He must have known I wasn't pretending. But how it must have hurt him when he went to the hospital, his heart torn with anxiety, and Wanda said she'd never heard of Jim Norris! And when Grant Conway had come!" The thought of it choked her all up. Tears welled up into her eyes and rolled silently down her cheeks.

People were looking at her. She bit her lip and dried her eyes.

When it was over and she was making her way back to the automobile that had brought her, a hand touched her arm.

"Ruth, I'd like to talk to you." It was Kivici. "My car is over here. We can talk while the crowd is breaking up."

Presently, they were seated in his car. A sea of faces was moving slowly past them. He was talking. Ruth hardly understood at first. She caught phrases. The studio had sunk millions in Miss Natishka's film. It was all wasted unless they could find someone to finish it. They had considered every actress in Hollywood. There wasn't a star who would consent to take over where Wanda had left off. They wouldn't risk a comparison of their acting with Wanda's. The public wouldn't want a patched job, either. All the time and money spent on the film was wasted unless— Ruth suddenly began to hear clearly now. And she knew why Kivici had been thoughtful enough to call her to the funeral.

"Get the idea, Ruth?" he was saying. "We'll make an asset of this liability. The public knows Wanda died in the midst of the film. We'll publicize that and the fact that no big star will risk her reputation to take over. But we'll say there is one person who had the courage to try, a nobody. A person the public never heard of but who was close to Wanda, working with her constantly. Her shadow—faithful, quiet, unassuming. A girl who never faced the cameras before. See? That will throw their sympathy right away to the brave kid who, out of love for Wanda's memory, was willing to stand-in for her even after death."

"You mean me?" Ruth asked. She couldn't quite believe her ears. "You want me to finish the film?"

"Yes. And look!" Kivici cried. "We'll play it up big. All the newspapers and movie magazines will run articles: Stand-in takes over for dead star! Critics who have seen the picture say the stand-in

can't be distinguished from Wanda. Get it? We'll have the public betting they can tell where Wanda did her last scene and where you began and we'll fool 'em. We'll slip in shots of you before Wanda's last scenes. We'll add new scenes. We'll put Wanda in here and there for a close-up right at the very end. We can cut and patch and change until nobody will be absolutely sure. Why, we'll have people going to see the show twice just to try to figure it out!"

Ruth listened quietly as the director painted an enthusiastic picture of the studio's scheme to salvage the wreck of the million-dollar film. It was clever, but its cleverness hurt her. It hurt her to think that they could hardly wait for Wanda to be buried before they began planning how to profit by her loss. And they probably could profit by it. They had conceived a shrewd way to play upon the emotions of the movie-going public, appealing to their attachment and esteem for Wanda Natishka, playing on their curiosity, challenging their astuteness to distinguish the real from the counterfeit.

"This is your big chance, Ruth!" Kivici was saying. "If you make a hit in this, the studio will give you a contract."

"I once had a studio contract," Ruth said quietly, looking him straight in the eyes. "It was just a scrap of paper when the studio decided to ignore it."

Kivici had the grace to look uneasy.

"I'll see that your old contract is paid up in full," he said eagerly. "And I'll see that you get that ten thousand dollars, too. And in addition to that you'll get a thousand dollars a week until the picture is finished."

Ruth looked away from him. She couldn't quite analyze her feelings, but it was something like contempt and bitterness for him. Her own heart was so full of grief, genuine sorrow for Miss Natishka, and an intolerable ache for Jim; yet here he was discussing business, offering what to Ruth was a fortune, almost on top of Miss Natishka's grave.

"You'll never get another chance like this to step right into a stellar rôle," Kivici was saying. "Why, this is the—"

But Ruth didn't hear the end of that sentence. Her eyes had caught sight of a face in that crowd that made her heart clutch tight. It brought a sharp, gasping cry to her lips.

"Jim!" She flung open the car door. "Jim!" She saw the grim, tired face look toward her. She saw the cheeks go deathly pale. The blue eyes stared incredulous, stricken. Then she was pushing her way through the crowd. And he was coming toward her, thrusting people aside. And at last she was in his arms. He was holding her tight. She could feel him trembling all over. The crowd was pushing on past them. She didn't know what people were saying. She wasn't aware of anyone but just herself and Jim. The heaven of feeling him! The relief of being able to cry and laugh and cling to him! "Oh, Jim!"

"Ruth honey! But—" His arms tightened. His voice failed him. She heard him sob and she turned her brimming eyes up to him.

"It's really me, Jim!"

"I know it is! But I can't believe it! I . . . I don't understand. I thought you were—"

"No! I was Miss Natishka's stand-in. That was the secret I couldn't tell you!"

"Let's get out of here," Jim said huskily. "I feel as if I'd been knocked for a loop." He took her arm, and the feel

of his strong fingers sent a wave of love surging through her. He was so big and sure. And he did love her! He loved her just the way she had known he did.

"Jim, I've been looking all over for you! I thought something had happened to you."

"It did!" He looked down at her. The stricken look of bewilderment and joy was still there in his eyes. "I've been dead—worse than dead—ever since—"

"I know, Jim." Her voice was choked with pity and love and overwhelming joy. She clung to his arm. She would never let him out of her sight again.

A hand clutched at her shoulder.

"Ruth!" It was Director Kivici. "Ruth, what can I tell the big boss? If you want more money—"

"I don't want anything right now."

"But, Ruth! Imagine playing the lead in—"

"I wouldn't be playing the lead." Ruth stopped and faced Kivici. "I would just be standing-in for Miss Natishka. And the only reason I would do that," she added, "would be because Wanda Natishka was always fair and square with me. I would like to be fair and square with her, even though she isn't here to know about it."

"Then you will accept?" Kivici cried.

"Probably," Ruth answered. Then she turned her back on the director. She clung to Jim's arm. She looked up into his eyes. "Oh, Jim, mom is going to be crazy about you!"

THE END.

### WISH OVER MANHATTAN

I chose a star  
To hold my wish,  
To guide me to  
A destined fate.  
It twinkled briefly  
As it slid  
And fell behind  
The Empire State.

GLADYS MCKEE.



# GIRL FROM THE GOLDEN GATE



by Dick Moreland

**The sensation of San Francisco  
night life—who was she really?**

WHEN he got the assignment, "Interviews and pictures, girls at the Golden Gate," Abner Calhoun smiled cynically and remarked to Flash Holt, the newspaper's ace cameraman: "Baron Lang's night spot. Free publicity."

"Say, them gals at the Golden Gate are plenty photogenic." Flash hung his equipment about his plump form. "It's a swimming act in a big glass tank and the dames wear suits made from fish scales. They's one that's tops, a slim

little blonde who does a stunt with a seal."

Abner had heard of the Golden Gate. It was more than a night club—it had become an institution. The big glass tank with its chorus of swimming girls had become one of the sensations of San Francisco's night life. The club, gaudy, glittering and ornate, combined the atmosphere of a Spanish fiesta with that of a beer parlor on the once-famous Barbary Coast.

Baron Lang knew how to entertain the press. Smiling, sleek, unctuous, he met them at the entrance and ushered them to a table. "Now, gentlemen, I thought we'd put on the regular show, then the girls will pose separately or in groups."

"Right," agreed Abner in a bored voice. "Bring on the dames." He sprawled his long, lean frame in a chair, fished out a crumpled cigarette and lighted it. Hat pushed back, shabby tweed suit, shoes run over at the heels, he was the typical drifting reporter, improvident, careless in matters outside his profession, hard-boiled, world-weary. Born in the East Bay district, he'd completed the circle—Chicago and New York, a dirty and dangerous six months in Spain, a hitch on a Shanghai sheet and now back to his home-town paper.

The show, Abner had to admit, was clever, even original. The curtains parted—the great crystal tank was apparently empty. Then the lights changed and it became a beautiful underseas garden, inhabited by shapely statues. The statues came to life and slim, lovely girls began to circle and loop in patterns as skilled as ballet dancers.

Baron Lang recited statistics: "One hundred thousand gallons of water, filtered and heated daily, every girl a champion swimmer, most of them with ballet training, all nice kids, secured at big salaries to perform—"

Abner ignored Lang's practiced patter. His narrowed eyes were fixed on

the tank, where a blond girl now gamboled with a sleek brown seal. The girl, her long golden hair floating about her shoulders, seemed as much at home in the water as the seal that played about her with the happy abandon of a puppy. Abner sat forward eagerly.

Flash had his camera ready; bulbs splashed light in the darkness. "That's the gal," he muttered.

"Linda Kilane," volunteered Lang, noting Abner's interest. "Pretty, huh? And something mysterious about her. Raised the devil when she heard you were coming to take pictures. Seems she don't want any personal publicity."

"Yeah," sneered Abner. "I've heard that one before. All of 'em want publicity, no matter what angle they take to get it."

"Now the girls will come down here, so you can talk to 'em," Lang went on confidentially. "And say, boys, I never try to influence anybody who works for me, but if you'd like to take a couple of 'em out to dinner—"

The old come-on. Every girl instructed to be nice to the newspapermen. Abner smiled wearily.

Linda Kilane was prettier than she'd appeared in the tank. Her hair was burnished gold and she wore it in thick plaits banded about her small head. She was slim and rounded and there was a hunted look in her eyes as she faced Abner Calhoun across the narrow table.

"Say, I've seen you before," he accused. "You were in my class at Public School 21, in Berkeley. Brown or Browning or Brownley—that was your name then."

She shook her head stubbornly. "I'm from Detroit. Never been on the coast before."

Abner laughed softly. "Listen, Linda, don't lie to a newspaperman. We can find out things, dig up dirt. C'mon now, spill it. What are you afraid of?" Ab-

ner was famous for his nose for news. That there was a story here he had no doubt. This slim girl was haunted by some secret fear, and he meant to dig out the yarn. Possibilities flashed through his shrewd mind. On the spot with the law, hiding out from some criminal partner, perhaps. He'd play along until he got the story, smear the whole thing on the front page, then drop her.

"Maybe I've seen your picture in the papers," he probed.

"Oh, why don't you leave me alone? Snooping reporters, poking into my affairs, making trouble. They'll find me and—" She stopped, flushed at having said too much.

"So you don't want me to run your picture?" he taunted her. "Afraid somebody'll see it and know where to look for you? And Flash got such a good shot of you, too."

Her eyes clouded. Impulsively, she reached across the table and caught his hand. "Listen, Mr. Calhoun, please don't print my picture. I've had enough trouble."

He calculated swiftly. What difference did one picture make? Flash had enough shots of the other girls to fill a page layout. Why not do this youngster a favor, and thereby gain her confidence?

"Sure, Linda, I'll play along," he said soothingly. "Y'know, I think you're a nice kid. Probably don't want your family to know where you're working. I understand. So your picture goes into my desk, and not into the paper."

In the weeks that followed, Abner made it a point to insure his welcome by printing human-interest stories about the club and its swimming girls. Hardly a day passed without some mention of the Golden Gate in the columns of the *Tribune*. The Sunday roto usually contained a charming picture of one of the fish-scale-clad darlings of the big tank.

Baron Lang beamed a hearty welcome whenever Abner appeared, which was often, for Lang knew that such publicity was beyond price. The best table was always reserved for Abner Calhoun. Anything he wanted was his.

What Abner wanted was opportunity to talk to Linda Kilane, to cultivate her confidence. She'd come and sit with him between shows and Abner would tell her of his wanderings about the earth, his hurrying to and fro in pursuit of the newspaperman's twin gods, war and rumor. Sometimes, in the afternoons, Abner would call for her and they'd go for a walk along the Embarcadero, stare at the great ships, the hurrying crowds and the rush and excitement of the city's colorful water front as it unfolded about them.

And, gradually, Linda grew to trust him, to tell him bits of her life. Nothing important at first, just funny incidents of her childhood. Later, Abner discovered that her mother and father had been killed in a motor accident, and that she had been brought up by a series of maidenly aunts who had little sympathy or understanding for a young girl's ideas or ambitions.

Abner found himself looking forward to seeing her, hurrying through his job in order to catch her midnight show. Oh, it was professional interest, of course. His plan was working. Any day now, she might break down and tell him what he wanted—the source of the fear which haunted her lovely eyes, even while she laughed.

One afternoon, Abner chartered a taxi and took her out to the beach, San Francisco's Coney Island, where life teemed along the street of rides and eating stands. "Look at that mob," he jeered. "The masses, the herd. All cut out of the same pattern, all wearing the same clothes, thinking the same thoughts. And the kids! Dirty little brats, growing up to ape their stupid fathers and mothers."

"You . . . you don't like children?" she faltered.

"Cannon fodder," he sneered. "Bring a child into this dirty, cruel world? A kid who would have to face what's coming—war, poverty and hardship?"

She looked away hurriedly. "Some children are sweet," she said softly.

"No kids for me," he snapped. "C'mon, let's have this boy scout drive us back to the club. I need a drink to get the taste of mediocrity out of my mouth."

Abner didn't know how he really felt about Linda until the night she telephoned him that she would be unable to see him after the show as she had to meet a visiting uncle from Los Angeles. Abner was furious. He had planned on taking her to visit some of San Francisco's other night spots, a sort of post-man's holiday for Linda.

Well, he'd make the round by himself. No gal could stand him up and get away with it. He knew a lot of the boys and girls about town. He'd been neglecting his old pals lately. He'd just drop in at various hot spots and call on them.

He was coming out of Roberti's, on Eddy Street, when he saw her, hurrying past the lighted shop windows, the collar of her coat turned up about her face. He'd have known her anywhere—her slender figure, the way she clutched her purse under her arm, the glint of her hair under the saucy little hat.

Stepping back into the shadows, he stood watching, unable to believe his eyes. "An uncle from Los Angeles!" he snorted disgustedly. What, then, was she doing in the city, and here, of all places, and at this time in the morning?

She paused at the corner under the neon glare of the Rex Hotel sign, and a man slid furtively out of the dark and caught her arm. She started, then, recognizing him, relaxed and began to talk. Abner could see the smile on the man's

face as he led her toward the entrance of the shabby little hotel. Linda looked back, seemed fearful that she was being followed, then slipped into the revolving doors and was swallowed up.

Abner took a deep breath. "The little—" he choked. His throat was stiff, his mouth dry. So this was her secret? He turned and pushed his way blindly into Roberti's and sagged against the bar.

"Hey, you seen a ghost, Mr. Calhoun?" asked the bartender with a laugh.

"Scotch and soda," snapped Abner. "Make it a double."

Before turning in that night Abner went to his desk at the office, took out Linda's picture and the story he'd written to go with it, dropped them into the basket on the editor's desk. "That'll fix her," he muttered, as he headed unsteadily for home.

Anxious to view the results of his perfidy, and hopeful that Linda might break down under the emotional reaction and tell him what he wanted to know, Abner hurried to the club the next night. Linda seemed as carefree as ever, fragile and lovely as she floated through the routine of her act. But when Abner went backstage afterward, he found her in her dressing room, crying.

"Get out!" She faced him, lips trembling, eyes wet. "You've ruined everything. I never want to see you again."

Abner laughed. "Yeah, I just came around to say 'good-by.' I saw you last night on Eddy Street."

All color drained from her cheeks. Her eyes widened with fear. "You know then?"

"I can guess," he answered grimly.

"You . . . you said you hated babies." Her tone was colorless.

Abner gazed at her in stunned silence. He swallowed hard. "Baby?"

Linda stood proudly before him. "Ann's five and the sweetest— Well, you wouldn't understand. Ted and I were married when I was only eighteen.



*He took her slim, trembling form in his arms, patted her shoulder clumsily. "What are we going to do, Abner?" she sobbed.*

I didn't know until afterward that he was a drunk. I got the divorce and custody of the child. Ted's family want her, have tried ever since the divorce to get her away from me. They've offered money, had detectives watching me. That's why I didn't want you to print my picture. I've been hiding from them. They . . . they have so much money."

"Ted? You don't mean Ted Lancing?" Abner asked incredulously.

"He never loved Ann," she told him simply. "He was no good. And, Abner, I was the girl in your class at 21."

"The child—you're hiding her at the Rex?" he asked.

"The mother of one of the girls in the show is housekeeper there, has been taking care of her for me. I hadn't seen her in months for fear I'd be followed. But Ann's been ill. Uncle Charles is a doctor. He— Oh, Abner, you've spoiled everything!"

She was in his arms and he was patting her shoulder clumsily. "Now, Linda, nobody can take Ann away from you."

"But . . . but they are trying," she sobbed against the rough tweed of his coat. "Ted came here today, threatened to go to court unless I gave Ann to him. He said that the judge would take her away from me because I worked in a notorious night club, didn't wear enough clothes!"

Abner's first impulse was to laugh. Linda in her fish-scale suit was clothed in a modesty more protecting than the ten underskirts of a Navaho bride. There was something immaculate, un-touchable about the girl. He sobered. But Ted Lancing's family was to be reckoned with. Ted was heir to a great beet-sugar fortune: his father stood high in the councils of the city. Any judge, with an eye toward future election, would listen with sympathy to Lancing's plea.

Holding Linda in his arms, Abner's professional instincts went to work shrewdly. Here was a front-page story,

indeed! The prominent Lancing family in a fight for the custody of the child. The mother's spectacular career at the Golden Gate. Why, it was a natural, one of those human-interest dramas the public likes to read about.

If he could keep Ann hidden, it would force the Lancings to take the case to court, thus exposing the whole sordid affair. Abner could keep the story hot for weeks. Of course, the Lancing's would probably be awarded the custody of Ann, but news was where you found it these days.

"You didn't tell where Ann was?" Abner asked anxiously.

"Of course not." Linda found a tiny handkerchief, dabbed at her nose. "What are we going to do, Abner?"

"Possession," said Abner glibly, "is nine tenths of the law. The Lancing's will expect you to hurry to Ann, will have you watched. So you'd better give me a note to the housekeeper and I'll go for her, take her to my mother's in Berkeley. They'd never find her there."

To Abner, Ann was just a chubby, pink-cheeked child no different from thousands of other little girls. In the taxi, crossing the bridge, she sat close beside him and held his hand. She had offered no protest at being taken away from the Rex, had accepted Abner without question as a friend of her mother's.

"I was on the bridge before," she volunteered. "But it was dark."

"Go ahead, look out the window," Abner grunted.

"It's too high," said Ann.

"Well, c'mon, then." Abner placed her on his lap. She clung to the lapel of his coat and peered out eagerly at the dark waters of the bay, flanked by the dull-golden gleam of the lights of Berkeley and Oakland and the blazing, topless towers of the city.

"Pretty," Ann remarked.

"Yeah," grunted Abner, fishing for a

cigarette, then stuffing it back into his pocket. Smoking might annoy Ann.

The taxi rocked along and Ann relaxed, her head on his shoulder. "Where's mummy?" she asked.

"She's back there, across the bay in San Francisco," said Abner absently. "How about a story?"

"Uh-m." Ann snuggled warm and comfortable in his arms.

"Little Red Riding Hood?" suggested Abner.

"That's old," protested Ann. "Snow-White and the— You know."

Dutifully, Abner began the story, but before he had progressed very far, Ann was asleep. He looked down at her and chuckled softly. "Modern little kid. Looks sorta like her mother."

Mrs. Calhoun snatched Ann from his arms when the taxi arrived at the Berkeley cottage and hustled her off to her room, clucking softly over the sleeping child like a mothering hen. Abner grinned after her, reached for a cigarette and headed back to report to Linda.

"I took a chance and telephoned," Linda confessed when she joined him at his table. "Ann's awake and says she likes you, that you told her a story."

"Aw, I had to keep the kid amused," he protested. "And you'd better cut out the telephoning and keep away from Berkeley if you don't want the Lancings to find her."

"Yes, but you'll see her, you'll tell me how she is?" begged Linda.

Abner nodded. "Sure, sure. Now, tell me, how did you ever start working for Lang?"

"I needed money," she began, but Abner cut in sharply.

"Mean Ted's family didn't make a settlement on you and the baby?"

Linda flushed. "They offered, but they wanted Ann. I refused to take alimony from Ted. I'd had no training in business and I had no knack at selling. Then I saw Lang's advertisement for girls who could swim well. That was

one thing I could do—I used to win cups as a kid—so I went around to the Golden Gate, tried out, and he hired me."

"Making an honest living for yourself and Ann—and Ted will try to get a court order on the strength of it," growled Abner. He sat up suddenly, grinned. "That's an idea," he announced. "Your defense. Of course, you know that you can't hide Ann forever. You'll have to go into court eventually and prove your fitness to keep her."

"Oh, no," protested Linda.

"Ann's worth fighting for," Abner reminded her.

Chuckling at his own cleverness, Abner went to Baron Lang and put the scheme before him. He told of Linda's trouble, mentioned the prominence and wealth of the Lancings. "Linda will have to appear in her costume," he pointed out, "to prove that it's not immodest. Why not have all the girls there, ready to throw off their coats and show that their suits are modest, too? I'll tip off the photographers. Pictures in all the papers, stories, interviews. You can announce that your show is artistic, not vulgar, play up the line that you intend to bring suit against the Lancings for their slanderous statements about the club."

"Pal, you got something," said Lang in an awed voice. "But are you sure Linda will go through with it? She's such a shy, modest kid."

"She's set," Abner promised. "Don't let her know your angle on it. Be surprised when they serve the papers on her, offer to help her. Catch on?"

"Pal, I'm way ahead of you," Lang grinned. "Kinda tough on Linda, but what a publicity stunt!"

During the next week, Abner acted as liaison between Linda and her daughter. Every day he spent an hour or so with the child, tumbling about with her on the floor, helping her build block castles, telling her stories of the glamorous old

city where her mother worked, and the wonders there for a little girl to see some day.

Ann was a cute kid, but Abner was too tough a newspaperman, too hard-boiled to let a child get under his skin. Sure!

Linda drank in his accounts of Ann avidly. "She's well again and happy," she gloated. "Oh, Abner, you should have seen her at the Rex, so pale and thin and sad. You don't know what you and your mother have done for her."

"Well, we want her to look full of health when she appears in court," Abner assured her.

A few days later, the expected occurred. Linda was summoned to appear in a suit brought by her former husband for the custody of Ann. Lang was sympathetic, offered her an advance of salary, all the time off she needed to prepare her defense.

When she told Abner what had happened, he clicked his tongue and shook his head. "They're determined to have Ann," he said. "We've got a fight on our hands. A lawyer friend of mine's going to take your case. You'll have to follow his advice, no matter what he wants you to do."

She nodded, studying him curiously. "Abner, why are you doing all this for me?"

He flushed guiltily, fumbled for the inevitable cigarette. "Aw, you and Ann are both nice kids," he evaded.

"Call for you, Mr. Calhoun," the waiter interrupted.

It was his mother's worried voice which came over the wire. "Abner, she's gone. I left her playing in the front yard and stepped down to the grocer's for just a minute."

Abner took a deep breath. "All right. Don't call the police; tell nobody what's happened. I think I know where she is."

Fuming with impatience, he looked up Ted Lancing's number in the directory, dialed. "Hello, Lancing? What's the

idea of abducting Ann? I'll have you sent to jail for this. I—"

"So you're Linda's newspaper friend I've been hearing about," came Ted Lancing's sneering voice. "You must think I'm a fool, Calhoun. Why should I take Ann when the judge is going to award her to me in a week? What are you trying to pull, blackmail? You tell Linda she'd better produce that child in court or she'll go to jail."

A very sobered Abner went back to tell Linda the bad news. She took it with icy calm. "And Ted hasn't got her? You're sure?"

"He's convinced that the court will award him custody," said Abner dully. "No point in his stealing her now."

"Then—"

"Somebody's discovered that Ann is related to the rich Lancing's."

Linda made a low moaning noise.

Abner's face was stony. "I'll call the paper—they may have heard something. And talk to Lang. We've got to check every angle."

But Abner's editor had heard nothing. Lang shrugged. "I don't mix with them snatch mobs," he growled. "If you find out who done it, let me know."

Linda had on her hat and coat, was pulling on her gloves. "We must go to Berkeley." She had regained her composure, but her face was ashen. "Talk to your mother, then call the police. Every second's precious."

They got a taxi. Abner slipped the driver a bill. "Step on it, pal," he ordered, giving the address. He and Linda leaped in and the cab shot away, headed for the bridge. "Take it easy, Linda," he tried to comfort her. "She may have wandered off, got lost." A look from Linda stopped him, and he put one arm about her shaking shoulders and held her close. "Linda, I've got something to confess," he began. "This trial was just a—"

"Not now. Nothing is important but Ann," she said in a choked voice.



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"Don't worry," stated Abner grimly. "We'll have every G-man on the coast on this job in an hour. My paper will help. We'll—" He stopped, caught Linda's arm.

"What? What is it, Abner?"

"Look!" He pointed.

The taxi was just rolling off the ramp and turning toward Berkeley when the headlights picked out a pathetic little figure standing on the curbing. She'd been crying and her pink cheeks were streaked with tears.

"Ann!" Linda's cry startled her and she looked up, rubbed her eyes and smiled. "Mummy!"

In her mother's arms, Ann rubbed her nose against Linda's cheek and told Abner what had happened. "I wanted my mummy, so I started to find her. You said she was across the bay. A boy told me to take the bridge, so I comed here and . . . and—"

In Mrs. Calhoun's cottage, Abner and Linda faced each other across the dinner table while Ann dozed contentedly on a couch nearby. From the kitchen came the cheerful clatter of dishes.

"So I had it fixed with Lang to turn your court appearance into a circus," Abner concluded his confession. "Anything for a news story, I thought, even if the Lancings got Ann away from you. Can you ever forgive me, Linda? I was a stupid, blind fool. When all the time I—"

"But, Abner, what about the trial?" she asked. "Will it still be necessary for Ann and me to appear? I mean, after—" She blushed.

Abner lighted a crumpled cigarette and grinned. "They wouldn't dare drag you into court," he boasted. "What chance would they have of taking Ann away from the wife of a respectable newspaperman?"

### SOUTH AFRICAN GARDEN

Lush grass wet with silver dew,  
Tangled vines where the moon peeps through,  
Star flowers—emblems of the night—  
Worship a goddess bathed in light.

Dusky shades in a scented dell  
Languorously weave a spell;  
Poppies glow in a crimson sea;  
Silence here—and mystery.

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To meet me at the trysting place.  
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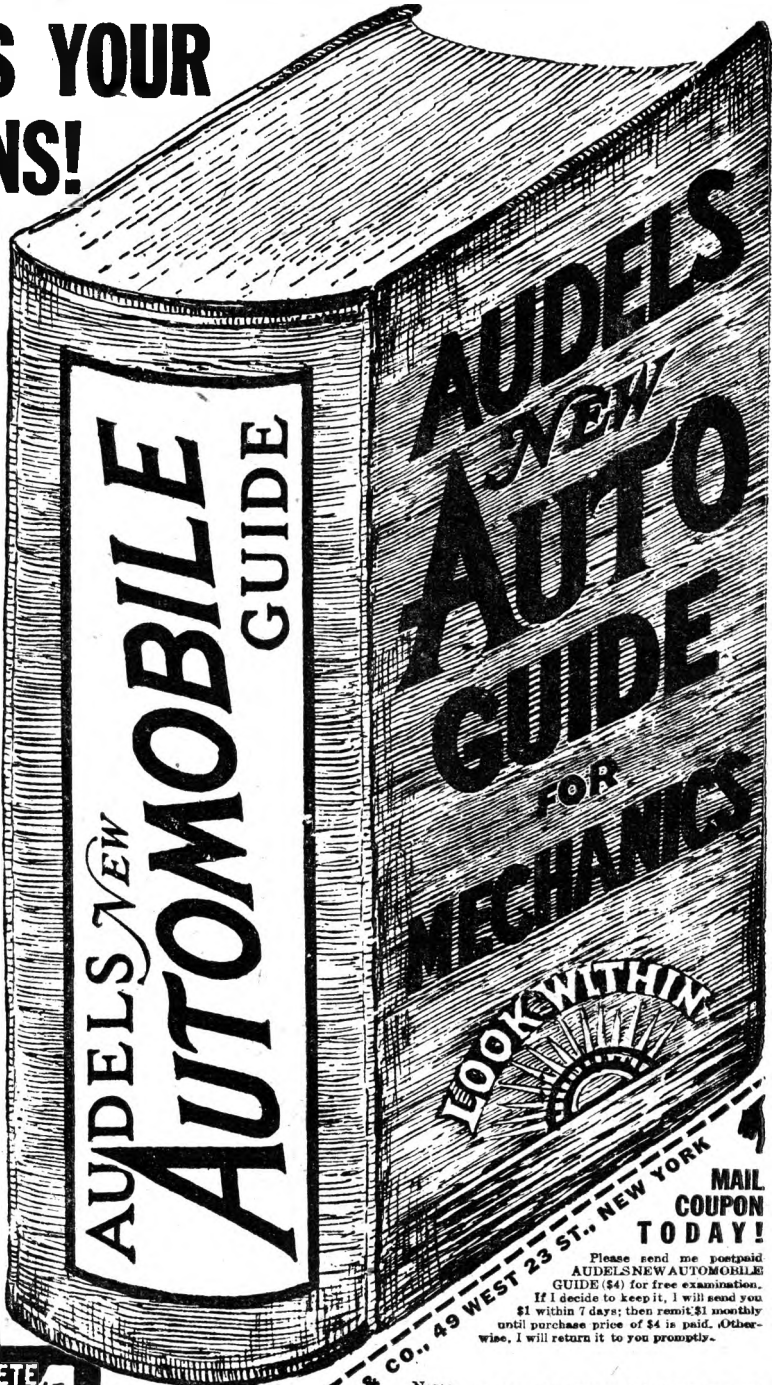
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THE squalid little honkatonk was packed—Pedro's place, where you were welcome as long as you had a dime in your pocket and where they'd slit your throat for thirty cents.

The sickly yellow glare from the smoking oil lamps cast vague shadows on the faces of the men standing against the walls, jammed in the doorways and crowded three-deep around the long bar.

**In her eyes was reflected the mystery, beauty and romance that he had been searching for.**

As Bob pushed his way through the crowd there was a roar of applause, shouting and stamping of feet that set the lamps swinging dangerously from the bare rafters. After a breathless silence the music started again.

She was standing near the piano singing in a husky, caressing voice that held her audience spellbound.

Beautiful, insolently sure of herself, her dark, burning eyes looked mockingly at the sea of swarthy faces as she swayed lazily to the music, one small, high-arched foot tapping softly in time.

She noticed the blond American at once, and smiled boldly at him.

"I will sing a song for you, Señor Americano," she called.

Bob could not understand the Spanish words of the song, but from her taunting expression and the delighted laughter of the men about him, he fully understood their import.

Still singing the last line of the song, she glided over to him, brushing aside the importunate hands that urged her to stop at tables.

"Buy me a drink, Americano," she commanded. "And tell me your name."

To the young American on a vacation from law school she seemed all the mystery, beauty, and romance he had hoped to find in Mexico. He stammered in his eagerness to introduce himself, and bought the drink. He was uneasily aware of the sullen muttering of the Mexicans. They wanted more music.

"You have a wonderful voice," he told the girl. "You could make a fortune in the States."

"Girls do not leave Pedro's. Not alive," she said carelessly, but her eyes darted furtively to Pedro, the vicious, pock-

marked little Mexican who owned the place. "What would Pedro's be without Inez?" She looked scornfully at the glowering faces around her. "Do you think, perhaps, they come for the vile liquor and worse food that Pedro sells them? No, señor, they come to see Inez and to hear her sing."

For all her bravado, there was an air of watchful wariness about her. The girl was desperately afraid of something. Before Bob could ask her about it, the place was in an uproar.

Two policemen burst in and seized Pedro, shouting that he was under arrest.

Chairs and tables were overturned, windows crashed as some of the men fought to escape and others crowded nearer to see the excitement.

Pedro fought like a Mexican cougar, but he could not get away.

"Pedro, stand still!"

The voice, like the crack of a whip, froze Pedro in his tracks, as if he had been turned to stone.

Bob gasped with amazement at the girl beside him. Eyes blazing in her white face, her lips curled in a snarl, she made a quick movement with her arm and a knife flashed through the air.

One of the policemen dropped Pedro and clutched his shoulder with a howl of pain. Blood was spurting from it. Pedro wrenched free from the other officer and, squirming like an eel through the astonished crowd disappeared into the night.

Inez, her drink still in her hand, ran swiftly to the other side of the room and leaped upon a table. The policeman started toward her, but she appeared not to notice him.

All the light in the smoky little place

seemed caught on her bright dress and defiant face as she turned to the bar.

"Señor Bob," she called, unmindful of the voices urging her to escape. "I will see you again sometime, maybe."

She raised the glass in a mocking salute and put it to her lips. The policeman was almost near enough to touch her when she whirled like a cat, threw the glass, contents and all, into his face and vaulted easily through the low window.

Bob lingered on the border for weeks, trying to find some trace of her. Pedro's place was closed. The wild rumors that Pedro was wanted for murder, treason, dope selling, that Inez was his wife, his daughter, his mistress, were impossible to untangle.

He finally gave it up and went back to school.

He found her two years later.

The reception for Jim Davis and his bride was in full swing when Bob hurried across the veranda.

"Be careful, Jim. That Slack—I'm afraid."

The low, thrilling voice stopped Bob in his tracks. Surely, he had heard it before? The two figures in the shadows had not noticed him.

"Forget about Slack." It was Jim's voice answering. "Are you happy, my darling?"

"The happiest woman in the world as long as you love me."

Arm in arm, they went back into the house and Bob, feeling like an eavesdropper, followed them.

"Theresa, this is Bob, a punk lawyer, a worse golfer, and my best friend," Jim was saying a minute later.

Bob scarcely heard him. Inez! Could this radiantly happy woman at Jim's side be the tragic, desperate girl he had seen in Pedro's? Could it be possible? Two years was a long time to remember a girl he had seen only once, but still—

"I believe we met in Mexico," he said, watching her closely.

Did he imagine it or did her face grow whiter? She shook her head.

"No, I have never been in Mexico," she said.

"Theresa had just come from Spain two weeks ago when I met her," Jim explained. "I married her right away before you other birds would see her."

So that was her story! He wondered what else Jim knew about her.

Someone called Jim and they were alone for a minute.

"I could have sworn you were a girl I had met at Pedro's."

"What is Pedro's?" She was still smiling, but her eyes were filled with apprehension. He felt sure the shot had hit home.

He wanted to shout, "It's the toughest honkatonk on the border, and you know it!" but he was afraid. Suppose he was mistaken? After all, he had seen the girl only once.

Jim came to claim her, and Bob went to talk to Jim's mother to see if he could learn more about the girl from her.

But she was full of her grievance about the chauffeur, Slack, whom Jim had fired earlier in the day.

"I do wish you would warn Jim to be careful," she said worriedly. "Slack had been drinking, and when Jim told him to get off the place, he threatened to kill him. Jim laughed and put him out, but I think the man is dangerous."

Bob quieted her fears and tried to get her to talk about her new daughter-in-law.

"We were horrified when Jim wired he had married a girl none of us had ever seen, but we all fell in love with her as soon as we saw her, just as he did. She is a Spanish refugee, you know. Isn't she adorable?"

It was evident that Jim's family had accepted her story about herself as read-

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ily and as wholeheartedly as Jim had.

Bob was putting in a thoroughly uncomfortable evening. One minute he would almost convince himself he was mistaken, that Jim's bride could not possibly be Inez. The next minute he would be sure she was the girl he had seen throw the knife. But if she were Inez, what should he do about it? There would never be any question about her past if he kept quiet. If it were not for him she would be safe. But his best friend, married to a girl like that! The thought sickened him.

If he could make her admit she was Inez she would know the game was up. Maybe she would clear out and that would be the best for all concerned.

She was trying to avoid him but, finally, he was dancing with her.

"I hope you will like me," she said shyly. "Jim tells me you are his best friend."

"He is my best friend," he replied slowly. "and I would do whatever I thought was best for him, no matter how much it hurt me."

"I feel that way, too." Her lips were trembling and her face was white and set; but she met his eyes steadily. Bob felt sure she was Inez now, but she was not going to give up.

"Jim loves me," she said. "I will let nothing make him unhappy."

That was it! If he told Jim the story, she might easily convince him Bob was mistaken. Bob had no proof of her past and she knew it. She smiled a little, as if she knew what was passing through his mind.

Behind them a woman screamed. The music died away and people stopped dancing.

Jim was standing with his hands in the air and, behind him, the discharged chauffeur, Slack, was pressing a gun into his back.

"You'll never put another man out of his job, Davis," Slack growled. "I'm going to kill you."

(Continued on page 130)



# YOUR STARS AND YOU

by KAI



## YOUR WEEK

**D**URING the week you may be restless in connection with employment matters, with the desire to make changes and go places. Keep your restlessness subdued or it may act to your detriment. Dissatisfaction with your work is apt to be from fancied causes, so keep your imagination from working overtime. Business opportunities may come your way and some benefits may be received, but you may not take the best advantage of your opportunities, in some cases due to having your mind on social activities


and love affairs. Give attention to the thing that should be done at the moment and you will make better progress all around. Money matters generally will be under beneficial influences. Some financial benefits may come to you from unexpected sources; some from able planning and hard work; some through the good offices of elderly people. Avoid financial extravagance. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure, but annoyance may be connected therewith. Avoid mis-

understandings with near relatives. Many of you may indulge in unnecessary worry during the week. If you feel certain that you are going to have a nervous breakdown, postpone the event and pay attention to your diet. Love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but be very careful in courtship. Keep your emotions under control. Beware of impetuous lovers.


### DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time. If not using that time, make correction to the time you are using.

#### Saturday . . . . . April 6th


 The morning hours will be excellent for most matters. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people and near relatives will do you favors. Love and marriage interests can be advanced. If environmental conditions have been unsatisfactory, it will be a good time to make favorable adjustments. You may benefit in connection with correspondence or other writings. Between 12:30 p. m. and 2:00 p. m., money matters will be under mixed influences. Some benefits may be received, but you may be put to unexpected expense. The benefits, however, are likely to outweigh the expense. Near relatives will do you favors. Environmental benefits may come to you through able planning. Between 3:30 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Keep your imagination from working overtime. Between 5:30 p. m. and midnight may be quiet.

#### Sunday . . . . . April 7th


 During the early-morning hours, environmental benefits may be received. The later-morning hours may be quiet. Between 1:00 p. m. and 2:30 p. m., love and marriage interests can be advanced. Between 2:30 p. m.

and 3:45 p. m., business benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests can be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing. You may also benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Between 3:45 p. m. and 6:30 p. m., avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Be careful in courtship. Between 7:00 p. m. and 9:00 p. m., business and financial benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with correspondence or other writings. Between 9:00 p. m. and midnight, business and environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with correspondence or other writings.

#### Monday . . . . . April 8th

 During the early-morning hours avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document. The later-morning hours may be quiet. Between noon and 1:30 p. m., mark time in money matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Between 4:00 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., curtail social activities. Avoid extravagance in money matters. Between 7:30 p. m. and midnight, mark time in money matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people.

#### Tuesday . . . . . April 9th

 During the early-morning hours financial matters will be under mixed influences. Some benefits may be received, but you may be put to expense. Mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Near relatives will do you favors. The later-morning hours and the early-afternoon hours may be quiet. Between 5:00 p. m. and 8:00 p. m., be very careful in court-

ship. Keep your emotions under control. Avoid unnecessary short journeys. Between 11:00 p. m. and midnight, unexpected financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests may be advanced in an unusual manner.

**Wednesday . . . . . April 10th**



During the morning hours you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Some financial benefits, however, may be received. Love, marriage and business benefits may be received. Be careful in courtship. Between 12:30 p. m. and 2:30 p. m., employment, financial, and environmental benefits may be received. Between 2:30 p. m. and 6:30 p. m., social interests can be advanced. Between 6:30 p. m. and 8:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Between 11:00 p. m. and midnight, be con-

servative in business matters. Avoid financial extravagance. Curtail social activities.

**Thursday . . . . . April 11th**



During the early-morning hours business and financial benefits may be received. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Mark time in love and marriage matters. The later-morning hours may be quiet. Between 1:00 p. m. and 2:30 p. m., avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Between 2:30 p. m. and 4:00 p. m., keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Be conservative in business matters. Avoid unnecessary travel and unnecessary lawsuits. Between 4:00 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., business and financial benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal docu-

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ment or through legal procedure. You may also benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Love and marriage interests can be advanced. Near relatives will do you favors. Between 6:00 p. m. and midnight, social interests can be advanced.

Friday . . . . . April 12th



During the early-morning hours, be conservative in business matters. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Do not travel unnecessarily. The later-morning hours may be quiet. Between noon and 1:00 p. m., mark time in business and financial matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Between 4:30 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Between 8:00 p. m. and 9:00 p. m., business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Between 9:00 p. m. and midnight, love and marriage interests may be advanced, but do not become romantic. Mark time in employment matters.

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 26th will find this an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people and near relatives will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between March 27th and 31st,

you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Near relatives will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between April 1st and 5th, matters will be about normal. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. If born between April 6th and 10th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Unexpected financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between April 11th and 15th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests, but do not become romantic. Business and financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. You may also benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Mark time in employment matters. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday, and Friday. If born between April 16th and 20th, matters will be about normal. Best day for you this week, Monday.

#### April 20th and May 21st

Taurus



—Taurus born between April 20th and 26th should be conservative in business and financial matters this week. Postpone important decisions. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Curtail social activities. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Avoid falls. Near relatives will do you favors. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between April 27th and May 1st, love and marriage interests may be advanced but be careful in courtship. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. If born between May 2nd and 6th, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. If born between May 7th and 11th, you may

be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between May 12th and 16th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but be careful in courtship. Business, employment, and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Monday. Be careful on Wednesday. If born between May 17th and 21st, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday.

#### May 21st and June 21st

Gemini



—Geminians born between May 21st and 26th may receive financial benefits this week. Be careful in courtship. Avoid unnecessary short journeys. Keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Avoid cuts and burns. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between May 27th and 31st, be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between June 1st and 6th, matters will be about normal. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. If born between June 7th and 11th, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between June 12th and 16th, mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Love and marriage interests can be advanced, but do not become romantic. Business and financial benefits may

be received. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday, and Friday. If born between June 17th and 21st, matters will be about normal. Best day for you this week, Monday.

### June 21st and July 23rd

#### Cancer



—Cancerians born between June 21st and 27th will find this an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people and near relatives will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between June 28th and July 2nd, love and marriage interests can be advanced, but be careful in courtship. Near relatives will do you favors. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between July 3rd and 7th, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between July 8th and 12th, curtail social activities. Be careful in courtship. Unexpected financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between July 13th and 18th, employment and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Be conservative in business matters. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday and Monday. If born between July 19th and 23rd, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday.

### July 23rd and August 23rd

#### Leo



—Leo natives born between July 23rd and 28th should be conservative in business and financial matters this week. Mark time in love and marriage matters. Avoid falls. Postpone

important decisions. Do not quarrel with elderly people. Near relatives may do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between July 29th and August 2nd, love and marriage interests may be advanced, but be careful in courtship. Near relatives will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between August 3rd and 7th, mark time in money matters. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday, and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between August 8th and 13th, love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but the unexpected may happen to disarrange your plans. Be careful in courtship. You may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between August 14th and 18th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but the unexpected may happen to disarrange your plans. Be careful in courtship. Business and employment benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. You may also benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday, and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between August 19th and 23rd, mark time in money matters. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Wednesday.

### August 23rd and September 23rd

#### Virgo



—Virgo natives born between August 23rd and 28th may receive business and financial benefits this week. Elderly people will do you

favors. Be careful in courtship. Avoid cuts and burns. Keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between August 29th and September 2nd, be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between September 3rd and 7th, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between September 8th and 13th, love and marriage interests can be advanced. Unexpected financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between September 14th and 18th, mark time in employment matters. Do not magnify trifles. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Be careful of your speech. Business and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Love and marriage interests can be advanced, but do not become romantic. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between September 19th and 23rd, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday.

#### September 23rd and October 23rd

Libra



—Librans born between September 23rd and 28th should be conservative in business and financial matters this week. Love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but delays may be encountered in the carrying out of your plans. Mark time in matters that do not go smoothly. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between September 29th and October 3rd, love and marriage interests can be advanced, but be careful in courtship. Near relatives will do you



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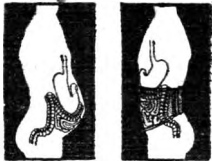
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favors. Best day for you this week, Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between October 4th and 8th, matters will be about normal. Best days for you this week, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between October 9th and 13th, curtail social activities. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between October 14th and 18th, be conservative in business matters. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Avoid unnecessary lawsuits and unnecessary travel. Employment benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Friday. Mark time on Sunday and Monday. If born between October 19th and 23rd, matters will be about normal. Mark time on Monday.

October 23rd and November 22nd  
Scorpio



—Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 28th should mark time in love, marriage,

financial and business matters this week. Postpone important decisions. Avoid falls. Do not quarrel with elderly people. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between October 29th and November 2nd, keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Be careful in courtship. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between November 3rd and 7th, avoid extravagance in money matters. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between November 8th and 12th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between November 13th and 17th, business, employment and environmental benefits may be received. You may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between November 18th

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and 22nd, avoid extravagance in money matters. Mark time on Wednesday and Thursday.

#### November 22nd and December 22nd


##### Sagittarius

 —Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 27th should mark time in love, marriage, and financial matters this week. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Do not travel unnecessarily. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between November 28th and December 2nd, mark time in love and marriage matters. Keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Do not travel unnecessarily. Avoid cuts and burns. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between December 3rd and 7th, matters will be about normal. Best day for you this week, Sunday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between December 8th and 12th, love and marriage interests may be advanced in some respects, but the unexpected may happen to disarrange your plans. Be careful in courtship. Avoid impulsive actions in connection with money matters. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. You may also benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Best day for you this week, Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between December 13th and 17th, mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. You may also benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Best days for

you this week, Sunday and Monday. Mark time on Friday. If born between December 18th and 22nd, matters will be about normal. Best day for you this week, Monday.


#### December 22nd and January 20th

##### Capricorn

 —Capricornians born between December 22nd and 26th may receive financial benefits this week. Elderly people will do you favors. Be careful in courtship. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between December 27th and 31st, keep your temper under control. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between January 1st and 5th, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between January 6th and 10th, unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Curtail social activities. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between January 11th and 15th, employment and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Be conservative in business matters. Curtail social activities. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday and Monday. If born between January 16th and 20th, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday.

#### January 20th and February 19th

##### Aquarius

 —Aquarians born between January 20th and 25th should mark time in business and financial matters this week. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Be care-

ful in courtship. Near relatives will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between January 26th and 30th, love and marriage interests may be advanced, but be careful in courtship. Near relatives will do you favors. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between January 31st and February 4th, mark time in money matters. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between February 5th and 9th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between February 10th and 14th, mark time in employment matters. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. You may also benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday, and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between February 15th and 19th, avoid extravagance in money matters. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Wednesday and Thursday.

#### February 19th and March 21st

Pisces



—Pisceans born between February 19th and 24th may receive business and financial benefits this week. Elderly people will do you favors. Be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Best days for you this week, Monday and Tuesday. Mark

time on Thursday. If born between February 25th and March 1st, be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Avoid misunderstandings with near relatives. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between March 2nd and 6th, financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between March 7th and 11th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love and marriage interests. Unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between March 12th and 16th, mark time in employment matters. Do not magnify trifles. Love and marriage interests may be advanced, but do not become romantic. Business and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Pleasant surprises may come to you. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between March 17th and 21st, financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Wednesday and Thursday.

Note for "Born Between—" readers: The week referred to begins with Saturday, April 6th, and ends with Friday, April 12th. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.

### More About Aries People

To ascertain in detail the events that may happen to a person during his lifetime, his horoscope must be cast. Groups of people, however, are affected in a general way by the positions of certain planets at a particular time and group members will be more or less affected by the group influence. During the twelve months ensuing from March 21, 1940,

the various groups of Aries natives will be beneficially or otherwise affected by the positions of certain planets in the following manner:

If you were born between March 21st and 26th, during April, the last half of May, and the first half of June, 1940, you will come under beneficial influences in connection with money matters. During the first half of April, 1940, near relatives will do you favors. During the last half of May, the first half of October, 1940, and the last half of February, 1941, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. During the last half of May, 1940, avoid misunderstandings in home affairs. During the first half of June, 1940, love interests may be advanced. July, September, and December, 1940, and March, 1941, will be about normal. During the last half of August, 1940, mark time in employment matters. During the first half of October, 1940, mark time in marriage matters. During the last half of November, 1940, be careful in courtship. During the first half of January, 1941, business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else.

If you were born between March 27th and 31st, during the middle two weeks of April, 1940, near relatives will do you favors. During the last week of April, the months of May and June, the first ten days of July, the months of November and December, 1940, and the months of January and February, 1941, you will come under beneficial influences affecting money matters. During the last ten days of May, the first week of June, the last three weeks of October, 1940, the last ten days of February and the first ten days of March, 1941, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. During the last ten days of May and the first week of June, 1940, avoid misunderstandings in home affairs. During the middle two weeks of July, 1940, love interests may be advanced. During the last ten days of August and the first ten days of September, 1940, mark time in

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employment matters. During the last three weeks of October, 1940, mark time in marriage matters. During the last week of November and the first ten days of December, 1940, be careful in courtship. During the middle two weeks of January, 1941, business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else.

If you were born between April 1st and 5th, during the last half of April, 1940, near relatives will do you favors. May, 1940, will be about normal. During the months from June to November, inclusive, 1940, and during the last ten days of February and the month of March, 1941, you will come under beneficial influences affecting money matters. During the first half of June, the last half of October, 1940, and the first half of March, 1941, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. During the first half of June, 1940, avoid misunderstandings in home affairs. During the last half of July, 1940, love interests may be advanced. During the first half of September, 1940, mark time in employment matters. During the last half of October, 1940, mark time in marriage matters. During the first half of December, 1940, be careful in courtship. During the last half of January, 1941, business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else.

If you were born between April 6th and 10th, during the first half of April, the last half of August and the month of September, 1940, you will come under beneficial influences affecting money matters. During the first half of April, 1940, the last ten days of January and the first ten days of February, 1941, business benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. During the first ten days of April, 1940, you may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Dur-

ing the last ten days of April and the first ten days of May, 1940, near relatives will do you favors. During the first three weeks of June, the last ten days of October, the first ten days of November, 1940, and the middle two weeks of March, 1941, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. During the first three weeks of June, 1940, avoid misunderstandings in home affairs. During the last ten days of July and the first ten days of August, 1940, love interests may be advanced. During the last three weeks of September, 1940, mark time in employment matters. During the last ten days of October and the first ten days of November, 1940, mark time in marriage matters. During the last three weeks of December, 1940, be careful in courtship.

If you were born between April 11th and 15th, during the months from April, 1940, to March, 1941, inclusive, you may receive unexpected financial benefits from time to time. During the months from April to September, inclusive, 1940, avoid dissatisfaction with your work. Do not take offense at trifles. During April, 1940, and the first half of February, 1941, business benefits may be received. During April, 1940, you may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. During the first half of May, 1940, near relatives will do you favors. During the last half of June, the first half of November, 1940, and the last half of March, 1941, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. During the last half of June, 1940, avoid misunderstandings in home affairs. During the first half of August, 1940, love interests may be advanced. During the first half of November, 1940, mark time in marriage matters. During the last half of December, 1940, be careful in courtship.

If you were born between April 16th and 20th, during the last week of April, the first three weeks of May, 1940, and the middle two weeks of February, 1941,

business benefits may be received. During the last week of April and the first three weeks of May, 1940, you may benefit in connection with a journey, your own or that of someone else. During the middle two weeks of May, 1940, near relatives will do you favors. During the last ten days of June, the first ten days of July, the last three weeks of November, 1940, and the last ten days of March, 1941, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. During the last ten days of June and the first ten days of July, 1940, avoid misunderstandings in home affairs. During the months of July, August, September, and October, 1940, unexpected financial benefits may be received from time to time. During the middle two weeks of August, 1940, love interests may be advanced. During the months from September, 1940, to March, 1941, inclusive, avoid dissatisfaction with your work. Do not take offense at trifles. During the last three weeks of November, 1940, mark time in marriage matters. During the last week of December, 1940, and the first ten days of January, 1941, be careful in courtship.

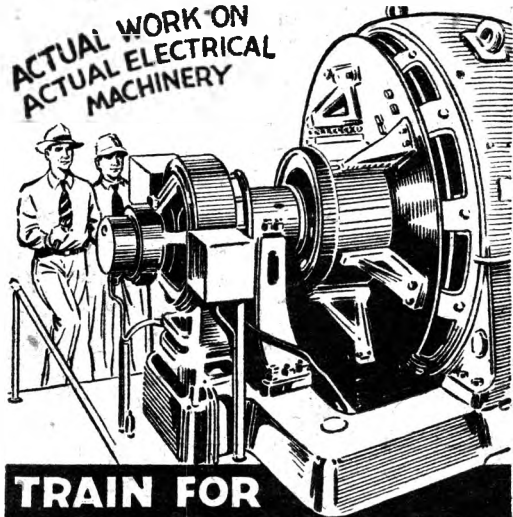
(For additional forecasts see the "Born Between—" section each week.)

\* (Aries article to be continued next week.) \*

### QUESTION BOX

V. P. Y., female, born May 25, 1914, Ontario: I am sorry you didn't know what time of day you were born. From time to time during the next eighteen months you will pass under beneficial influences affecting marriage matters.

A. H. K., female, born June 26, 1894, New Jersey: You did not tell me what time of day you were born; consequently, I cannot estimate the approximate months when certain influences will come into operation in your nativity that are likely to affect marriage matters. However, about the first half of 1941 you are



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likely to have an impulsive love affair that may not result in marriage, or if it does, the marriage may not last long. About one year after this impulsive love affair takes place, you will come under excellent influences that may result in a very happy and a lasting marriage for you.

V. L. P., female, born December 14, 1917, between 4:00 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., Ontario: Since writing to me you have passed under excellent influences that may have enabled you to advance marriage interests. You will come under beneficial influences affecting marriage matters about October, 1940, and about February or March, 1942. If marriage has not already occurred, I think you would be wise to defer it until the latter part of February or the first part of March, 1942; at which time, however, minor obstacles may have to be met. Do not marry either one while in doubt as to which of two suitors to marry as afterward you may wish you had married the other or someone else.

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V. M. B., female, born January 22, 1921, about 1:00 a. m., Michigan: This date fell on Saturday, not on Thursday. Employment conditions may be somewhat unsatisfactory for you during the next few months. There is a possibility, however, that you may be able to advance employment interests about the first half of July, 1940. I am inclined to think that you will find many differences between you, hard to reconcile, should you marry the boy whose birth data you sent me. I'm sorry.

F. M. N., female, born January 29, 1915, between 6:00 a. m. and noon, Massachusetts: An answer to you was published in the February 26, 1938, Love Story Magazine. The hour of birth at that time was given as "about 6:00 p. m." Based on your latest data, you will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Middle of 1940, good. First half of 1941, excellent. I am unable to state the approxi-

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mate months, due to the uncertainty of your birth time. I think you would succeed at X-ray work.

H. S., female, born April 17, 1912, about 11:30 a. m., Nebraska: An answer to you was published in the January 20, 1940, Love Story Magazine, regarding financial and employment matters. I'm sorry if you overlooked it. Regarding marriage matters: You will come under excellent influences about the following times: Middle of November, 1940, last half of June, first part of July, 1941.

C. S., female, born November 3, 1915, about 7:30 a. m., Nebraska: An answer to you was published in the January 20, 1940, Love Story Magazine, regarding business and financial matters. I'm sorry if you overlooked it. Regarding marriage matters: You will come under influences about the following times: Middle of March, 1942, may be obstacles. Last half of June, 1942, excellent.

"MARIE," born December 24, 1913, 4:00 a. m., Minnesota: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: First three weeks of June, 1940, adverse. Last half of September, first half of October, 1940, good in some respects, but annoyances may be experienced. Last three weeks of March, 1941, excellent.

"LENIE," born December 23, 1917, 12:05 a. m., Minnesota: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Middle of April, 1940, adverse. Middle of November, 1940, good. Last half of April, 1941, excellent.

"ANN," born April 30, 1911, 8:00 a. m., Minnesota: About the following times you will come under excellent influences that may bring you business, financial and home benefits: September,

1940; January, February, March, June, and July, 1941.

M. J. E. B., female, born May 15, 1919, about 11:00 a. m., Michigan: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about January and February, 1941.

Miss F. B., born December 8, 1925, about 6:15 p. m., Michigan: About the middle of August, 1940, and about the first half of November, 1941, you will come under excellent influences that may affect heart affairs. Because of your youth, marriage may not occur until later but may result from an attachment formed under these influences.

C. B., female, born September 7, 1892, 5:00 p. m., Ohio: I am unable to state whether or not your daughter will come to see you. In your future efforts at reconciliation, I suggest that you try during the following times: Last half of August, last half of September, 1940; middle of April, first half of July, first half of August, 1941.

M. S., female, born May 20, 1920, about 1:15 a. m., Oregon: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Middle of October, 1940, may be obstacles. Last part of July, first half of August, 1941, excellent. Middle of December, 1942, adverse. Middle of March, 1943, excellent.

J. T., female, born December 8, 1910, 4:00 a. m., New York: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of March, 1941, adverse. Last three weeks of June, 1941, excellent.

I. L. L., female, born August 17, 1913, between 10:30 and 11:00 o'clock, Kentucky: I cannot be certain from your letter whether it was a. m. or p. m.



# The FRIENDLIEST CORNER

by  
**Mary Morris**

**W**HO wants to hear all about New Zealand? For those who enjoy writing, here is a chance to get some very interesting letters from a peppy girl who is keen about making friends. She is especially eager to hear from Pen Pals living in Western States but, of course, everyone is more than welcome. So won't you give her a break?

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Here's a plea all the way from New Zealand. I'm a peppy girl eager to hear from Pals between sixteen and twenty. I like horseback riding, fishing, swimming, hiking, and collect stamps, picture post cards and snapshots. I'll gladly exchange them with other Pals, and answer questions about this country. I would especially like to correspond with Pals living in Arizona, Arkansas, and other Western States, but everyone is welcome. I promise to answer all letters received. **NEW ZEALAND NONIE.**

For Western Pals and farmerettes.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Please find me some Pen Pals. I would especially like to get in touch with Western Pals, and those who are living on farms, but promise prompt replies to all letters. I'm a big-city girl of twenty-one, will exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and promise to be a real friend. I'll really appreciate your letters, girls. So get busy and write to **ANCEY.**

Are you interested in astrology?

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Won't you print my letter? I'm still a fairly young woman, like to make friends, and am very much interested in astrology and numerology. I'd like to hear from Pals all over, and promise to answer every letter I get. Come on, everybody, let's exchange news and views. **SOPHIA M.**

Friendly and sociable.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Won't you print my plea? I'm a married woman of twenty-one, have one child, considered friendly, sociable, and would love to hear from Pen Pals who want a real friend. I like reading, crocheting, travel, and walking. I promise to be a steady correspondent. **DOROTHY JEAN.**

Your letters will cheer her up.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** I'm a high-school senior, a girl of seventeen, very lonesome, collect pictures of movie stars, and my hobby is skating. I want to hear from Pen Pals everywhere, far and near, and of any age. I am living in New York, will exchange souvenirs, pictures and books. **LONELY VERA.**

She finds her job interesting.

**DEAR MISS MORRIS:** Here's one more plea. I'm a girl nineteen years of age,



work in a drugstore, and find it very interesting. I like sports, dancing, and promise faithfully to answer all letters received. Here's hoping that Pals all over will not hesitate to try me. Who'll be the first?  
NESA.

Exchange dress patterns with her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope that some of the Pals will write to me. I'm a married woman in my early twenties, have two little girls, live on a farm and like it, but have no neighbors nearby and often get very lonesome. I'll exchange snapshots, dress patterns, souvenirs, and will be a real friend to all.

POWNAI PAL.

A plea from South Africa.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hello, everybody! I'm an English girl living in South Africa, age twenty, and hope to hear from Pals everywhere, especially those in Canada. I've loads of things to talk about, and will answer questions about my corner of the world. Here's luck!

MARSHA.

Prompt replies guaranteed.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please make room for my letter. I guarantee prompt replies, and hope single and married Pals will drop me a few lines. I'm a married woman in my twenties, have one child, live in Iowa, and hope to hear from at least one Pal in every State in the Union.

MRS. DEE.

She'll really appreciate your letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if I'll have any luck. I'm a teen-age girl who would very much appreciate hearing from Pals between fifteen and seventeen, especially girls in Canada, Florida, and Ohio, but everyone is welcome. I promise to be a real friend, so who'll try me?

MICHIGAN D.

Not lonesome, but take her on, anyway.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I'm not really lonesome, I would nevertheless like to hear from girls all over. I'm a Canadian girl of almost seventeen, and really

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enjoy writing letters. I like skating, swimming, basketball. and feel sure I can find many interesting things to talk about. Please, Pals, let me hear from you.  
SCOTIA RONNIE.

Lively, happy, and athletic.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lively, happy girl of eighteen, live in Pennsylvania, and would love to hear from Pals everywhere. I like skating, trapping, horseback riding, and do a lot of camping during the summer. I promise faithfully to answer all letters, so come on, girls, let's be friends. OUTDOOR JO.

Alabama Lady has traveled by plane.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I'm a married woman of fifty, I'm young at heart and hope to hear from Pals of any age. I have traveled quite a bit by automobile and plane, enjoy keeping house, cooking, reading, music, hiking, and other sports. I hope you will print my plea, and that Pals who want a real friend will get busy and drop me a line.

ALABAMA LADY.

Lonesome young Californian.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hello, everybody! I'm a lonesome young California girl looking for Pals between fourteen and eighteen. I attend high school, play the piano, sing, like all sports, reading, movies, music, and last but not least, writing letters. Come on, everybody, let's get acquainted!  
FREEDA.

She'll appreciate real friends.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room for another plea? I'm a girl eighteen years of age, grew up in an orphanage, and would love to correspond with Pals all over the country. Right now I'm living in a large Midwestern city. Can you guess which one? Anyway, do hurry and write to me, girls.

ORPHAN EMMY.

Know anything about tropical fish?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's my plea. I'm a married woman of thirty-one, have

five youngsters, and they are my real hobbies. Next, I like reading, writing, crocheting, knitting, and tropical fish take up some of my time, too. I am living in Massachusetts, and hope to hear from single and married Pals everywhere.

MAJETA.

A friend just for the asking!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I have some Pen Pals? I'm a Connecticut girl of twenty-one, promise faithfully to answer every letter that finds its way into my mail box, and will tell all about myself later. How about it, Pals? If you want a true-blue friend, try me.

MARY LEE.

Are you her birthday twin?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Calling girls whose birthday is on September 15th! I'm a married woman of eighteen, have a baby one month old, and would love to exchange letters, news and views with other young married or single Pals. I'll also exchange snapshots and souvenirs.

IOWA POLLY.

She collects china pups.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope you'll find room for my letter. I want to hear from girls between fourteen and seventeen. I'm a lively girl who adores writing letters. My hobby is collecting china puppies, and I am interested in everyone and everything. I live in the West, and have a lot of things to tell you. THEROLEEN.

Give her a chance.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: All I want is a chance to prove that I can be a true-blue friend and a steady correspondent. I'm a married woman, twenty years of age, live in New York State, like to make friends, interested in everything, will ex-

change snapshots, and promise to answer all letters. Who'll try me?

CHUBBY MARY.

A peppy fourteen-year-old.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I sincerely hope that someone will write to me. I'm a girl of fourteen, considered sociable and friendly, enjoy dancing, making friends, will exchange snapshots with anyone, and promise prompt replies. Please, Pals, answer my plea. I'll try very hard to make my letters interesting.

VIRGINIA BLONDIE.

Here's a Pal from Texas.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's my plea. I'm a married woman of twenty-one, live in Texas, and feel sure that I can make my replies worth while. I have one child, enjoy writing letters, making friends, collect picture post cards and will exchange them with anyone. Come one, come all!

TEXAS MARIANE.

She may be a writer some day.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope Pals all over will not hesitate to write to me. I'm a single young woman thirty years of age, interested in everyone, enjoy writing long, chummy letters, and want loads of Pen Pals. My ambition is to become a writer. But don't let that stop you from answering my plea. OHIO NAOMI.

A plea for older Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Can you find room for me? I'm a married woman of fifty, have recently moved from a large city to a small one, and get very lonesome. I like fancywork, crocheting, collect miniature china animals, and promise to answer letters promptly. Please, Pals, hurry and write. LONESOME RUBY.

Miss Mary Morris 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 include forwarding postage when sending letters, 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.



THE

# Friend in Need

conducted by **Laura Alston Brown**  
*well-known authority on love and marriage*

**A**LTHOUGH we have problems and disappointments of one kind or another in this life, we should try not to lose sight of the fact that no one's life is entirely free of upheavals, big or little. If trouble does not come from one direction, it is sure to come from another. No one, looking at another's life, can realize what the other person may be going through, what heartaches he or she may be concealing with a smile. Even if we can't have just the things we want, we can always find something to be thankful for.

Do you remember the old saying about counting your blessings? Here's a reader who thinks we would all be happier if we would try to be just a bit more grateful for the little we have been blessed with. Some of us may never see our dreams come true. But life would be brighter if we tried harder to appreciate and enjoy the present, for today comes only once. What do you think, family?

**DEAR MRS. BROWN:** Although I'm not a philosopher, and perhaps my opinion may not set the world on fire, I wonder if you can find room for my letter?

I read the letters from other readers, and the advice you give, and it seems to me that too many of us are a very ungrateful lot. Maybe we expect too much

of life and of those we love. But I think that, too, many of us don't appreciate what we already have. In other words, we rarely stop to count our blessings, as the old saying goes.

A lot of us, too, become too easily discouraged and are not willing to accept a little at the beginning. There are many girls who could marry, but they don't appreciate the things a man of moderate circumstances can give them. Lots of girls, I've noticed, refuse to marry unless they can have a three-room apartment when they could be just as happy in one room. They want too much, and don't stop to count what the man offers.

Then there are so many dissatisfied, cross wives and husbands. I know some married couples who could be happier if they only tried harder to appreciate what they have. One couple in particular has two fine youngsters. The husband has a job, though it doesn't bring in as much as it would in better times. They are, I think, still in love with each other, but are always grumbling and complaining to each other, and any of their friends who'll listen to them, that they haven't this, and haven't that. They can't go places because the children need things. Most of us are no doubt familiar with the story. They don't appreciate the fact

that their children are bright and healthy, that they themselves are in good health, have good looks, that the wife is a good housekeeper, and the husband a steady worker and willing to do things for his family.

And I've noticed other people who could be happier if they tried harder to appreciate the things they have. I don't know how other readers feel about this question, and would certainly enjoy hearing their opinion. But as I said before, most of us could get more out of life if we tried to be more satisfied with what we have.

Of course, I know that being dissatisfied helps us to improve ourselves and our circumstances. But why must we grumble all the time? Just notice when a few married women, or even single girls when they get together, what do they do? Tell each other their hard-luck stories. I ask you, does that make for cheerfulness?

Now I suppose you will think I have a lot of this world's goods and can afford to imitate Pollyanna. I'm a poor man's wife. I'm in my twenties, have been married five years, and have three children. Life isn't easy for us. If business were better, my husband would earn more and things would be easier. I have to stretch every cent in every way I can. But whenever I begin to feel blue, I try to snap out of it right away. I tell myself I'm lucky to have a husband who loves me. He has his faults, but I'm not perfect, either. We have our differences of opinion, but we try to work things out without quarreling and giving the children a poor example. Our children are healthy, and though we eat plain food, and our clothes are not in the height of fashion, we manage to look neat and presentable.

I'm a high-school graduate, and my husband had plans to go to college before we were married. But circumstances became less and less encouraging, so we decided to get married, anyway, and he took up a trade. Sometimes he looks back and I know he regrets that things

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did not go better with us. That is natural. But, I try to cheer him up in every way I can. More wives should do that.

And to get back to my argument, I think it's a pity that so many people, young and old, waste their time complaining. Good luck to you and all the readers.  
WINNIFRED.

And the best of luck to you, my dear. I'm sure our readers will enjoy your letter as much as I did, and I might add that you've got something there! Our daily life is made up of many little things, some good, and some not so good. But instead of moaning about the bad, we'd be happier if we tried to forget it and remembered only the good. It seems to be a quirk in human nature to be more upset when something goes wrong, or when we can't have what we want when we want it, than be happy about the things we do have. But perhaps that is because we are apt to take the good things in life for granted.

**DEAR MRS. BROWN:** Like any other girl of my age I want friends and a little fun, but my father is so unreasonably strict, he thinks a girl of sixteen is too young to do anything but stay home. I'm in my last term of high school, and dad doesn't want me to date boys or go around with girls. He always criticizes my girl friends, and lectures when I do much as speak to a boy. If I want to go to the movies I have to go with someone older than myself.

My mother tries to make him see things from my side, especially about dating a boy now and then, but he won't listen to her. So I go out with boys on the sly, but it hurts me to have to sneak out like this. I would also love to bring boys to the house and introduce them to my parents, but I'm afraid of my father. He says I can have boy friends when I'm twenty-one. Do you think that's fair? I'm so unhappy. FLORA.

Girls of your age are entitled to some social life. Of course, you realize that you are too young to have dates, but you

are not too young for wholesome friendships with boys and girls.

Isn't there some way you can coax your father to be more unbending in his attitude? Do you think you could flatter him into adopting a different opinion? Tell him how proud you are of him, and that you know you are too young for beaux, but that you are anxious to have some of your school friends, boys and girls, meet him and see what a grand person he is. No doubt he is strict because he has your welfare in mind. But you sound like a sensible girl, and your father should be more reasonable on this point.

Suggest having two or three boys and girls in some Saturday or Sunday evening, and ask your parents to join in the fun. He may yet thaw out if you don't give up.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have come to you with my problem because I am at the end of my rope and don't know which way to turn.

I have been married four years and have a two-year-old son. Something is happening to my marriage, and I can't seem to do anything about it. Slowly but surely my marriage is going on the rocks, unless something is done quickly.

We have reached the point where we quarrel all the time about little things, and this constant nagging and bickering is driving me out of my mind. It seems to me my husband's to blame, but I guess one person couldn't possibly be to blame all the time, so I'm to blame, too. But I can make the most casual remark and the first thing I know I've got a quarrel on my hands.

At least half the time since we've been married he has been unemployed, through no fault of his own, for he isn't lazy. At present, however, he has steady work, though he makes barely enough for rent and groceries. We all need clothes and we are in debt. We've had tougher times before and managed to stick together. It looks easier now, for he has good prospects for the future.

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I am twenty-two years old and my husband is twenty-five. He ordinarily is a congenial man and people like him. He is good-looking, but not vain. He's crazy about our baby, and I'm sure he still loves me. At any rate, I know there isn't another woman in the picture. I am quick-tempered and impulsive, but not very demonstrative emotionally.

At first, when we quarreled, I always gave in and made up, but there's a limit to those things, and I couldn't keep my self-respect and keep on doing all the making up when I knew he was in the wrong. I don't exactly feel like apologizing for something I know I haven't done. But I don't mean he's wrong all the time.

Another thing is that he says I don't love him because I don't show it. But when you've spent a day doing the never-ending cooking, washing, housekeeping and running after and waiting on a two-year-old you don't have very much vivacity left for a lot of love-making, but maybe that's the trouble. I love him so much I don't see how I could stand it if he left, and that's what he's threatening to do. Of course, I tell him I don't care, and he says he knows it.

He's trying to make me into a mid-Victorian wife who is a slave to her husband, though he's generous with his money and I go when and where I please while he's at work, and I drive the car. But he thinks that I should cook three hot meals a day and have them on time. At home, for Saturday-night supper, we used to have sandwiches, and for Sunday breakfast we'd have toast, coffee, cereal, and a "snack" if we stayed home for lunch. My husband has to have a complete meal Saturday night, no matter where we'd planned to go. And Sunday he has to have hot biscuits for breakfast.

So, you see, it's just little things, but there are worlds and worlds of them.

I've tried to be fair by telling him about his good points as well as some of his faults.

The first year and a half we were married I worked and paid as many bills as he did, and looked after the house and laundry. I could work again if we separate, but I hardly know where to begin because of the baby.

All this sounds as if we two were acting like silly kids, but it's not as easy as that. To me it is very serious, and I know that my marriage is at stake. Any advice you care to give me will certainly be appreciated.

SALLY.

But doesn't marriage include making concessions and sacrifices, even though at times the blame seems unevenly distributed? Of course, your husband should try to see things from your side, and how much it would mean to you if you could take things a little easy at the end of the week. On the other hand, men who are providers sometimes feel that since they are doing their share by bringing home the bacon, it is a wife's privilege to please her lord and master in every way she can.

I know how much of a grind it is for a woman to keep house and cook without so much as a day off, which is at least a servant's privilege. I would suggest that you work out a routine whereby you would have a little free time for yourself, even with a two-year-old to look after.

Avoid nagging. Compel yourself to be more generous with compliments and display of affection. In order to be happy, the masculine ego must have choice morsels to feed on. If you see that a quarrel is in the offing, laugh it off, or sit on your husband's lap and tell him that you'd rather try to reach a better understanding than quarrel. What difference who is the first to kiss and make up, so long as peace is preserved?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My mother is a difficult person to get along with. This may be a mean thing to say, but she is forever nagging and picking on me. There



are other children, but she seems to think I am the black sheep. I work, taking care of children. I earn very little, but with this money my mother makes me buy my clothes. I really can't, because I have to buy books and school supplies. What shall I do? My other problem is this:

I went out with a fellow I like and mother told me when I should return. It was impossible to come home at that time, and I came in two hours later. For my punishment she makes me stay in and I can't go out with other boys or girls at night.

I have stayed in for four weeks now and haven't gone out since. What should I do to gain my freedom again and make my mother stop picking on me? Should I run away? I think I would be happier. I really don't care for boys except this one. SIXTEEN.

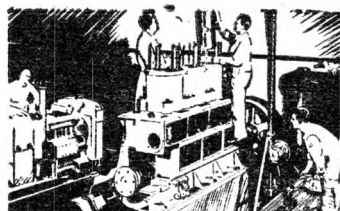
It doesn't seem fair that your mother should forbid you your share of freedom and carefree good times, including friendships with boys and girls and joining in the social activities of young people of your acquaintance. Would she object less, do you think, if you made a point of introducing all your friends to her? Try not to feel that your mother is against you, my dear. She means well and, in her opinion, is trying to protect you.

Talk it over with her. Tell her just how you feel about the situation, that you don't like to go against her wishes, but feel you have a right to some freedom. Running away would not solve your problem, because life is hard enough without deliberately adding to its difficulties. Are there any clubs you can join, or perhaps attend church socials to which your mother would not object? Then you could have more friends.

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

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(Continued from page 104)

The man was crazy drunk. Everyone was afraid to move for fear he would kill Jim instantly.

"Walk over to the door," Slack commanded.

Jim started moving slowly.

"Jim, stand still!"

Like a man in a dream, Bob again saw a knife go flashing through the air. The revolver spinned harmlessly out of Slack's hand, and he grabbed his shoulder and screamed with pain.

He met the girl's eyes for an instant. They spoke clearly. "Now you know. But he would have killed him." Then she was running across the room to cling, sobbing, to Jim.

The servants hustled Slack out to wait for the police.

Jim was mopping his brow. "Ye gods, honey! Where did you learn to throw a knife like that?"

Her eyes were on Bob's face. "My father, Pedro Martinez, taught me," she said clearly.

"I'll have to get better acquainted with you."

She was still watching Bob. "There are many things about me you do not know."

"They will have to wait until we finish our dance," Bob broke in quickly. "We were just beginning to be friends."

She clung to Jim, but he gave her a little push.

"Better dance with him, honey. If you keep on throwing knives like that, we're going to need a darn good lawyer."

They danced in silence for a minute. Then she raised her eyes to his.

"I love him enough to give him up," she said.

He smiled down at her. "You love him enough to keep him."