

• NOW TEN STORIES

NOVEMBER

# NEW LOVE



15¢

MAGAZINE

NANCY  
CROSBY  
•  
HOPE  
CAMPBELL  
•  
DOROTHY  
DOW

*Marry Me  
IN Mexico*

by FRANCES  
LAKE MCKENNA



Anyone who knows  
can tell the REAL THING!



THOSE who know fine whiskey, recognize the pre-war quality of Calvert. That's why, even in these days of limited supply, it's true that Clear Heads Choose Calvert. You may not always be able to get it...but it pays to keep asking for the *best* rather than the most *plentiful* whiskey. America's Finest Blended Whiskies — from the House of Blends! Calvert Distillers Corporation, New York City.



Today, more than ever...

**CLEAR HEADS CHOOSE CALVERT**

86.8 Proof. Calvert "Reserve:" 65% Grain Neutral Spirits... Calvert "Special:" 60% Grain Neutral Spirits

MAKE THIS ASTOUNDING

# half and half TEST TODAY!

**NEW non-drying cake makeup  
brings you glowing beauty in 2 minutes**



To be thrilled with your complexion make this startling test against *any type* of makeup. Apply the new *non-drying* Starlet on half of your face quickly and easily. Then—study your mirror *closely*. Note the rich glowing overtone—the flawless rose petal finish—the soft blending of the glamorous warmer shade. See how tiny blemishes, wrinkles disappear.

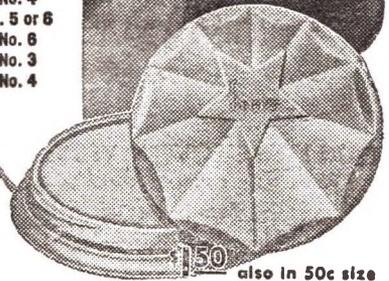
Remember—this new loveliness *lasts* for many hours—without that dry "masky" feeling. Starlet is a new, secret formula in which are blended *three* delicate skin-protecting oils including *LANOLIN*. Performance proves! Make the Starlet half-and-half test *today*.

★ ★ ★

*There are six perfect STARLET complexion shades. Be sure you choose the shade most suitable for your skin tone. If your dealer cannot supply you write direct to Starlet. Use coupon below. Enclose 50c in coin or stamps... we will send you postpaid our lovely new plastic compact with a generous supply of Starlet creamed cake makeup.*

### Choose Your Shade

IF YOU ARE	FOR DAYTIME	FOR EVENING
Light Blonde	No. 1	No. 3
Medium Blonde	No. 2	No. 3
Light Brunette	No. 3	No. 4
Medium Brunette	No. 4	No. 5 or 6
Dark Brunette	No. 4 or 5	No. 6
Light Redhead	No. 2	No. 3
Medium Redhead	No. 3	No. 4



also in 50c size

Make the Starlet Half-and-Half Test with this improved 3-oil Formula today! Compare Starlet with any other type of makeup you are now using.

*See and feel the difference.*

# STARLET

*creamed cake makeup*

*in 6 attractive shades*

PARFAIT POWDER PUFF CO.  
Chicago 10, Illinois

PARFAIT POWDER PUFF COMPANY  
1510 N. Ogden Ave., Chicago 10, Ill.  
Please send me postpaid new Starlet makeup compact. I enclose 50c. Check shade desired.

1. Creme Light     2. Creme Medium  
 3. Natural     4. Rachel     5. Rose     6. Rose Tan

Name.....  
Address.....  
City, Zone & State.....

DEC. ISSUE OUT—NOV. 3rd

# NEW LOVE

15c

MAGAZINE

PEGGY GRAVES  
Editor

ALL STORIES NEW

VOL. 10

NOVEMBER, 1944

No. 4

## *Novelettes*

1. MARRY ME IN MEXICO..... Frances Lake McKenna 8  
Denise discovered that the best way around a barrier of hate was to find the road to romance.
2. I SAW YOU IN MY HEART..... Dorothy Dow 20  
Lilith found that a triangle was the long way around to her heart's desire.
3. ORCHIDS FOR HIS WIFE..... Ruth Scarlet 28  
When a heart goes into a tailspin, it can be caught on the rebound.
4. TWO-TIME HEART..... Louise Morgan 37  
When a man has a girl on either arm, he's apt to be too whole-hearted.
5. DRESS REHEARSAL FOR MARRIAGE..... Lee Lyons 44  
Shelly was a business girl until she found the best career was waiting for the man she loved.
6. BACK FROM BEYOND..... Hope Campbell 52  
What should a girl do when she finds she's bewitched by a kiss?
7. RINGS ON HER FINGER..... Clayre Michel 60  
You can't fool the heart with a 'reasonable facsimile' of love.

## *Short Stories*

8. ALL THE LOVELY YESTERDAYS..... Nancy Crosby 68  
When a flyer runs a courtship, he sets the course for heaven.
9. SORRY—HE'S MINE..... Lucinda Baker 72  
A girl's heart can't harmonize when it's playing second fiddle.
10. THE HUMBLE WARRIOR..... Maurine Gee 76  
Vicky found that a sailor won't wander when his heart is safely anchored.

## *Features*

11. DEAR READER..... The Editor 6

Published monthly by Fictioneers, Inc., a division of Popular Publications, Inc., 2256 Grove Street, Chicago 16, Illinois. Editorial and Executive offices, 205 East 42nd Street, New York 17, N. Y. Copyright 1944 by Fictioneers, Inc., a division of Popular Publications, Inc. Entered as second class matter March 5, 1943 at the post office at Chicago, Ill., under the act of March 3, 1879. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts, although care will be exercised in handling them. All rights reserved under Pan American Copyright Convention. Single copy price 15c. Yearly subscription in the U.S.A. \$1.80. Foreign postage 75c additional. Printed in U.S.A.

# LIGHTER MOMENTS with fresh Eveready Batteries

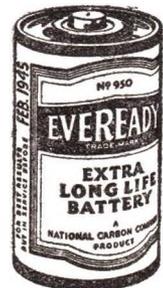


*"Your bawth is drawn, m'Lord!"*

IF YOU ARE finding it difficult to buy "Eveready" flashlight batteries this is the reason. Nearly all we make are going to the Armed Forces and to essential war industries. This leaves very few of these long-life, dependable flashlight batteries for civilian consumers.

*Back up our hard hitting Infantry boys with War Bonds. Buy all you can afford.*

FRESH BATTERIES LAST  
LONGER... Look for  
the date line →



# EVEREADY

TRADE-MARK

*The registered trade-mark "Eveready" distinguishes products of National Carbon Company, Inc.*

## Dear Reader:

You'll be glad to know that Velda Johnston will be back again next month with a novelette which we think is one of her best.

ENCHANTED INTERLUDE is the story of an American girl who had lived all her life in a tiny Mexican town which the war had made into a second Monte Carlo for a group of wealthy refugees. Allison Dane had only contempt for the gay "international set" playing on the golden sands of Acapulco Bay. Prominent among them was an American, Nick Glenn. Allison's aversion to him was natural, but at the same time there was something mysterious about him that aroused her curiosity.

One day he saved her from an embarrassing situation and from then on a strange bond grew between them, perhaps because they were the only Americans in the little seaside town. Nick sent her flowers and sought her out on the beach during the fleeting moments she snatched from her arduous duties at the Chavez Clinic. Gradually her dislike changed to admiration because of the frank, good-natured manner which set Nick apart from the other idle escapists. But more than anything else he made her feel that she was a beautiful, desirable woman. Without realizing it she sought excuses for his useless existence, his good-looking face and engaging smile awakening in her a troubled awareness.

One day while they were swimming, she noticed the white scar under his shoulder! How was it that the indolent, good-humored Nick Glenn had received a knife thrust in the back? But there was much about him that made her wonder—much that was contradictory. He told her he had flown for the Spanish Loyalists, and yet she found him kissing the exotic Lya Duclois, a woman of Vichy sympathies. Allison fell more deeply in love and less and less eager to know the answer, for something told her that knowing might put an end to the happy, enchanted interlude into which she had drifted. But let Velda Johnston unfold for you this absorbing tale of love and intrigue below the Border.

The December issue also features novelettes by Kathryn Keeley, Marguerite Jacobs and Dorothy Dow, as well as shorts by Vina Lawrence, Ruth McCaslin and other favorites.

It's on sale November 3rd, until then,

Sincerely yours,

Peggy Graves

• HOW TO *QUICKLY, SAFELY*

# REDUCE

*the lazy way*

NO STRAIN · DOCTORS APPROVE

**Lose 3 to 5 lbs. a Week  
... yet EAT PLENTY!**



Lose inches of fat from abdomen, hips, thighs. Follow the KELP-I-DINE REDUCING Plan. Simply take a half teaspoonful of KELP-I-DINE just once a day, at any meal. EAT AS YOU USUALLY DO. DON'T CUT OUT fatty, starchy foods, just cut down on them. THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT. SAFE, SURE. Lose excess weight NATURALLY and SAFELY. You won't feel hungry while you take off pounds and inches.

So stop wishing ... and start getting back your slender lines. Reduce the LAZY WAY. Without strain or nervous irritation. Look and feel years younger. Send \$1.00 now for the KELP-I-DINE REDUCING PLAN and a full 30-day supply of KELP-I-DINE.

**LOOK BETTER!  
FEEL BETTER!**  
Regain your shapely figure. KELP-I-DINE is absolutely harmless.

Grateful users say: "Doctor approved." "Wonderful, lost weight ... gained pep." "Lost 18 pounds in 3 weeks." "Lost 21 pounds in 4 weeks."

**MONEY BACK GUARANTEE**



- NO EXERCISE
- NO HARMFUL DRUGS
- ABSOLUTELY HARMLESS

**\$1.00**

**FULL 30-DAY SUPPLY**

**AMERICAN · HEALTHAIDS CO. P-6  
871 Broad St., Newark 2, N. J.**

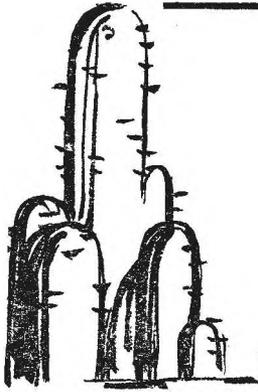
Enclosed find \$1.00 for the KELP-I-DINE REDUCING PLAN and one month's supply of KELP-I-DINE to be sent to me postage prepaid. If not satisfied I may return unused portion and my \$1.00 will be refunded.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....

I enclose \$2.00. Send a 3-month supply postage prepaid.



# Marry Me In Mexico

— By FRANCES LAKE MCKENNA —

**W**RATHFULLY, Denise sat tapping her typewriter. Through the open windows in the second-floor press room of *The Daily Telegram*, came the triumphant if not so harmonious blare of the local band playing *Anchors Aweigh*. Out of the corner of her eye, Denise could see the topmost furl of red-white-and-blue bunting flapping gently in the soft afternoon breeze over the speaker's stand down in the street.

It was a typical small-town parade, the kind that welcomes home from war its favorite sons. The town was Amity, in Southern California, not far from the Border. The returning war hero was Captain Jiri Lee of the United States Army. But particularly, he was the son of the late Gillian Lee who, not only had founded the town, named the town, but owned and published a chain of newspapers which extended all along the West Coast.

With the exception of Denise Adair, the entire newspaper staff had gone that morning in a body to the railroad station to welcome

home their boss. Now, draped along the porch railing were various members awaiting his address from the speaker's stand which was outside the neat, white stucco building that was the home of *The Daily Telegram*.

Perched on the window ledge on the second floor was white-haired Blanch Wooley who, thirty years before had been Gillian Lee's first woman reporter. She was now society editor.



*Denise discovered that the best way around a barrier of hate was to find the road to romance.*



When Denise mentioned Roger's name, Mia let out a muffled cry and dropped her jeweled purse.

Beside her stood Sally Kane, her assistant, slim, blond, fresh from a school of journalism in San Diego—the newest member of the staff.

Denise sat beside them, wrathfully pounding her typewriter in total oblivion to all the excitement and furor. Despite the anger smoldering in her emerald eyes she was lovely with the cloud of amber hair which hung to her shoulders. Her tailored white sports dress accentuated the bronze of her skin.

"There he is!" reported Sally, suddenly and breathlessly. "The parade's breaking up, he's not going to speak yet. He's shaking hands with everybody. Oh, Miss Wooley, isn't he gorgeous? Isn't he simply everything you could possibly imagine a man could be? And to think I'm working on one of his newspapers."

THAT, to Denise, was the last straw. Futilely, she sank back in her chair. "You people make me sick!" she snapped. "This whole town makes me sick, turning itself inside out for Jiri Lee. All they gave Spark Taylor when he came home was a banquet. Because his father didn't leave him a bucketful of dollars and a string of newspapers. If you ask me, Jiri Lee should have stayed in France, because it's only a jump from there to Germany, and the way things are going, there'll be a vacancy there soon that he could fill beautifully!"

Incredulously, Sally faced her. "Why, Denise Adair! You sound as if you hate Captain Lee."

With a gay little laugh, Blanch Wooley squirmed around, looked from one girl to the other, her wise old eyes sparkling. "Perhaps I should have warned you, Sally, not to be too horrified at Denise's tirades against Jiri. For years, the town has accepted them as it accepts the weather forecasts. Because in all the history of Amity, there has never been a feud like the one between Denise Adair and Jiri Lee."

Sally gasped. "But why, Denise? I mean—why, everybody loves him."

Blanch chuckled. "The word, love, I think, started the whole thing. Shall I tell her, dear?"

Denise shrugged. "Why ask me? You would anyway."

"Well," Blanch began, mischievously, "it all started at Denise's tenth birthday party, eleven years ago. Jiri was invited, naturally. He was fourteen then, and because he was the richest boy in town, Denise expected a rather extraordinary present from him. I remember her flying down the path to meet him when he arrived with an enormous package dangling from his hand. And what do you suppose it was? A parrot, who cried, 'Jiri loves Denise, Denise loves Jiri.' And Denise flew

screaming upstairs and wouldn't come down until her mother sent Jiri and his parrot home."

"And from then on," Blanch pursued, "there was a fight whenever they met—with no holds barred."

"Why do you work on a Lee newspaper if you hate Jiri so?" Sally wanted to know.

"For several reasons," Denise explained with pseudo sweetness. "Your captain Lee has often accused me of having printer's ink in my veins instead of blood, and I suspect he's right. My parents were successful newspaper people in New York when Gillian Lee brought them here twenty years ago. Dad was city editor here until he died, the year before I graduated from high school. Mother was society editor until she died, shortly afterward. After high school, I intended enrolling in a school of journalism. I got as far as Los Angeles when Jiri Lee came after me. He reminded me that Mother and Dad had got their experience the hard way. He offered me the job as court reporter here, at a salary I'd have been silly to refuse."

"Now tell her the real reason," Blanch prodded gently.

Denise flared, "Okay! Because as long as I can remember, I've wanted to do the story—the true story—of the whole Lee dynasty, and because Jiri promised that if I'd come back with him that time, he'd give me a try at it when he felt I was good enough. As if anyone could ever lay hands on all those diaries and files he keeps locked in his library out at Rancho El Chico."

Sally mused, piqued, "I've heard he's turned down offers from professional biographers to write the life story of his famous father. But I've always supposed it was because of—well, some hidden family skeleton, maybe, that he didn't want known. He's probably embarrassed because his mother lived in Europe until she died. But the whole world knows all about that."

"But it doesn't know the why behind the story," Denis reminded succinctly. "And unless I'm mistaken, it's just as my father always said about famous people who turn out to have infamous pasts—that the brightest halo often hides the juiciest scandal."

Sally kept staring at Denise, and then she was aware that the girl was staring past her with a look of stark horror.

Blanch was rising, a strangely sad smile twisting her lips. "Well, Jiri, dear," she said, "we've been wondering where you disappeared to. Isn't it about time for your speech?"

Jiri said, in his deep soft voice, "Hello, Blanch. Miss Kane, I met you at the station this morning, didn't I? No, they're having a bit of trouble with the mike hookup, so I dashed up here for a minute's breath." He

hesitated for an instant. "Hello, Denise."  
"Hello."

Silence. Then Jiri's whimsical laugh. "Is that all—after two years?"

"What do you expect me to do?" she flashed, then could have cut out her tongue.

But he didn't take her up—not on that. He said, "You could at least look at me when you say it."

She looked. Then because she felt her cheeks flaming, she looked away. He was as she remembered him, only more so. Tall and broad shouldered. His flashing black eyes were as penetrating as ever and his crisply-waving black hair looked wet, it was so shining. His uniform made him handsomer than any man had a right to be. Only he wasn't quite so arrogant and cocksure.

Fleeting, Denise wished she could forget their mutual antagonism long enough to welcome him home with a casual indifference. Then she remembered how ruthlessly he had dealt with Roger Balcome three years ago, and she knew as long as she lived she could never feel casual toward Jiri Lee!

Suddenly she found herself staring at his long, brown hand resting flat on the desk beside her typewriter.

"So you think you're good enough now to write my biography," he said softly.

Her head jerked up, and she noticed that Blanch and Sally had disappeared. She said pointedly, "Eavesdroppers seldom hear good of themselves."

"Trite," he commented, with a maddening grin.

Her face flamed, then paled. "Always before," he mocked softly, "we've battled with words. Do they fail you now? Are you that overcome by my presence?"

She cried blindly, "You promised I could have access to certain papers, you may recall . . ."

"Exactly. And I'm keeping that promise. I'm due back overseas in three months. So beginning tonight, you will live at Rancho El Chico. Beginning tomorrow, you'll start assembling material from my diaries and letters, all of which I'll turn over to you in the hope that you're as good as you think you are, and also that your dislike of the Lee family is genuine enough that you'll approach the job objectively and not clutter it up with a lot of corny idealism and hero worship—like those editorials you wrote about Roger Balcome during his trial."

"I see that two years of war haven't changed you," she said with bitterness. "Just because you were born with the United States mint in your mouth and a hunk of newspapers for a teething ring, you still think you own the world and everybody in it. But you don't own me, Jiri Lee, and you never will. I don't want

to stay at El Chico. I wouldn't have to, since I'm living right here in town, and have been since—"

He snapped, "I know all about that. You've been living at the Hillside Apartments for eight months, ever since Balcome finished serving his year in jail, and you leased him your place for a chicken farm."

Denise smiled, a slow, taunting smile. "And that's why you're so angry, isn't it? Because there's nothing you can do about it."

"Will you come to El Chico, Denise?"

"No."

Their eyes locked and held for a split second. Then he strode over to the stairway door. "Oh, Blanch!" he shouted.

"Jiri, dear, hurry," Blanch's voice drifted up. "They're almost ready for you."

Then, in a voice half the town could have heard if it had been listening, Jiri said, "Look, Blanch. I've just agreed to give Denise a try at her life-long ambition of recording my family's statistics for posterity, while I'm home. We'll find a substitute for her job here."

Through the haze of rage consuming her, Denise heard Blanch's laughing reply. "We'll wait awhile and see how long she'll be able to stick it out. And I don't envy Becky and Pop Giles their jobs out at El Chico!"

With as much arrogance as could be crammed into one individual, Jiri strode back to Denise. "Well?"

She said through her teeth, "I'll go just for spite."

THREE hours later, she was explaining to Roger Balcome her move to Rancho El Chico in a slightly different way. Near the door in her cozily-furnished living room at the Hillside Apartments, her two suitcases were packed and ready to be picked up by Jiri's housekeeper and caretaker. Roger sat on the studio couch, blond head drooping, hands clasped dejectedly between his knees. Denise sat facing him in a deep chair. She wore smartly-tailored green jodhpurs and an apricot wool sweater. Roger was still in his ranch clothes, for he had just driven in from Denise's farm.

"I don't know," he mused, clasping and unclasping his slim, nervous hands. "You're the one person I counted on that Lee couldn't push around. Now you've sold out to the returning hero."

"But it wasn't like that," Denise insisted patiently. "I've told you that he just happened to walk into the office when I was talking to Blanch Wooley about writing his family's biography—and you know I've always wanted to try it. So—well, he just gave me the chance."

"Chance." Roger looked up, his blue eyes blazing. "He never gave anybody a decent

chance at anything, unless he saw to gain plenty by it. And if you don't know what he expects to gain in this case, I'll tell you. He'd do anything short of murder, I think, to get rid of me for good. Since he can't, he wants the next best thing—to run me out of town. He knows you're the best friend I have in Amity, so he soft-talks you into trying his family's biography, and he even gets you to stay at his ranch. Why? Simply to get around you, and influence you into ordering me to vacate your farm."

Denise kept watching him intently as he spoke, feeling, as she always had, that there was something more deadly personal between him and Jiri than appeared on the surface.

Fleeting she remembered when Roger first arrived in Amity, nearly three years ago, shortly after she began working on *The Daily Telegram*. His continental charm and boyish blond handsomeness made him instantly popular with all the girls in town. He was the typical American who had lived most of his life abroad. An inherited heart ailment prevented him from entering the Armed Forces.

Apparently he had money, for he lived in the best suite in Amity's best hotel. Then one day the town awoke to learn that he had bought the old Crandall mansion and was remodeling it into an elaborate night club—Amity's first and only! Afterward, it was conceded that the venture might have proved successful if Roger hadn't equipped his upstairs rooms for draw poker games. For if there was one thing Jiri Lee was dead set against, it was all forms of gambling.

The sheriff, prompted by Jiri, warned Roger. Roger then electrified the town by proclaiming he was quite within the law, and produced proof in the form of a forgotten amendment to the town's charter which permitted public games of draw poker, but only draw poker.

And the town held its breath. Then one night the sheriff raided Roger's club and found not only the draw poker setup, but practically every known gambling device as well—and Roger went to jail. But the surprising thing was that when Judge Carter offered to free Roger merely in payment of a fine, Roger chose to stand trial!

His defense was that he had been framed by Jiri Lee. He swore that on the week end preceding the raid, he had gone to Agua Caliente for the races, and that the gambling evidence had been secretly installed during his absence.

But the evidence stood, and Roger went to jail for a year. As to his guilt, the town was divided. Some believed he deserved what he got, while others, considering his continental background, believed he had been dealt with too harshly.

As a court reporter during the trial, Denise, watching the evidence stacked so irrevocably against Roger, concurred wholeheartedly to the latter belief. On the morning Roger was sentenced, she accused Jiri of having a hand in it, but he had merely walked away, his face expressionless.

Then the very next day, as if all he had been waiting for was to put Roger safely behind bars, Jiri enlisted in the Army.

And because Denise sincerely believed that Roger was the victim of Jiri's ruthlessness, she upheld him in her editorials and in a final gesture of defiance against Jiri she leased Roger her tiny farm.

She said now, compassionately, "You don't have to worry, Roger. I've told you before that my home is yours as long as you want to rent it. I've no use for it since Mother and Dad died. You're making good, people like you, and if ever you want to buy the place, I'll sell it to you."

He gave her a sly glance. "I'll bet." His tone was sardonic.

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that Lee wouldn't let you! Already, he's fixed it so that we can't see each other for the next three months, by tricking you into staying out at his ranch. Because if you think he'll let you date me out there—just ask him."

She strained forward in her chair. "Will you come out to El Chico to see me tomorrow night, Roger?" she asked softly. "I'd like you to drive me there tonight, except Becky and Pop are coming for me."

He gave an ironic little laugh. "I'd never get inside the ranch gates."

"Why?" she persisted. "You've intimated before that there's something between you and Jiri besides—what's already happened. What is it, Roger?"

"I'll tell you," he said, smiling a secretive smile, "when the time comes. I'll tell you plenty of things you can write into that biography of his—when the time comes. When I'm convinced that you're not afraid to write the truth as it really is."

She pried and prodded. But Roger would tell her nothing more. Presently the couple from the Lee ranch arrived in the station wagon.

**A**N HOUR later, Denise was settled in one of the luxurious guest suites at the celebrated old Rancho El Chico, and swapping town gossip with fat, flashing-eyed, motherly Becky over a cup of tea in the lovely redwood-paneled living room. They chatted until long past midnight.

At breakfast next morning, Becky told her that Jiri wasn't up yet "—and probably won't

be soon, because he drove to San Diego to meet company on the midnight plane and didn't get home until four o'clock." Idly wondering who the company was, Denise went for a stroll around the beautifully landscaped grounds. She was standing beneath a gnarled old pepper tree on the knoll beyond the corrals gazing eastward toward the snow-capped mountains, when Jiri found her.

"Are you always such an early riser?" he complained.

She glanced at her watch. It was nine o'clock. "For a rancher," she said, "this is practically noon. Out home, I always got up at dawn, just to watch the sun rise over those mountains. I've the same view that you have here, you know."

He didn't answer, but asked instead, "I wonder whether you'd answer me truthfully if I ask you a question that's absolutely none of my business."

"If I answer at all," she said, "it will be the truth."

"Thanks. Are you in love with Roger Balcome?"

She merely smiled.

He tried again. "Has he asked you to marry him?"

She still smiled.

He looked, for a moment, as if he'd like to choke her. Then he shrugged. "Okay. Let's go into the library."

When presently Jiri pushed open the heavy double doors into the spacious old book lined room, Denise saw a darkly exotic-looking girl standing by the window.

"Mia, may I present Denise Adair," Jiri said. "Denise, this is Mia Savelle, who arrived last night from New York."

Denise murmured an acknowledgment, stood uncertainly. The girl regarded her with a strange, quiet speculation. Jiri said, with stiff formality, "Denise, I'm afraid Mia and I must throw ourselves on your mercy. She has just arrived from France. For important reasons, her presence at El Chico must remain secret. I must ask your promise to tell no one that she's here."

Denise looked from him to the girl, and something in his manner, the girl's tense, almost frightened watchfulness made her instantly alert. She said, "I cannot promise, until I know that her entry was legal."

Jiri gave a short, rueful laugh and drew from his pocket a small, flat leather folder. "I anticipated your suspicions. Here is Miss Savelle's passport. You've my permission to check with the Federal authorities. My chief concern is that you tell no one in town that she's here."

Denise dropped the passport on the desk. "I prefer not to become involved. I'll leave at once," she said, and walked toward the door.

"You will not leave," Jiri said quietly. Slowly, incredulously, Denise turned. "How can you stop me?"

Jiri smiled without mirth. "By denying anything you might say about Mia being here. By taking her elsewhere at once, and returning with some other girl of my acquaintance. By announcing to the town, in explanation of your abrupt departure, that you left in jealous haste because you thought my guest was in love with me, and you couldn't stand competition."

Rage held Denise speechless for what seemed an eternity. When her voice returned it was like the soft hissing sound of silk being torn. "I was never more convinced than in this moment that you would stop at nothing to get what you want."

"Nothing," Jiri assured her, "when I know what I want is the right thing. Have I your promise?"

For one brief moment, their glances locked. Then, head high, cheeks blazing, Denise walked around the desk and sat down.

SOMETIME later, Denise looked up from the maze of letters on her desk. Jiri was lounging in the deep window seat overlooking the valley, his long brown hands playing abstractedly with the drapery cord.

"But I don't understand," she said, with frank bewilderment. "If your father loved your mother as deeply as this correspondence indicates, why didn't she return to him?"

Jiri said, his dark face tortured, "It's because he did love her so utterly that he lost her. She was only sixteen when he married her. She was half Spanish and spent practically all those years in a convent. They met at a fiesta in Santa Barbara, where she was visiting an aunt. It was love at first sight—with him. I suppose he courted her with the same intenseness which later helped him to become one of the richest men in the country. Undoubtedly she thought it all quite romantic. It was after their marriage, after I was born, that his love only terrified her. I remember how he explained it to me once. He said Mother was saintly, too ethereal, for family life."

He went on, with difficulty, "My father wasn't wealthy then. He had but one newspaper, *The Daily Telegram*, which he mortgaged to take Mother abroad, hoping the sea voyage might cure her unhappiness. When it didn't, he rented a tiny villa for her in France and came home, hoping that after a few month's separation she would return to him."

He finished darkly, "But it lasted a lifetime. She died six years ago in the same villa. Exactly five months later, father died of a broken heart. And that," he added, flashing her a look of scorn, "is the dark scandal of the

Lee family. The story of a man who had everything except the one thing he wanted most—the woman he loved.”

“I’m sorry,” Denise murmured, feeling inadequate and ashamed. “But there’ve been so many conflicting stories. People have wondered—”

“But never guessed the truth,” Jiri supplied bitterly. “Always, they’ve called my father hard and ruthless. But his sole ambition when he returned from France those long years ago, was to pay off his staggering debts and build a home here that Mother would be proud of when she returned. Then everything he touched turned to gold.”

Abruptly he bent forward, plowed his hands through his mop of black hair. “During my childhood, when I saw Father’s silent suffering, his longing for my mother, I prayed that I would never love a woman that way—so much that without her nothing mattered.”

Watching him, Denise thought suddenly, poignantly: But he *does* love some woman that way—and he knows it! Was it Mia?

Jiri jerked to his feet, and suddenly was towering over her, hands planted flat on the desk. “Tell me,” he demanded. “All this gossip about my parents’ separation—have you ever heard they were divorced, that Mother remarried and that there was—another child?”

“No,” Denise answered truthfully, startled by his forbidding dark looks.

“Because it would be a lie,” he went on, more bitterly angry than the occasion warranted. “My mother was Mrs. Gillian Lee until she died. I know because I went to the cemetery after the Allies captured the little town, and saw the headstone with her name, Amity Lee. I found out other things, too—from a family who knew her well. I learned that the last twelve years of her life were spent with the Sisters of a nearby convent, administering to the poor.”

His voice whipped on, “You’ve had your mother, Denise. You don’t know what it is to worship a mother you’ve never known. I often longed to visit her in France, but my father forbid it unless she asked to see me. She never did. You say that she wrote inexpressibly beautiful letters to my father. She had an inexpressibly beautiful soul, Denise. Those letters *are* my mother.”

There were tears in Denise’s eyes when he finished. “You—make me so—ashamed!” she said.

“That wasn’t my intention,” Jiri snapped. “But there’s one thing you can do for me. Write it—like that—in my father’s biography. And end, once and for all, this gossip.”

**A**FTER dinner that evening the three of them sat in the spacious old redwood-paneled living room. Jiri and Mia were gayly

preparing to leave for the city for their night of dancing. Jiri looked handsome in his winter uniform of deep olive brown, and Mia was darkly lovely in a gown of heavy, rich white satin.

Like a bride, Denise thought watching them from a deep chair near the enormous stone fireplace. She was still wearing jodhpurs and a sweater, for dinner at Rancho El Chico was comfortably informal.

“Won’t you change your mind about joining us?” Mia asked prettily. “Surely there are many young men in town who would be only too eager to make a last minute foursome with you.”

“I doubt that,” Jiri inserted, dark eyes mischievous. “Denise has been too busy becoming a famous newspaper woman these past three years to dally with young men. Or has someone neglected to keep me informed of your love life, Denise?”

“Apparently,” she retorted involuntarily. Then she gasped. “As a matter of fact—I completely forgot until now—but I’ve a date with Roger Balcome tonight. . .”

With a muffled sound, Mia dropped her jeweled evening purse. As she bent to pick it up, Jiri said, “I’ll get it. You run upstairs for your fur coat—instead of this velvet thing. It’ll be cold driving back.”

When she left, Jiri slipped the purse into his pocket and walked over to Denise. “Is Balcome coming here tonight?”

“If you object, I can easily meet him elsewhere.”

“Don’t be silly. I merely asked if he’s coming tonight. Can’t you give me a direct answer to anything about him?”

“Yes. When he learned yesterday that I’d be staying here, he accused me of playing into your hands, that it was your way of turning me against him. I assured him that neither you nor anyone could do that, and I’d continue seeing him as often as I liked. We made it a date—for tonight.”

“To prove that I hadn’t changed your mind?” Jiri mocked softly.

She didn’t answer. He reached down and gripped her hands hard. His eyes were intently black. “I’m sure,” he said, “that I needn’t remind you to tell no one about Mia being here.”

“I’ve promised,” she told him angrily, more stirred at his touch than she cared to admit. “I’m sorry I forgot to mention it until now, but since you’re taking her dancing— Let me go, Jiri Lee. There’s Mia, coming downstairs!”

Abruptly he let her go and walked out into the hall. Staring after him, Denise observed Becky closing the big double library doors for the night, as was customary. She saw Jiri whisper something to his housekeeper,

then he left quickly, taking Mia with him.

She went up stairs to freshen her makeup. When she came down Roger had arrived. The living room was in darkness and Becky had ushered Roger into the library.

When Denise walked in, he was standing beside the desk, his eyes narrowed as if in concentration. She flashed a glance over the desk, then hated herself for doing so. Nothing seemed disturbed.

Denise poured him a highball and they sat chatting about nothing in particular for awhile. And then out of a clear sky Roger shot at her, "Who is Mia Savelle, and what do you know about her?"

Denise felt a chill forboding, but managed to look convincingly bewildered. "I don't know what you mean."

"Then what was this passport doing on your desk?"

Her blood congealed as she stared at the leather folder, opened to Mia's photograph. It was all she could do to keep from snatching it from Roger's hand. Vividly, she remembered putting it aside on her desk, intending to return it to Jiri after he had forgotten it that morning, then she had forgotten it herself.

"Oh, that," she scoffed, laughing. "It's a joke, really. A—sort of souvenir. Jiri told me about it this morning. It seems that on a

week-end leave, while in France, he went on a spree to—oh, some town, I forget. And he met this—Miss Savelle, a refugee from Nazi-occupied France. They had themselves quite a time, I guess, and—well, the result was that when he got back to camp, he found her passport in his pocket. He hadn't her address, so he took a chance on writing her in care of the hotel where they'd met. He informed her that he had her passport, and asked whether he should forward it to her there or turn it over to the proper officials. She never answered, and he forgot it—until he found it in his luggage on his way home."

Roger was staring at her with a strange, narrow-eyed concentration. "But it's stamped officially," he pointed out, "with the owner's arrival in New York—on the same date that Lee arrived."

"Right," Denise agreed. "Jiri had it stamped as a joke. He—said he had lots of fun with it in New York, giving his friends the impression he'd brought over a beautiful French refugee."

Playfully, she wiggled her fingers at him. "Give it back, Roger. It isn't yours, you know."

"It isn't Lee's, either," he said with sly malice, slipping it into his pocket. He got up and walked toward the door.

**For quick, smooth shaving every time,  
Try Thin Gillettes, four for a dime!  
You save on dough—you look well-groomed—  
And wiry beards are really doomed!**



Made Of Easy-Flexing Steel  
Hard Enough To Cut Glass

THIN  
**Gillette**  
BLADES  
4 for 10c

**Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade**

Denise held fast to her control. "But you're not going already! If it's that silly passport—what has it to do with you? I've told you the story as Jiri told it to me."

He turned and smiled thinly. "I'm sure you have. Also, I'm sure that Lee meant you to tell me, and that he planted this passport where I'd see it tonight—to substantiate his story. But you can tell him for me that I don't scare so easily—as he ought to know by now."

**F**OR three endless, conscience-ridden days, Denise alternately considered and rejected ways of getting back the passport before Jiri missed it. Instinctively, she felt that the secret of Mia being at El Chico was safe with Roger, that he would tell no one. But was it Roger whom Jiri didn't want to know about Mia? Was the passport something Roger could hold over Jiri? In any case, she hadn't actually broken her promise to Jiri, had she? Rather, she had shielded him and Mia with the story she had told Roger.

Thus she reasoned. Simply, she could not bring herself to tell Jiri that Roger had taken the passport, because he would think she had betrayed him.

Not once since that first day did Jiri come to the library while she was working, nor did he inquire how she was progressing. He was pleasantly casual, but spoke to her only when necessary. He was constantly with Mia and Denise knew they never again left the ranch grounds after that first night.

Nor did Roger telephone her every day which had been his usual custom. When she repeatedly tried to reach him by phone, his ranch boy, Pietro, had several times informed her that Roger would call her back later. But he never did.

For three days she lived in a state of anxiety. When she learned that Becky and Pop were taking the station wagon into town for supplies she asked to accompany them. She explained that she needed some things from her apartment.

They left her at her door, and before they were out of sight she went into the garage and took out her own black coupe. Without wasting any time, she drove out to the farm.

**A**S she turned into her own driveway she felt, as always, a surge of pride in the one spot on earth that was hers. Against a flamboyant sunset, her little red-tiled, Spanish bungalow lay like a quiet jewel in its setting of ancient, fat-trunked palm trees.

A screen door slammed and Roger strolled across the lawn. "Well, just in time for dinner," he greeted.

"I've had dinner, thanks," Denise said. "And let's skip the preliminaries, Roger.

I've come for one thing: that passport you took from my desk the other night."

He laughed. "So Lee has made you his emissary as well as his biographer. How much did he tell you to offer me for his little joke book?"

"Jiri didn't send me," she corrected. "As far as I know, he hasn't even missed the passport. But I want it back, Roger. I'm not leaving without it."

He gave her a sharp, searching look. "Then why are you worrying if Lee hasn't asked you for it? It just doesn't fit, Denise."

"Nothing fits to me, either," she said tightly. "I only know that you must give it to me. Besides, what would you do with it?"

He smiled slowly, slyly. "Nothing. The next move is Lee's."

So Denise knew she'd been right all along. The passport held some vital, terrible significance both for Jiri and Roger. And she also knew from Roger's smugly triumphant manner, that in his possession the passport spelled some grave, imminent danger to Jiri Lee. And it was all her fault! If, in a fit of pique, she hadn't pushed it carelessly aside . . .

She took a deep breath and said slowly, "You've often said you might like to buy my place here some day, if you had the money. Would you accept it outright—in exchange for that passport?"

Slowly, incredulously, he lifted his hand against the car door and leaned against it, staring at her. "You mean it. You don't know what it's all about, you've only a hunch it's something I can use against Lee, but you'd trade me your home for that passport. Why, Denise? I didn't know Jiri Lee meant so much to you."

It came as an unexpected blow. Sword-straight she stood, a little apart from Roger on the sloping lawn, her glorious hair pure gold in the sunset's glow, her dark eyes wide with a look of stark and sudden terror. Because Roger's words told her what her heart would have told her long ago if she had listened. She was hopelessly, inexorably in love with Jiri Lee. And the disdain and resentment that she had spent on him all along was only a defense mechanism, a shield to hide a love, which she must have known, subconsciously, would never be returned.

Through her whirring realization, Roger's voice came tauntingly. "So you do love him. And I suppose you discovered, in the sweet intimacy of Rancho El Chico, that he loves you, too. What shy confessions those old walls must have heard. And you believed him so blindly that you can't see he's simply using you to gain his own ends!"

She ignored his mockery. "I assure you that Jiri Lee's dislike of me is quite genuine."

"So much so, Roger said significantly, his

eyes never once leaving hers, "but maybe she'll tell him that she's going to be married—to me, tonight, in Mexico."

Her heart stilled. "Roger Balcome, are you mad?"

"No, I'm not mad. I'm just adding the two and two that I should have long ago." Then he said, "You want that passport so badly that you'd give me your farm, outright. I don't want your farm, Denise. I want you."

She cried scornfully, "You're crazy if you think I'd marry you! I've liked you, Roger. All during your trouble, I upheld you openly when Jiri was so dead set against you for no apparent reason, almost from the moment you arrived in town. I've always thought it was because he just didn't like you, or want you around. But people have since reminded me that Jiri Lee is ruthless only in dealing with unworthy people. Maybe you're unworthy, Roger. I wouldn't know. But I do know now, that it's more than just the fact that you opened a gambling club in Amity that's between you and Jiri. I've always thought he was hard, tyrannical and dictatorial. But you're all those things—even more so than Jiri could ever be. And, besides you're malicious and vindictive, which Jiri couldn't possibly be. I must be a complete and utter dope not to have realized it before now."

She reached for the handle of her car door. "And maybe instead of Jiri using me, as you intimate, you're using me to get even with him for something. But even when I thought I hated him, I never would have harmed him. I just wanted to—cut him down to—normal size," she finished, on a half-sob.

Smoothly, Roger held the door shut with one hand while his other reached through the lowered window for her ignition keys.

"Nor shall I harm him," he mimicked softly. "I merely want him to acknowledge something which he rightfully should have when I first came to town. When he took too long to make up his mind, I tried to force him by defying him with a gambling setup, but he fought me with all his stiffnecked family pride. That's all I'm saying now except that I haven't been using you. But I'm going to tonight! Until now, I never guessed how things were between you and him. Now this is my big chance—and you're not muffing it, baby."

He went on dryly, "I've a twenty-gallon drum of gasoline for farm emergency which I probably won't need after tonight. So we're driving across the Border—right now—and we're telephoning back to Lee that we're getting married. Or shall I turn over that passport to the FBI? Because in case you don't know—whether it's counterfeit, as I suspect, or real—it's a Federal offense to tamper with somebody else's passport, even as a joke, and with the FBI, a big name like

Lee won't protect him or mean a thing."

**I**N THE stuffy little sitting room of a front suite in a Tia Juana hotel, Denise stood at the window, staring down across the dusty, noisy main street.

She wondered with every breath, what it was all about. She had to come—to protect Jiri and his Mia! Perhaps if she could have told Roger the truth he wouldn't have kidnapped her. But what was the truth?

She shook her head. She only knew that it must be something desperate. Why else would Jiri have agreed to come at once, when Roger telephoned him long distance immediately after they arrived at Tia Juana. Their conversation had been short and, apparently, to the point—as if they'd been over the details before. Roger had curtly informed Jiri that he and Denise were here and would be married by midnight unless Jiri arrived within an hour. Jiri had said something, to which Roger had answered, "That's right, Lee. Five hundred thousand, cash and negotiable bonds. Cheap, isn't it, considering that in exchange for it, you'll be rid of me for good."

Denise drew a deep, ragged sigh. What on earth could Roger Balcome have, or do, or say, that was worth five hundred thousand dollars to Jiri Lee?

As if in answer to her question there was a sharp knock at the door. Roger shot across the room, was opening the door almost before Denise turned around. And there was Jiri, hard-jawed and more quietly furious that she had ever seen him, and at the same time more heartachingly handsome.

Roger made a mocking, sweeping gesture. "Enter the bridal suite, Lee. Obviously you exceeded the speed limit getting here."

Ignoring him, Jiri took a step toward Denise. "I could kill you for getting yourself mixed up in this—"

"Just a minute, Lee," Roger inserted. "Denise knows nothing. I've kept my agreement with you to say nothing to anyone until you'd investigated—although you've taken two years to do so."

Jiri looked at him with utter contempt. "I didn't think you were man enough to keep an agreement. Not after I paid you five thousand dollars to keep quiet when you first came to Amity and presented me with your miserable claims. Not after you used the money to open a gambling club, to deliberately force me to acknowledge your claims. You were so sure that I'd bribe the town's officials to let you continue operating your club on the strength of that old, forgotten-by-law. When I didn't, because I knew that you had installed every known gambling device in your upstairs rooms, you accused me of planting the evidence there. You're a very clever crook, Balcome. But

you made one mistake. You didn't count on the honesty of the woman who loves you."

Roger smiled, unperturbed. "Meaning Mia Savelle? I know that you met her while you were in France—by what strange coincidence, I don't know, because I never mentioned her to you. But you did meet her, and what she told you only substantiated my claims. Still you're too selfish, too cowardly and stiff-necked to acknowledge the truth. So to frighten me off, you forge a nice legal-appearing passport—Mia Savelle's—and when you return home you plant it where you know I'll see it."

He took a cigarette from a silver case, and carefully tapped it. "And you tell Denise the story that goes with it, in case I inquire about the passport, as you know I will. The story of how you met Mia while on a week-end leave somewhere in Normandy, where she'd arrived as a refugee. That much is probably true, but the phony story about the passport is pure bunk. A neat trap, and one which undoubtedly would have caught me if my claim were not legitimate."

"You're very sure of yourself," Jiri mocked. "Because you know that all records, all vital statistics of the residents of your town were destroyed in that bombing three years ago." He swung to Denise, his voice like a whip-lash, "So you made up a story about the passport. I've wondered. Why didn't you tell him the story I told you—as I expected you to, in spite of your promise not to?"

Roger snapped, "Save the recriminations, Lee. What if Denise didn't repeat the story exactly? I know that you've met Mia, who no doubt proved to you conclusively that my claim is just. Otherwise, you wouldn't have wasted all this time since you've been home, making this last desperate attempt to break me down—to make me think, maybe, that you'd bribed Mia into lying about me. Be man enough now to admit you've lost."

For answer, Jiri turned and jerked open the door.

Mia walked in.

**D**ENISE, standing at the window, scarcely able to believe her eyes or ears as the little tableau unfolded before her, felt a surge of pity for Roger. His collapse was so real. He took a staggering step backward, an expression of utter bewilderment on his face, as if his last friend on earth had deserted him.

"So it was your passport," he whispered. "You—came to America—with him."

Mia lifted her hands beseechingly, dropped them, and said in an anguished flow of words, "Yes, Roger. And I must tell you at once that Jiri knows the truth. I had to tell him. You know I never wanted you to do this terrible thing. Nor would you have, if your uncle, that horrible man, hadn't begun warp-

ing your mind with this scheme for quick wealth. But he's dead now, Roger. He was killed five months ago—by the Nazis. He was such a bitterly frustrated man. You know that, darling. Ever since he was barred from practicing as a physician in America and came over to France, where he became the popular physician among the wealthy set, because he was really brilliant, so falsely charming. He might have made out all right until the Nazis came in if he hadn't become Mrs. Lee's physician, and learned her background. That's when he grew so obsessed with this horrid plan to—"

With an indulgent laugh, Jiri put his arm around her shoulders. "Perhaps," he suggested, "I can explain more clearly—without the invectives."

He looked coldly at Roger. "Actually, I never believed your claims that you were my half-brother. Despite the documentary evidence which you brought with you to Amity, I was sure that if my mother had divorced my father, remarried and had another child, she would have so informed him. I saw my mother's headstone was Amity Lee. Naturally, I knew that wasn't conclusive proof. I also knew it was useless to search for the originals of those records you showed me because all records of the town were destroyed in that bombing—as you well knew before you left."

He went on quietly, "My only hope of proving your claim false was to find someone who knew my mother. So I secretly roamed the neighborhood of her villa—and found Mia."

"I had to tell Mr. Lee the truth, Roger," Mia broke in, her dark eyes pleading. "Even though I knew you might hate me for it. He knows that we've known each other all our lives, that we became engaged before you left for America, and that you intended sending for me after you—established your claim. But the knowledge of what you were doing was so intolerable. That's why I was glad when Mr. Lee came, and I could tell him that his wonderful, lovely mother had never remarried, but that it was only an evil scheme which your uncle concocted after her death, after those records were destroyed. I told him that he bewitched you into coming to America, with those records he forged, so that you could impersonate yourself as Mr. Lee's half-brother and demand a share in his wealth. But someday maybe you'll forgive—" she broke off, sobbing softly, heartbreakingly.

"I guess I know when I'm licked," Roger was saying, and walked over to the table where his hat lay. He turned and looked defiantly at Jiri. "Well, I'm ready. What's the charge this time—blackmail?"

Mia flung herself into his arms, sobbing, "Oh, Roger, my darling. He isn't going to do anything to you. On the contrary, he's

doing a wonderful thing for us, together—in return, he said, for what I did for him. He's giving us a farm in—in—"

"Connecticut," Jiri supplied.

"I don't want his charity!" Roger snapped.

Jiri snapped back, "It isn't charity, nor is it for you. It's Mia's. Call it a reward for honesty—and loyalty. Before telling me anything about you, she made me promise to give you a chance to begin over again decently."

He reached into his pocket. "Here are my car keys. Drive it back to Amity if you like. It shouldn't take you more than a week to wind up your business there. Get married and leave for Connecticut."

Roger halted at the door and made a rueful little salute at Denise. "Thanks for everything, champion." Then with a significant glance that linked her and Jiri together, he said, "Maybe you'd better start adding the two and two that I added earlier tonight—back on your farm."

With that, he and Mia were gone.

**D**ENISE stood stared blindly out of the window for a long time. The room was so silent she wondered suddenly, sickeningly, whether Jiri had gone without her knowing it.

She whirled. He was standing exactly where he had been when Roger and Mia left. He came toward her—slowly, purposefully. She could scarcely breathe, she loved him so much, and she looked wildly everywhere, but at him.

"You were going to marry him," he accused in low fury.

"No."

"Then why did you come here with him!"

Her heart was pounding so hard. She wondered if he could hear it. She turned around again toward the window. He whirled her back toward the window. He whirled her back again.

"Answer me!" he demanded. "And I'm warning you—I've had about all I can stand from you, and I'm keeping you in this room with me until you explain to my utter satisfaction, if it takes all week!"

So they were at it again. Wrathfully, she told him everything from the night Roger took Mia's passport from her desk.

"But what I don't get," she cried finally, "is why, since you brought Mia to America with you as living proof that Roger's claim was false, you didn't have a showdown with him right away, instead of dragging me in!"

"Because I was afraid it would send you straight into his arms," Jiri said. "I've known that you've been dating him steadily ever since I've been gone—or, rather, since he was released eight months ago. I didn't dare move for fear he'd give you another

cock-and-bull story. Then I overheard your little speech at the office the day I arrived home—and it gave me the idea of how I could get you out at El Chico, where I'd have you under my eyes—I hoped."

"Because of Miss Savelle, I suppose," Denise said with flaming jealousy. "You were protecting my heart."

"I was protecting my own," Jiri corrected, his black eyes drilling into hers. Then abruptly as if at the end of his patience, he caught her chin upward, hard.

"What made Balcome think he could force me to acknowledge his claim tonight by telling me that you were marrying him? Why do you suppose I made you promise to say nothing about Mia's arrival, if it weren't that I figured that if you loved Balcome, your promise to me would mean nothing, that you'd tell him anyway. And that night he came to El Chico to see you—I told Becky to put him in the library and place that passport in plain sight where he'd see it. I knew if he learned Mia was here, he'd contact her somehow to find out what I knew. When he didn't—well, Mia and I just waited. And I wasn't any closer to knowing the one thing on earth that I had to know—whether you loved Balcome or not."

Abruptly his dark head came down and rested against her amber curls. His arms caught her to him achingly as if they had so long hungered to hold her. "I'm so insanely in love with you, my darling, and have been ever since I've known how to spell the word. The whole town knows it! You'd know it, too, if you hadn't kept fighting me so hard all these years. I only fought you back to keep you aware of me, and in the hope that you wouldn't fall in love with somebody else before I made you realize, somehow, that you were born to love me. Then tonight—"

His head moved, anguished, against her head. "I can't even remember driving here. I doubt if I'd made it alive if Mia hadn't kept assuring me that Roger was probably calling a bluff, and that you do love me—maybe. I can't fight you any longer, my dearest. I just want to love you, marry you and live with you at Rancho El Chico."

Gently, she drew her head from beneath his and smiled up into his tortured, dark eyes.

She said simply, "In all my life, there's never been another man but you. You are my life. And I know now that's why I've fought you so—because it all seemed so hopeless, and would have been so overpowering if I had admitted it. Now I want only to belong to you—"

Jiri kissed her and as the world took wing. She wondered how anyone could be so unbearably happy and still live.



Chloe drew away slowly, and the man turned. Lilith stared and her heart turned to stone.

*Love may be blind, but the  
right girl can open its eyes!*



By DOROTHY DOW

**"I** WANT you to be here when they take the bandage off," Lieutenant Marvin said, urgently. "Because all I know about you is that you have the loveliest voice I ever heard, and I'm gambling that your face matches it."

"Of course I'll be here," Lilith told him. Her excitement was deep and wordless.

For six months she had been devoting a few nights a week to the boys in the naval hospital. It wasn't much, perhaps, but it was something, in addition to the defense job that took up her days.

Three weeks ago, Tony Marvin, USNR, had been wheeled into the end room. His eyes were bandaged but his young mouth had smiled gallantly, and his yellow hair was slightly ruffled. His was an interesting case, the surgeons said. Infection from exposure on a raft for eighteen days caused it. It was painful at first, bad enough all the way. But Tony Marvin would see again, perfectly. Only, for the present the bandage was necessary.

Lilith had read to him every night she was on duty. For the last week she had come to the hospital every night.

Now at quitting time she put away her book, and pulled her coat over her slim shoulders. Their hands clasped, for a formal good-bye, but Lilith put her finger to her lips and left a kiss on his pillow.

"Good night," she murmured, for the second time, hating to go.

She was in the door, when he called, "I say—there's just one thing, I forgot—if you wouldn't mind coming close so the guys out in the ward can't hear. . ."

She went back and leaned down over his bed. Utterly without warning, two strong arms shot out and pulled her close, and a warm young mouth set itself against hers. Lilith pulled herself upright, feeling dizzy.

"Sorry," Tony Marvin murmured. "Sorry, if you're mad—I mean. I have to wait until tomorrow night to see your face, but all of a sudden I couldn't stand waiting any longer for that. Are you mad?"

"I ought to be," Lilith said shakily. "But under the circumstances, we'll pretend you were lonesome and kissing your mother good night—or something."

"Hey, that's an insult! Does my kiss feel like that? Okay, you wait until I'm on my feet, and then I'll show you." Shining white teeth showed in a flashing grin.

Lilith took one last look at the tanned young face below the bandages, and then almost ran out of the room.

**I**N THE subway, going home, she took out her compact and outlined her lovely, curving lips. Lilith was a girl who would rate a second glance, and many more. Her hair was the shade of dark brown that set off ivory skin and velvet brown eyes. She was filled with anticipation, because tomorrow Tony Marvin would see her, and somehow he had become the most important person in the world. The feeling had grown from day to day, but tonight, in that swift pressure of his lips it had burst into full bloom.

"This is IT!" her heart thudded. And it would be IT, for him, too. Fate couldn't have it turn out differently.

Unlocking her door, she rushed into the living room, and then stopped short. She had expected her roommate to be out for the evening, but Chloe was lounging in a chair, long legs clad in bright silk lounging pajamas. If Lilith was moon-like in her loveliness, Chloe was like the sun. Bright yellow hair shone in little curls, and a scarlet mouth pouted in accord with the bright blue eyes that looked sullenly at Lilith beneath long mascaraed lashes.

"I thought you were dancing?"

"So did I, but that darned Tod had to report for special duty, and there was no one else at that hour. I hate sitting around this dump all evening, it drives me crazy, and there was nothing in the house fit to eat, unless some one felt like cooking. I suppose you've been doing your Girl Scout deeds for the halt and the dull and the meatballs that don't have girls of their own to come—"

"I read outside of visiting hours, it's quite different," Lilith said, serenely. "And if you think they're all meatballs, you ought to see the one I was reading to tonight. Six feet tall, and as good-looking as Cary Grant, in very much the same way. Even his name is nice. Anthony Marvin. . ."

"Anthony Marvin! You mean, *the* Anthony Marvin?" Lilith stared because Chloe was suddenly all animation. "The rich one who was on the raft, and—"

"He's the one who was on a raft, and got a medal. I don't know about rich—"

"Dope, you never read the most important part of any story," Chloe said impatiently. "Of course he's richer than rich, and not married. Of all the chances . . . why didn't you tell me?"

Lilith giggled. "I couldn't see you going and wasting your evenings reading to a man with bandaged eyes," she said. "And to tell you the truth I never thought of it. And it's too late now. Tomorrow they're taking the bandages off, and he particularly asked me to be there—"

She broke off, at the sound of the doorbell. Chloe was at the door first, hopeful. But it wasn't an officer dropping in, it was a Western Union boy, with a telegram for Lilith. She took it, nervously, and tore it open and read the words that sent terror to her soul:

DADDY TO BE OPERATED ON FOR  
APPENDICITIS, NO NEED WORRY  
BUT DOCTOR SAYS I AM NOT  
ENOUGH OVER FLU TO BE THERE  
AND MAYBE YOU CAN COME TO-  
MORROW MORNING VERY SUDDEN  
EMERGENCY LOVE,

MOTHER

Lilith said, "Oh!" and in another tone, "Oh." At nineteen, you may be a swell girl, but you're not an angel. There was no one in the world like Daddy, but for one fleeting second, the thought of not seeing Tony Marvin tomorrow night stabbed at her breast.

And then she was all efficiency, telephoning about trains, calling the plant. It was bad luck about Tony and it was too bad to have to miss a few days of work, but sometimes those things had to happen. Daddy was frail, and so was Mother. Someone would have to be there . . . in case things went wrong, Lilith thought, with a little-girl sinking of her heart.

Tossing clothes into a bag, and remembering to give money to Chloe, who was chronically short, she thought of telephoning the hospital. But it was too personal. She couldn't ask a harried head nurse to explain to Tony. Chloe would promise to do it, of course, but Chloe would forget because she was so involved with her own dates.

"I'll write him a note—"

She scribbled the note hurriedly, adding her address, saying she would be back in town in a week if all went well. Surely, there was nothing too much taken for granted in that—just regrets, and congratulations, and a wish to see him. After all, with that kiss burning on her lips, she didn't have to be vain to know that Tony Marvin would wish the same thing.

"I'll mail it when I leave," she told herself, but there was no stamp, and no time to stop in at a drug store and buy one.

She said, frantically, "Chloe, this is terribly important to me. It's about the most important note I ever wrote, I guess. You *must* get a stamp on your way to work and mail it. Promise?"

"Darling, I've never seen you so excited." Chloe picked up the letter, narrowed her eyes and laughed. "Don't tell me you're carrying a torch for one of the lads."

"It's not that. I mean, well, he wanted me to be there, most especially. I can't have him disappointed, not knowing why. His family live in California, and they didn't come on. Will you please, Chloe?"

"I might remember—if you let me wear your red cape while you're away," Chloe teased.

"Wear anything in the darned place, but see that the letter goes to the hospital."

Lilith made the train by one minute. It was dirty and crowded, as trains are apt to be in these days, but that didn't matter, as long as it was taking her homeward. There was time now, too much time. Time enough to worry about what could happen to a tired old man going under the doctor's knife for the first time. Her father was

Dr. Jerome Avery, and he had operated on countless people in his time. But the last year had used him cruelly, making him do the work of three younger men. Lilith clenched her fists, bit her lip and blinked back frightened tears. "Nothing must happen to him, please, please," she prayed, desperately, under her breath.

**N**OTHING had happened. It had been what doctors call a routine case, all going perfectly, although if it had been put off a day the story would have been different. "Just before it ruptured," her father boasted, sitting up on the fourth day. "And I diagnosed it myself!"

Mother really was the sickest of the two, having had a relapse due to nerves over the emergency. But by the end of the week, she was sitting up, too, and thin efficient Cousin Ella had come over from Plainfield to help out with the telephone calls, and give the maid a little time off. Pinning on her hat, Lilith felt weary and worn, but terribly happy. Daddy was fine, Mother was fine, and she was on her way back to the city. "Back to Tony," was the way she phrased it in her heart.

Lilith thought now as the train sped along, "Even if Chloe forgot to mail that letter he'd have found out somehow why I wasn't there."

She didn't know whether to laugh at herself or be shocked, at the deep flush of happiness that swept over her at the thought of seeing Tony again.

The train trip didn't last forever, even though it seemed to, in her impatient mood. There was the usual wait for a taxi, and then she was speeding along the city streets at eleven o'clock at night. Lights flickered along the avenue giving her a welcome, and Lilith felt happier than ever before in her life. Tonight there would be nothing except a long, hot bath to wash off the travel dust and tomorrow there would be a telephone and Tony. . .

"I'll wear my new white lace, if he asks me out to dinner," she told herself, swinging into the little apartment building, her suitcase in her hand. "And little purple flowers in my hair, and the rhinestone sandals, and—"

She stopped for breath, at the top of the steps, and shrugged her suit coat into place, having that dirty, tired feeling that one always has after a long train trip.

She put the key in the lock and turned it. The room was only faintly lighted with soft flickering candles. There were two tall vases of red roses and the room smelled of Chloe's heavy-sweet perfume.

The room smelled of Chloe, who stood in the middle of the room, her arms about the

neck of a tall man who held her close. The man was kissing her. Chloe drew away slowly, and the man turned. Lilith stared and her face froze while her heart turned to stone. Because there was no question about it—even though she had never seen the man without a bandage across his eyes, she would have known that fine face anywhere.

CHLOE breathed, "Lilith" and, a moment later, nervously, "I hate surprises, why didn't you wire?"

But Tony Marvin came across the room and took Lilith's icy little hands in his. He looked down at her from the bluest eyes in the world. He was handsomer than she had believed.

"My guardian angel with the beautiful voice," he said, gently. He kissed one cold hand, and then the other.

Lilith felt she would never speak or move again.

Tony's voice was gay, happy, welcoming. "And the girl who brings gifts! Lilith, you don't know how much I've wanted to see you. To thank you for the reading. To thank you for keeping me from almost going crazy. And for something much more important—Chloe." He swung around and drew Chloe into his arms. From their security, she looked at Lilith with eyes that were watchful and hard.

"Chloe . . ." said Tony. "She was there when they took the bandages off, because you had sent her. She was the first thing I saw. I took one look at her and it was like the old song . . . my heart stood still. I said, 'Lilith, darling . . .' and then I kissed her. . ."

"But I don't understand," Lilith said. The words came with difficulty from the dark, painful cavern of her heart. "I don't see . . ."

Chloe said, hurriedly, gayly, "It was the letter, pet. You made me promise to get it to the hospital, you know. I forgot to mail it, and I just couldn't bear to think of this man waiting for a girl who didn't come. The very idea made me ill. I broke my date, I went there myself—"

"All in white lace like an angel" Tony said tenderly.

"And because I thought it would mean more to him, I asked to see him, rather than send the letter in. They were just taking the bandage off, and I was so thrilled I couldn't even remember to give him the letter. I just said, I've come . . . and then they took the bandage off."

"As a matter of fact, she didn't tell me until the end of the evening, that she wasn't you," Tony said gayly. "She was afraid I would be disappointed. For the most beautiful girl in the world, your best friend is modest, Lilith, do you know it? She thought I'd

be disappointed . . . when all the time I'd fallen head over heels in love with her. With her beauty and the sweetness of her being there. . ."

*And with all the dreams you had dreamed of me to lead up to it, to make your mind ready for love,* Lilith thought, with a hot rage.

But what was the use? Chloe leaned against Tony's shoulder, her red mouth curved in a triumphant smile. Lilith might understand, Lilith might know that Chloe had seen her chance at the rich young Tony Marvin, and grabbed it. But Chloe also knew that it made no difference. If you break an egg you can never make that egg whole again. Lilith had broken the whole basket of eggs that was her heart, when she had given Chloe that letter to deliver.

"We only needed you back to make it perfect," Tony said, his smile deepening. "Because you started it, you're part of it, it's a three-cornered romance. You must be maid of honor, and our best friend forever and ever, Lilith. You will be, won't you? Because Chloe is going to marry me next month, when I get leave and can take her out to California. My mother is an invalid, so we'll have a home wedding—with the flowers, and the green lawns, and the loveliest bride in the world. We're just waiting for my leave."

He took Lilith's cold hand in his again. The touch was intolerably dear. She wanted to jerk her hand away, but if she did he would wonder why.

There was a faint sneer behind Chloe's smile now, as if she were taunting, and Lilith had to talk that sneer away.

She said, very softly, "I can't wish you two people all the happiness there is because I think you have it. I think you'll always have it, I hope you will. Tony, I'm so glad, about the eyes. About you. Chloe—you know how I feel. I don't have to put it in words!"

Chloe said, very clearly, "Yes, Lilith, my sweet, I know exactly how you feel!"

SHE had been back for a week, and she was alone in her room. Tony and Chloe had gone out on the town. Tony had coaxed her, insistently, to go with them, and Chloe had added casual persuasion.

Tony had said, hurt, "Look. You don't let us see you, you don't let me get half as well acquainted with you as I want to. Why, I almost knew you better when I couldn't see you. And you certainly talked to me more. You're such a quiet little nun, Lilith—I didn't guess that."

"She's had a tiring time at home," Chloe said smoothly. "And she's carrying a torch

for a sailor. Don't ask her questions, it's not fair. But don't coax her, either."

Tony had stared at Lilith soberly. "Are you carrying a torch, Lilith? I'll bet a lot of guys are carrying one for you. Darned if I know why, but there's something about you that gets me, and it isn't your curly lashes or your eyes, either. You make me think of snow slides and summer days swimming and moonlight nights with everyone having fun. You make me think of the little sister I always wanted and never had. You'll have to be my kid sister, Lilith, and then I'll be the luckiest guy in the world with Chloe for a wife and you my sister—"

"Even you don't need more than one girl," Lilith had said, with spirit. Chloe had laughed, a little crossly, but then Chloe was cross every time Tony noticed Lilith, and Tony noticed Lilith every time the three were together. Chloe managed so that it was only for short spaces, and Lilith met her more than half way in that.

The two girls had never said one word after that first night when they were alone. Chloe had gone around in a rather arrogant silence, as if daring Lilith to start something. Lilith had shut her pain inside. What was the use of accusing Chloe of being a thief and a plotter? When the plot wins, that is all that matters. But in the matter of seeing Tony, Lilith met Chloe more than half way, because seeing Tony, loving him intolerably was pure, undistilled agony. To see him, and know how very sincerely he liked her, was an added pain. What girl wants liking, when she has dreamed of so much more?

She dated various men and went through

the motions of having a good time, but the fun was all hollow. Tonight it seemed she couldn't face making conversation across another dimly-lighted table, dancing and smiling, while all the time slow tears seemed to drip in her heart. That was why she had stayed in tonight, to be alone with her thoughts, and to decide what she was going to do.

To stay on, living with Chloe even for another week seemed intolerable. It would be a wrench to give up the little apartment, which had been hers first before Chloe had coaxed her way in as roommate. The landlord had done it in Lilith's favorite colors. He had built bookshelves and cabinets because she was a good tenant. It was too expensive for the improvident Chloe, but in this day and age she would have no trouble subletting it. And Lilith had found a small place on the other side of town which would have to do, because she could no longer live with the girl who had stolen her chance at happiness.

The thought burned in her heart as she jerked books from the shelves and suitcases from the closet. She had lain a long time on the bed in speechless misery before she started to pack, and it was later than she realized, almost one in the morning, when she heard someone pounding on the door. She opened it and Chloe came into the living room, glowing from excitement until she saw the dismantled room.

"What in the name of heaven are you doing?" she demanded.

"I'm moving." Lilith's voice was chilly. "You can have the place to yourself. You owe me last month's rent, so that will even

**DOES THE MOON AFFECT YOU, TOO?**

**NO, I GET MY EFFECT WITH STARS - STAR BLADES!**

6NX PROCESS  
**STAR**  
DOUBLE EDGE

4 for 10¢

**STAR**  
SINGLE EDGE

us up, and—" She turned away sharply. "You can't do a dirty thing like that to me," Chloe cried, panic in her voice. "You simply can't. You know darned well I'm over my head buying clothes to be married in, and I can't swing even half of this right now, let alone the whole place. I never heard of anything so mean as leaving me holding the bag . . . having to get someone new in, going to all that bother—"

"Since," Lilith said, low, "You have Tony so safely in the bag, I don't see why you mind holding it. After all when you made up your mind to get him, you didn't think about whether it was mean to me or not, did you, Chloe?"

Her eyes were steady, but Chloe's fell. Chloe laughed, a nervous laugh. "So that's it. So you were carrying the torch for him, and you are being a poor loser! I should think you'd have more pride, Lilith. After all, what do you think Tony will think, if I have to tell him that you moved out because you were so much in love with him you couldn't stand seeing him when he was engaged to me? Tony will be so sorry for you, he—"

"Will you? Was he sorry for you when you told him about that unfortunate marriage of yours?" Lilith snapped.

Chloe gave a small gasp, and went pale under her rouge. "Because after all, of course you have told him—"

"It's my own business whether I tell him or not," Chloe said frantically. Her hands fumbled with her big evening purse.

Lilith laughed, softly. "I think it might be Tony's business, a little, too, you know. However, speaking about one's own business, it's mine, if I move out because I'm in love with Tony. I'm sure you realize that, Chloe. I'm sure you'll tell Tony that you asked me to move because your best friend was coming to town and had no place to go. Or any story you like—any story that will hold water. . ."

Chloe said angrily, "Oh, all right, have it your own way. Go on and hold that marriage story over my head if you want to. Go on and be sour grapes. I don't care. I'm going to marry Tony Marvin, and have everything in the world. And how do you like that? I'm going to marry him next month, and I guess I can manage until then without any help from you, and—"

The door bell rang softly, once, and then again as if the person ringing realized it was too late to ring doorbells. Chloe jerked the door open, and Tony came into the room. He was pale, excited looking.

"Chloe darling! I'm glad you aren't asleep, I wanted to see you the worst way. Chloe, listen, and don't be too upset because it's one of those things. My leave is canceled, and I'm reporting tomorrow at a camp in the South.

Going out in an hour. We'll have to postpone the marriage and everything for awhile, because I know it means overseas. Darling, I'm sunk, but I'm glad of the chance to be back, pitching again with all the others.

"And this time I have the consolation of knowing you'll be here waiting for me, and I won't have to worry about you. Lilith will look after you for me. Won't you Lilith?"

He crossed the room to Lilith and took her hands, looking down into her eyes, pleadingly. Lilith felt herself go soft and hot under that gaze.

"You're our best friend, Lilith, someone a man could trust through fire and flame. I knew that, before I ever saw you. Look after Chloe for me, will you? Don't let her dance too much, do too much, worry too much. Take care of her for me until I come back. . ."

She said, shakily, "Anything you ask, of course, Tony. Anything."

"I knew you would." He bent his head and kissed her. And all at once that other kiss came rushing back. She felt tears pressing on her eyelids, but she blinked them back.

She said, steadily, "The best of everything, Tony. Come back, we want you back. I'll take care of Chloe the best I can. Good-bye."

**T**ONY had gone in late September, with the red and gold leaves blowing about the streets. Sometimes Lilith thought the smell of bonfires and the clear rustle of leaves would always remind her of Tony, and the weeks that went by when no word came from him. And then his first letter, which Chloe had read with triumphant eyes.

"He's in France, and all okay," she told Lilith, casually. "Sends his best, and all that—"

She tossed the letter into the fireplace and went into the bedroom to dress for a date. Lilith watched the thin pages burn, thinking how carefully she would have saved the letter, if it had come to her.

There was a curious armed truce between the two girls ever since the night Tony left. The light of victory had shown in Chloe's eyes, but she went warily. Lilith knew she was a fool to go on living with Chloe, but she had promised Tony. There was also the dull comfort of knowing that if she moved out she wouldn't even know whether Tony were alive or dead.

Tonight was one of those nights when Lilith would go through the motions of having a good time. She was going dancing with Peter Garrison, who was just back from the Pacific. Peter was a darling, but she wished he weren't so much in love with her, and she wished even more that his blue eyes didn't remind her of Tony's.

It was six o'clock on an afternoon in early

December, and Lilith had stayed at the office later than usual because Peter wouldn't call for her until nine o'clock.

"Wear something to make you look even more angelic," Peter had said in his usual gay tone.

She might even wear the white lace, Lilith decided. She had put it away the night Chloe had borrowed it along with Lilith's name—the night she had taken Tony . . .

"I'll wear the red sheer, with the narrow green belt," Lilith told herself, locking her desk.

The telephone rang, and she picked it up automatically. It was late for business calls.

"Miss Avery—Miss Lilith Avery—" a voice said clearly.

Lilith was so startled she almost dropped the telephone, because the voice cut into her memory sharply. It was exactly like Tony Marvin's voice, if ever two voices were alike in the world.

"This is Miss Lilith Avery—"

"Lilith! This is Tony! How are you, and do you know it's grand to hear your voice?" His own laughed, through space.

Lilith could only make silly little noises of incredulity and strange, confused happiness. He was back, he was safe. Oh, thank God, he was safe!

"Yes, in person," he went on. "Don't sound as if you think you're dreaming, my good girl. Got in town one minute ago—no, five, and rushed for the phone. I called the apartment, but no one answered. Then I thought I'd see if I could get you first and let you break the news. Surprises aren't always so hot—are they? Going home, are you? Tell my girl for me I'll be along in about an hour and a half, with love and kisses?"

Her fingers shook as she put the telephone aside. She thought, fleetingly: Funny, Lilith was going to get home early today, she said someone was coming in for cocktails.

She picked up the phone again and dialed their number. But there was no answer.

As she walked into the crisp December night her heart was a chaos of feelings—gladness, sadness and wild excitement, but above and beyond them all was the fact that Tony was back and she would see him again.

**H**ALF an hour later, Lilith ran the block and a half to the apartment building on winged feet. She unlocked the door on a burst of laughter and loud boogie-woogie music. The living room was empty, but Chloe came from the kitchen as she heard the door open. She wore a trailing hostess gown. Her hair was mussed and her lipstick smudged.

Lilith said, breathlessly, "If you were at home why in the world didn't you answer the telephone? Tony's back! He tried to get

you. He'll be along any minute, Chloe, and—"

Chloe said, gayly, "Don't be a dope, Tony is in France. You've been drinking." From behind her came a burst of masculine laughter. A man weaved into the room with a slightly unsteady gait. He was a slim man with sleek black hair. Lilith had never seen him before. Somehow, he didn't look like most of Choe's men. There was something too slick about him.

"Who's the beautiful doll?" he demanded, waving his highball glass.

But Lilith's raised voice subdued him. "Chloe," she insisted, "I'm deadly serious. Tony is back and he's coming to see you. You'll have to get rid of this gentleman . . ."

"Tell the beautiful doll I'm not a gentleman, I'm just family, honey," the dark man said raucously. He put his arm about Chloe, the highball tipping, spilling on her shoulder. Chloe jerked away. "You're not kidding, Lilith! You mean Tony's really back? Oh, my goodness! Nicky, get your coat on and get out of here! Get out of here fast, because—"

"Now, now, sugar, that's no way to treat an ex-husband you haven't seen in years and years," the man remonstrated. "You know me, Chloe, baby, I'm the type that walks out on them, but they don't throw me out. I walked out on you once, maybe you've forgotten that. When I'm ready I go. Besides, I want to meet this new billion-dollar boy friend. We might get together, the past and the future and—"

Chloe said, fiercely, "Nicky, if you don't get out, and get out right now, you won't ever get a cent from me when I get the money. I told you when it was all set I'd see that you got enough to start up a little place of your own, didn't I?" She took his arm, frantically. "Nicky, every time I see you there's trouble—"

"Why do you want to see me again, then, babe? You look me up, don't you? Calm down, now, I'll just finish this little drink, and then I'll be on my way."

The doorbell rang and the three in the room stood stark still.

Lilith took one step toward the door, but Chloe jerked at her arm. "That's Tony. Don't answer! Nicky can go out the back way!"

"It's my turn now," Lilith said, her head high.

She pulled the door open, and it was Tony, indeed. Tall, and with the glamor of far places and danger about him, he stood in the doorway, his eyes going from Lilith to Chloe. Chloe's hair was a yellow tangle and her negligee was soaked from the spilled highball.

The man, Nicky, was the first to move. He put down his highball and moved for-

*(Continued on page 95)*

*Crystal had lived in Hollywood long enough to know that it takes more than a smooth line to tie two lives together.*

# Orchids



# For His Wife

By RUTH SCARLET



This was her husband, and she had every right to be proud of him.

“AND then, a letter to my agent in New York,” David Dane began. The brand-new lieutenant’s uniform fitted him with the precision of exquisite tailoring, and he wore it as casually as if he had been in uniform for years, instead of for just twenty-four hours. Above the trim collar and carefully knotted tie, his famous handsome face was very boyish, very serious.

This was the beginning of another step in his fabulous, lightning career, and beginnings

are always momentous. He had gone from boy extra to star in an amazingly short time. And now, it was the Army Air Force, with Hollywood pushed into the background.

"Better begin by saying that I didn't know yesterday that—"

He broke off, startled, and Crystal's pencil wavered above the paper for just a moment, and then she turned her head, sharply, as David Dane made an incredulous noise, and moved forward.

High heels clicked on the parquet floor, and a wave of perfume sifted into the still air of the study. Rita LeVere paused in the doorway for one breathless moment, all dark splendor, golden skin and orchids. And then she had thrown herself into David's arms, in one superb gesture. Automatically, they closed around her.

"DAVID, I have the most wonderful news in the world for you! I'm free—" Her red-tipped hands clutched his shoulders. Greedy hands, lovely, predatory hands, Crystal thought scornfully, gathering up her papers, with no haste.

The rich voice crooned on, thickly sweet. "David, I went to Reno. I got my divorce. Darling, are you terribly surprised. The day after that dreadful quarrel I rushed off to Reno, incognito. I did it for you, David . . . to prove how important you were, how much I cared. David, tell me, did you dream, did you guess—"

"Hardly."

Crystal wanted to laugh over the tension in that boyish voice. Anyone who knew anything about Hollywood, would have understood that note. David Dane, the rising young romantic lover of the screen, could very well have his name linked with Rita LeVere. The fans liked to read about those glamorous alliances. But marriage was quite another thing, when everyone knew that however beautiful she was, Rita was at least ten years older, that her career was closing on a list of gaudy triumphs and tinsel scandals, while his was just beginning.

"You haven't even kissed me, my darling," but the low husky voice crooned, "We've wasted so much time, let's not waste any more. When shall we be married, darling? Tomorrow—just a simple ceremony, nothing elaborate . . ."

"Well—er—"

Crystal, unnoticed in the background, drew a deep breath, and cleared her throat. To someone like Rita, a secretary was less than a piece of furniture. But the perfect secretary is the perfect secretary, simply because she always knows what to do.

Crystal knew, now. She could see the waters of oblivion, of ridicule, of career-suicide

closing around David just as certainly as Rita's lovely arms encircled him caressingly. Even if he were silly enough, Crystal thought angrily, to be infatuated with her, he simply could not, he must not, marry her!

Crystal steeled herself and said in a voice that was fresh and clear and determined, "I'm sorry, Miss LeVere. But David can't very well marry you, tomorrow or any other time. Because you see—he married me last week. Tell her, David, dear. Explain how much time we've been spending together since she went away. Tell her how it happened, on the spur of the moment . . ."

Her heart seemed to stand still while she waited. Rita's face was a mixture of incredulity and fury. David's had changed with lightning speed from shock to frozen attention.

It was his turn to clear his throat, now. Crystal waited, not breathing. Would he call her a silly little liar, would he tell her to get out, would he fire her? Why in the world had she stuck her neck out, anyway?

"David, she's lying, it's a joke—"

"I'm sorry, Rita. Terribly sorry, because you're being hurt. But, my dear, you can only blame yourself. You disappeared, you walked out. I was in a tailspin, Rita. And then Crystal . . . Well, er—Crystal, perhaps if you don't mind leaving us alone for a few minutes, maybe I could try to make Rita see that—"

"I shall be delighted to, darling," Crystal said smoothly.

She walked out of the study, and shut the door. Sounds of a storm rising on the wave of Rita's frantic wrath pursued her footsteps down the hall. Quite shamelessly, Crystal tiptoed back and listened. Rita was using the works—sobs, choking accusations, imploring tears. David was being convincingly sorry, tender.

Crystal nodded her head approvingly, because he was doing it well. It wasn't easy, either. He actually sounded upset. Crystal narrowed her eyes, listening.

*He's still crazy about her. But he can't give in. He can't throw everything away. Oh, men are soft, they haven't sense . . .*

The storm ebbed, waveringly. Rita's voice still rose and fell, but it was no longer angry, only caressing and pained. Rita had accepted the picture of David being driven into a hurried marriage as a rebound from the way she had hurt him.

Frowning, Crystal tiptoed away, down the hall, into the library, and was deep in a book, when the door slammed, and she heard Rita's car drive away. She raised her head, slowly, when David strolled into the room, and then she moved uneasily, as he stood, staring down at her.

“SMART, aren't you?”  
 “That's what you pay me to be, isn't it?”  
 “How do you know I didn't want to marry her?”

Crystal said, gently, “It's not too late, you know. Go after her and tell her I lied. Tell her I'm crazy. Say anything. Why not . . . if you really do want to be Rita LeVere's fifth husband!”

He said, evenly, “You have a good head. Is it good enough to realize that unless I want to be just that—Rita's fifth husband—we'll have to get married in earnest, not just conversationally. Just saying we did it is good enough for Rita, maybe, but the Army needs proof. Especially since Rita will spill it to the town within two hours.”

“I—I did think of that,” she stammered, feeling curiously uncertain, under his steady blue gaze. “I thought Hank Wrenn could pull strings, twist dates and break the publicity so it would all fit. That day last week when we went to Los Angeles—maybe we could fix a story to say we did it then. And listen!” she said with a sudden fury, because there was some accusation in that steady look he bent upon her, “Listen, my dear Mr. Dane—please don't think for a minute that it will be a treat to me to marry you. I didn't do what I did because I wanted to, whether you think so or not. It was just like throwing a life-line to a drowning man—pure business. After all it's quite simple. You go to camp and I stay here, and sooner or later there's a divorce . . .”

“For how much?” David Dane snapped.

She flushed. “For peanuts, thanks. Just chalk it up to my having a Girl Scout complex, and wanting to keep one of heaven's gifts to the cinema from making a monkey of himself. Just call me soft hearted—or do I mean headed?”

He said, smiling, “You might be, at that. You could even look soft, now that I'm taking a good look, if you unpinned that little bun at the back of your neck, and used some lip-

stick. Funny, I never noticed before, but you're really rather lovely in a black-and-cream, ice-and-ivory way.”

Startlingly, he bent, and kissed her. His lips burned against hers, and then Crystal jerked away, her heart thudding. David Dane laughed, softly.

“Well, you aren't marrying me because you go for me, yourself—that's a cinch,” he told her, as if it were amusing. Maybe it was. Crystal felt confused, angry. This wasn't a joke, even if he treated it as one.

And then he said crisply, “Call Hank, will you, and tell him to hustle over here and get on the job. Put yourself down for a raise—you've earned it. And for heaven's sake go and make yourself look ravishing, because this is your wedding day. Oh, and by the way, Miss Henderson—since we're getting married—do you mind telling me what your first name is?”

“Crystal . . . and don't call me darling, I loathe it.”

“Okay, darling,” David Dane said.

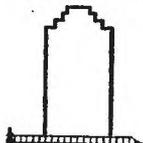
THAT had been in April 1942, and this was October 1944, now. Looking back, Crystal could not see even yet how she had the audacity to do it. You have a crazy, reckless impulse, and you speak out of turn, and all at once you find yourself caught in a trap. Hollywood was the trap. Publicity was the trap. Hollywood and the studio expected certain things when a romantic star secretly married his secretary.

Crystal had found herself pushed and shoved like a doll. There was a flash across the front pages all over the country and there was a wild burst of fan mail. There was a reception, and there were parties. Someone had sent in heaps of clothes, silks, satins, sables, even jewels. The very idea of not going away with the groom, who was the idol of millions, was absurd, it seemed. Crystal was a camp-follower envied by girls all over the country. Six weeks in Texas, three weeks

TEST SIGHT

TASTE RIGHT

If the ladder is placed against building, how far up will it reach?



ANSWER,

It will reach exactly to the top of the building.



in Florida, a brief trip to Washington . . .

She felt dizzy, as if she were walking in a dream. It was all a joke to David. In public he was devoted, in private he was a kid having a joke on the world. Crystal narrowed her eyes, bit her lips, tried to pretend it was funny, too. But it wasn't, it hadn't been.

Then, all at once, the first act was over and David had gone overseas. In a burst of publicity, she had gone back to California. Back to living in the big Dane house and hating it. Closing it and taking an apartment. Having her every move suddenly important. Back to being interviewed, to knowing that an unrelenting Rita LeVere was her enemy. Rita had power in Hollywood, power enough so that Crystal felt little knives stabbing in her spine when women looked at her in a certain way, which meant, "She maneuvered David into marrying her, but of course every one knows it's Rita he still loves!"

Not, of course, that she cared. Why should she? Only, in the most unaccountable way, she did. Her marriage with David was a farce, pure and simple. It was easy to remember that, with David's amused casualness to remind her. "How is my wife-in-name-only?" Crystal would feel prickles of irritation going up and down her spine, because he made the whole thing seem so melodramatic.

But the very moment David sailed, Crystal began to feel utterly and completely married. Even if the ceremony had been a farce, they were still legally married. If anything happened to her, it would be David, who must be notified of it. If anything happened to him, it would be she, who would receive the letter from the War Office, beginning, "We regret . . ."

Lying awake at night, just as wives lay awake all over the country, she had known months of fearing such a letter; months of praying passionately that nothing might happen to him, because somehow the feeling of possessiveness had grown and grown . . .

It was in her letters, because of course she wrote to him. As his secretary, keeping track of his affairs, she would never have done otherwise. As his wife-for-the-sake-of-the-public, she simply had to write, in order to answer the many questions, sly or curious or really affectionate, "And how is David, what do you hear from him?"

She could never help feeling oddly proud and warm when she replied, just as she felt when she addressed the envelopes that carried her letters.

It really wasn't hard to write, although she had thought it would be; it was rather fun. Away from the tension that his nearness gave, she could relax and write the sort of letter

any girl writes to a handsome young man. Not a love letter, naturally . . . nothing would be more stupid. David would have laughed scornfully, if she had written him a love letter. But she did write long newsy letters, full of stories of Hollywood, and of the people they both knew. And it seemed natural to knit things, to get off packages of cookies and chocolates; to say, "I hope you're taking care of yourself. I hope you are getting decent food. I hope you aren't taking too many chances . . ."

It had seemed natural to write more and more often, with more and more intimacy. Maybe that was because David wrote often, and because his letters were amusing. Crystal would wonder, reading one, what sort of a letter he wrote to Rita, because, somehow, she was sure Rita had never given up.

When David was decorated overseas, Rita gave an interview about her "deep, tender, and lasting friendship with David Dane." Rita wept for the public, emotionally, and gave a party, to celebrate, to which David's wife was not asked. Crystal was interviewed, too, of course. She was angry at herself for being all choked up with pride, for bursting into tears because she could not forget how young and reckless David was!

And then, all at once, after the endless months of sitting and thinking, wondering and waiting, David was coming home. He had flown fifty missions, and the War Department was sending him on a tour across the country.

Crystal was interviewed by a major in a too-tight uniform, and by a colonel who looked tired and fatherly. No one could know the exact time David would arrive, but his appearance would be made public when he got off a plane at La Guardia Field. Crystal had gone on to New York to be there ready to join the Army officials and the Press at the proper moment. There would be a rally that night, followed by a banquet and speeches. David would have a two-week rest period, and then the tour would start.

**C**RYSTAL had listened, going hot and cold. All at once, the whole thing, which had started as a mad impulse seemed shameful and wrong. She was not really his wife. To meet him at the airport, to have him take her in his arms, was an imposition on all the people all over the country who believed in David Dane, and his love, and his marriage. An idol and a hero should be gold all through, with no bit of brass. And, Crystal was the only thing about David Dane that was false. She, and the marriage were the flaws in David's shining armor.

"But of course you must go," the Colonel said, shocked, when she tried feebly to get

out of it. "Even if you want to see him alone—and I can understand that a first meeting alone is what you both want—this is a job to do, and you two young people will do it together."

Crystal assented miserably, knowing there really was no way she could avoid it.

But it was cheap and tawdry. David would think so too, even while he played his part in it.

In a panic, she told herself again, "I can't do it, I can't stand there and act the way a real wife should act, it's too much—I'll get sick, I'll run away and hide!"

But she had done neither. More than her dislike of the situation, was her sense of what she owed David. It was her fault that she was his wife, and he had a right to expect her to act the part.

She dressed carefully, in the beige suit, arranged the tiny, matching hat over her perfect hair. The fact that she looked like an ad from *Harper's Bazar* didn't lessen the fear that was growing by the second.

There were big purple orchids sent by the welcoming committee for her to wear and there was another florist's box, containing a spray of superb brown-speckled orchids, with a card which said:

*Just the thing for the most beautiful wife  
in captivity.*

Crystal thought suddenly, how wonderful it would have been if David had actually sent the card, himself, and meant every word in the message. Just the same, she pushed the purple ones aside and pinned the green-and-brown flowers high on her shoulder of her mink coat. The girl who looked at her from the glass was quite different from the slim, sedately-dressed girl who had said to her boss, "Just chalk it up to my having a Girl Scout complex . . ."

That girl of another year had been cool and unobtrusive as a good secretary should be. This girl had cloudy hair, foaming shoulder-length, and sweet perfume filling the air she moved in. This girl looked stunning, excited, and not at all cool!

**I**NDEED, it seemed actually as if her heart would stop beating from intolerable excitement when she stood waiting out at the Field. People pushed and stared, photographers moved about and shutters snapped. And then there was a shout, and a hushed tension as high above their heads a plane came winging through the blue air. Crystal stared up into the clear skies, her mouth dry, her eyes suddenly wet with tears. There was something intensely moving about David, carefree, casual, reckless, unthinking David, coming

back a hero. It made his movie triumphs worthless by comparison. It made his past unimportant, his present both dignified and fine. "Which it would never have been if he had married Rita," Crystal told herself proudly.

But how would David feel about the girl who had shoved herself into sharing the limelight in his new and glamorous life?

"It's Dane!" a thousand voices said. A tall figure moved away from the plane, that a moment ago had taxied to a halt. Sunlight glinted on the hair Crystal remembered so well. She held her breath, and the queerest, shyest pride flooded her body. Even if he were only a husband in public, still, he was *her* husband . . .

This was her husband, and he was very much a hero, and very much a man, and she had a right to feel proud of him. The young, thoughtless David Dane of two years back, was very straight, very different looking. Fine lines showed about his eyes, and his face was hawk-thin.

"Darling!" David said, and he put his arms around her, almost roughly. Crystal felt herself lifted on tiptoe by the gustiness of that caress.

"Fine," a press man caroled, and the camera clicked. Maybe he was a make-believe husband, but the kiss was the very realest sort of kiss. It wasn't one kiss, it was an assault of kisses. Crystal put up a shaking hand to steady her hat, when he let her go.

Her voice sounded thin and far away in her own ears when she managed to speak. "I'm awfully proud of you, David, and awfully happy . . ." Then, to her horror, tears welled up in her eyes and ran down her cheeks, and David, with the funniest look on his face, was pulling out his handkerchief, and mopping at them. Crystal felt ashamed of herself, but everyone else seemed to think that it was all just right, and what was to be expected of her.

Many of the onlookers nodded approval, and a woman crooned, "The poor dears, you can see how terribly in love they are."

David heard and winked one eyelid very slightly, and his mouth curved upward, even while he was being formal to the Mayor's greeting. Crystal stiffened, and the tears dried almost at once. It was still a joke to David, which was as it should be. It was a joke, and it was up to her to free him from it as soon as she could.

Erect, she walked by his side to the waiting car. The rest of the day was a mad whirl, in which she and David were not alone for even a moment.

They made one stop at the hotel, and David was kept busy posing, while Crystal ran up to the suite, and did things to her face and

hair. They went on, and met thousands of people, and hundreds of people seemed to make speeches. David made one beautiful, sober speech, a short one about how lucky he was, and how happy he was to be back, and about the men who were still a long way from home. Crystal cried as she listened, but she managed to wipe her eyes before he got back to his seat.

Crystal tried to eat at the banquet, but she couldn't swallow her food. She felt unhappy, and yet, for one moment, when David's eyes met hers, and he raised his glass toward her, as if he were drinking a secret toast, she felt a wild surge of bliss before she sternly reminded herself that it was just one more gesture David was making in their game.

When the banquet was finally over, and she and David were alone in the hotel suite, she would have given anything to have someone there to ease the tension. Wearily he tossed his cap on the table and walking about the suite—living room, kitchenette, her bedroom, his bedroom . . .

She put her hat in the closet and smoothed her hair, trying to think of something to say.

"David," she finally said, "it's nice to have you back. I guess you know how everyone feels about you. Everything is in order, but I'd like to have you go all over the accounts when you have time. I rented the big house, and took a little place, as I wrote you. I haven't touched any of the money you put in my account, outside of my salary. I'm proud to have done anything that might have been a help to a man like you, and I don't want to be paid for it. Of course I understand as well as you do, that our present position is impossible, and as soon as you want to discuss it, and do something about it—"

"The thing I'd like to do now," David said, almost dreamily, as if he had not heard her, "is to see how it feels for a guy to kiss the wife he hasn't seen for too long. And after all—you are my wife . . ."

Crystal stiffened. He was carrying the joke too far. She wanted to tell him not to bother, but he drew her into his arms.

There was one moment in which she would have pulled away, from the kiss that was no more than a careless gesture, but the touch of his arms and the strength of his thin young body moved her inexorably. It seemed to Crystal that she could not have pulled away from that embrace to save her life. And then his lips met hers in a kiss like music and midnight, to remember as long as one lived. A kiss that was full of tenderness and longing.

Finally he said, "I might almost persuade myself it was more than a dream—that you really felt what you seemed to just then . . ."

"But, David, I—"

SHE didn't have a chance to finish because she had half turned away to escape the queer steady gaze of David's burning blue eyes. Her own eyes caught the flash of stones and gold, from the enormous flat compact on the desk, a gold compact studded with rubies and diamonds.

David's eyes followed hers. He said, wryly, "Been getting presents, beautiful?" and the words stung.

She said, swiftly, "It's not mine. I never had anything like that in my life. But how funny, it wasn't here when I came up awhile ago. Someone must have been in the apartment . . ."

She picked up the compact and regarded the jeweled design more closely, aware that David was staring at her. There was an initial on the compact.

"R—who in the world could that be?" she asked, and then, in twinkling she knew. She tried to sound casual. "David, do you think by any chance in the world you might have had a call from your dear old friend, Rita, and—"

She stopped when an impatient knock sounded at the door. Crystal didn't need the click of high heels, and the wave of perfume, to tell her who it was.

Rita moved into the room, a chinchilla cape dropping from her beautiful bare shoulders, her glamorous face alight, every curve outlined by the silver sequins that wrapped her as lovingly as her own scented skin.

"David! My wonderful, wonderful hero!"  
"Rita!"

She went past Crystal, with a pantherlike movement, exactly as if Crystal had not been there. She put out both hands, and tilted her lips to David's. He kissed her cheek briefly, his face looked, all at once tense and white.

Crystal put her hand to her heart and looked away.

"David, do you have to pretend?" the rich voice said, reproachfully. "Do you have to go on with the farce any more? I haven't lived from the time we said good-bye, until now. My letters told you that, didn't they? Even if you didn't reply, even if you—"

"I didn't read them, after the first one," David said. The harsh note in his voice was new, it had not been there two years before. "You seemed to forget that I'm married, Rita. It makes a difference, you know."

"Not to my heart," Rita murmured. "And . . . not to your wife, or to you. Because, you see, David, I know all . . . ail that you couldn't tell me, all that you gallantly hid. And knowing that for me there is only you, and for her there's already someone else . . ."

"But that's a filthy lie," Crystal cried sharply. She stepped forward and spun Rita around. "And you know it, you know there's

no one else!" Her voice shook with anger. "No?" Rita was smiling as she reached out and picked up the compact Crystal had dropped back on the desk a moment before. "My compact . . . Ah, you discovered it. You realize I came here earlier to greet my dear David? The bellboy let me in, I meant to write you a note of welcome home, and tell you I was waiting to see you, David. But suddenly I felt dizzy. I was overcome . . . I had to lie down for a minute, and I found a note under a pillow, David. Just like the movies . . ."

Crystal cried out sharply, and then put her hand over her mouth to stifle the cry.

Rita went on, "It was a very revealing note, David. It told me all that I had guessed. It told me that you had never loved this girl here, that she had trapped you into the marriage, that it was no marriage at all. And it told me, because I have a woman's intuition, that there must be some other man, richer, maybe, for her . . . otherwise, she would not be setting you free, as she is, David. A very silly note—but a lovely note, since it washes away all that has happened, it—"

David stalked across the room, into the bedroom. Rita's flood of words died away, but her eyes, surveying Crystal, were bright with malice and triumph.

Crystal clenched her fists, and blinked back tears.

David stood in the doorway with the bit of blue paper in his hand. "Your writing, Crystal," he said, "I recognize it." He drew a breath and read aloud almost mechanically:

*Dear David,*

*This is good-bye, good luck. A marriage that starts with a trap, and ends in a fake is not good enough for either of us. I'm going away, David, and you are quite free to wind things up as you will.*

*Always good luck, my dear.*

David's mouth curved, wryly, "Was this to be found by me under my pillow, Crystal, as a homecoming gift?"

She had no chance to reply. Rita was beside David, her hand was on his arm.

Rita was crying, wildly, "What difference does it make, why do you care? The thing is, you will be free. The thing is, she trapped you. Ah, David, I always guessed it, I will tell everyone in the world about it!"

"You'd better get it straight, Rita," David said. His voice was stern. "Tell the story correctly . . . if you want to tell it. Crystal didn't trap me. She was trying to save me from being trapped by another woman. That's why she married me. Not loving me, she married me. Not loving me, she is willing to set me free. But tell the story accurately, Rita . . . or I might have to go around and correct your version. I might have to tell

**It's the patented filter with its 66 mesh-screen baffles, that whirlcools the smoke—retains flakes and slugs—absorbs moisture—minimizes raw mouth and tongue bite. When filter is discolored, it has done its job. Discard it and put in a fresh one—costs only ONE CENT. Enjoy the benefits of Frank Medico Pipe, Cigarette and Cigar Holders.**



**\$1 WITH BOX OF FILTERS FREE!**

X-RAY VIEW

GENUINE FILTERS FOR MEDICO PACKED ONLY IN THIS RED & BLACK BOX



who the woman was she saved me from."

There was a whip-lash quality to his voice. "But . . ." Rita mumbled and paused. She tried again; "David . . . when she is setting you free—and of course it's because of another man. No woman would do it for any other reason . . . you mean that still . . ."

She was embarrassed, uncertain, for probably the first time in her life. David said, lightly, "I mean that yesterday is yesterday and that no one with any sense goes back to it. You were part of my yesterdays, Rita, and we will build our very different tomorrows apart. Thank you for coming to welcome me. I'm grateful, Rita. I'll be still more grateful if no silly stories about silly notes are whispered around Hollywood."

Rita cried, furiously, "I never want to mention your name as long as I live. I loathe you!"

The door slammed, and Crystal felt as if that slam were the most important part of her whole life. She looked at David, standing in the center of the room, tearing the note into little pieces that rained down on the floor. He had protected her from Rita's malice and sent Rita away. Even if he didn't love her, she would always remember that. Even if she weren't really his wife, he had acted as if she were in truth.

"David, I want to thank you, I want to explain—" she started, but the words withered.

David's face was gaunt and white.

"Why don't you go, too?" he demanded, fiercely. "You don't need to stay, you know. I don't need to hide behind a woman any longer. Just because I was fool enough to think a game might have turned into the real thing . . . Just because for weeks I've known that you're the only woman I ever loved—But that—doesn't need to matter to you. You've got somebody else. It was kind of you to go through a whole day with me, you don't need to add another minute to the score. It was kind of you to let the world think I had something to come back to . . . something real, and true, and forever . . . even if I had nothing but an empty hotel room."

David's laugh was the bitterest sound in the world as he stumbled across the room slammed the door of his room.

Crystal felt her whole body shake, so that for a moment, she had to hold on to the chair.

Little pieces of truth seemed to shake themselves into place one by one. All the gentle, tender things David had said in his letters seemed to be staring out at her heart in black and white. The look in David's eyes when he had walked from the plane, the feel of his mouth, seemed to have a new meaning.

**T**HEY had been real! All the time they had been real!

A wild joy flooded her. She ran across the room and jerked the door open, exactly as if she had a right to. David sat by a window. He looked young and wretched.

"David, you'll have to talk to me. David, I didn't know it had come true for you . . . I didn't know you had changed . . ."

"Do we have to make a scene of this?" he said angrily. "Do we have to put it in words? I was in love with you before I sailed. You'd been under my skin for weeks— How can I tell how long! Your letters were so kind, they made me hope. Your lips against mine, out at the airport . . . that made me sure. Your lips made a fool of me, Crystal. But don't try to make a fool of me any further. Don't try to be kind. Rita was right, you wouldn't be walking out on me unless there was another man, and . . ."

She said, "Rita is a fool and you're incredibly stupid if you don't know more about women than that! There isn't another man, and there never will be! I was walking out on you because I loved you too much to live with you, to try to carry on, when I didn't matter to you, and—"

"Say that again."

"I won't. I hate you. You're stupid, you—"

"Be still." David's arms were about her. The grim sound had gone from his voice. "What are we quarreling about? You were going to leave me because you loved me and I couldn't stand losing you to someone else because I love you! Stop talking, stop arguing with me, we've wasted enough time—"

He was strong as soldiers are strong, bright gold as heroes are. His kisses had sun and stars behind them. Crystal felt herself being swept dizzily into space, into the clouds . . .

David said, huskily; "It's a nice way to begin a honeymoon . . . a real one, a forever-and-ever one . . ."

## *Your Copy May Be Late*

**Because of the exigencies of war-time transportation, your magazine may be late sometimes in reaching you. If it does not arrive on time, please do not write complaining of the delay. This delay occurs after it leaves our offices and is caused by conditions beyond our control.**

# Two-Time Heart

By LOUISE MORGAN

MR. SANBORN nervously ran his hand through his thinning hair. "Miss Lawrence," he said, "I hope you realize how very valuable this illustration is."

"Yes indeed, Mr. Sanborn," Hilary said meekly.

"And you *will* be careful?"

There was a note of desperation in his voice that caused a tide of crimson to rush to Hilary's small, oval-shaped face. Of course he was remembering such things as spilled ink and letters sent to wrong clients.

She took the watercolor from him and gravely said, "I'll be careful, Mr. Sanborn, I promise. Don't you worry."

She hoped her smile was reassuring. If this weren't the gravest kind of emergency Mr. Sanborn wouldn't ask her to deliver the package to the engraver. It was after working hours and they were the only people left in the office.

It had just started to rain, and Hilary buttoned up her shiny new red raincoat and tied the belt around her slim waist. She carefully put up her smart, little red umbrella. It just matched her coat, and, with her long shining black hair, she looked as fresh and pert as a red-winged blackbird.

The taxi stopped in front of a big, gloomy corner building. Hilary paid the fare and tucked the drawing under her arm. She poked her head cautiously from the cab doorway while she put up her umbrella. When she was all set she carefully put one foot on the gleaming, rain-washed sidewalk.

She was so busy puddle-hopping that at first she didn't notice the big, khaki-clad figure hurrying around the corner. But sud-

denly she looked up and saw him heading straight for her, full speed ahead. With a feeling of panic she dashed forward, narrowly missing a collision. But within a foot of the doorway she skidded on the slippery pavement and wildly toppled forward.

Minutes later she came to and found her throbbing head pillowed against a hard, khaki shoulder. She was inside the engraver's building and a night watchman was standing before her.

"What happened?"

"You slipped and hit your head," said a deep pleasant voice.

Hilary turned and looked up at the soldier. He was a captain and his eyes were the deepest, brightest blue she had ever seen. They were set in a broad, tanned face, under a thatch of blond hair.

"Feeling better?" he asked anxiously. "You fell awfully hard."

Suddenly Hilary came alive with a start. "What have you done with my picture?" she said wildly, looking accusingly up at the captain.

"Were you carrying something?" he asked politely.

"Was I carrying something!"

The watchman interrupted. "Oh, she must mean this," he said, holding up a water-stained, bedraggled parcel. "It was lying out there in a puddle. Seems to be a little wet."

It was the grossest of understatements. The package was soaked through and through. With trembling fingers Hilary tore off the wrappings, but it was no use. The watercolor had practically evaporated.

"It's all your fault," she wailed. "If you

*Hilary always got orders confused—until the Army gave her a command to love.*

hadn't knocked me down this never would have happened. I'll probably lose my job!"

She tried to rise, but her aching head made her totter dizzily, and the captain hastily put an arm around her.

"I'm terribly sorry," he said. "Isn't there something I can do?"

"Oh, sure," Hilary said bitterly, "just take me off to a quiet corner and shoot me."

Her tragic tone was completely justified. The picture was damaged beyond all hope. She ought to go back tonight and tell Mr. Sanborn, but her head ached fiercely. She decided to postpone the verdict until tomorrow when she would be in condition to take it.

The captain helped her out to the street and hailed a cab. When it drew up to the corner he handed her in, and then hopped in beside her.

"What's your address?"

"Go away," Hilary said crossly.

"You're in no condition to go home alone," the captain said. "I can't leave you now."

"You leave me now or I'll have the driver throw you out," Hilary said, the words running together because of the thumping in her head.

"Be sensible," he urged. "You might fall down again when you get out of the cab, and it would be my fault."

"Yeah, be sensible, lady," the driver urged, regarding Hilary with worldly tolerance. He shook his head and turned to the captain. "The ladies didn't ought to drink so much, Mac," he said.

"Oh, all right," Hilary said, glaring at both of them, and she gave the driver her address. "And you can wipe that grin off your face," she muttered indignantly to the captain.

**IT WAS** still pouring when they reached the brownstone house where Hilary shared an apartment with Julie Carson. She should have said good night at the entrance, but somehow she let him guide her up the stairs. But at her own door, she very firmly said, "Thanks for the taxi ride, Captain, and good night."

"Oh, wait a moment," he said good naturedly, "you can't just disappear from my life like this. Isn't there something I can do to make up for the trouble I've caused?"

"Yes," Hilary said coolly, "there is something you can do—get out of my life and stay out. You're bad luck and I have enough without asking for more from you. And, anyway, let's forget the whole thing."

She hadn't heard the door open, but when she turned, Julie stood there framed in the glow from the living room.

"Why, Hilary," she said, "is that any way

to talk to your friend? Sending him out into the rain when he's already wet!"

"I'll say he's wet!"

But Hilary's words had no effect on the captain, because when she looked up at him she saw a pleased, fatuous grin on his handsome face. Probably because of Julie. Most men did look that way when they saw her.

"It wouldn't take long for me to dry off," he said.

"Come on in," Julie said hospitably, "and don't mind Hilary. Her grouchy moods come and go."

Hilary trailed in disconsolately after Julie, her wet coat dripping on to the living-room rug. She watched as Julie solicitously seated the captain before the fire and hurried to get him a drink. When they were comfortably settled, Hilary stowed away her coat.

"Hilary, dear," Julie said, "do you realize you haven't introduced us?"

"How can I?" Hilary said. "I don't know his name."

The captain laughed, as if Hilary were a naughty little girl. "I'm Greg Marsh," he said. "And I'm in town on a ten-day leave."

Julie rounded out the introductions and said, "Well, isn't that nice. Have you been having a good time?"

"No," Greg said, "not very. You see, I don't know anyone in town."

Poor-little-you, Hilary thought, eyeing the captain's lean good looks. I'll bet you have a rough time of it. She sat in a corner of the room while Greg and Julie enjoyed the couch before the fire.

"Well," Julie said cheerfully, "it's a shame Hilary ruined the picture, but after all she did meet you."

"Yes," Hilary said, "the beginning of a beautiful friendship—even if it does cost me my job."

"Oh, Hilary, don't be so tragic!" Julie scolded playfully. Then she added, "I don't know why Hilary has so much trouble holding down a job. Goodness knows she tries hard enough."

"Little Mary Mixup—that's me," Hilary said. She wasn't enjoying Julie's sly little innuendos at all. To be painted as a hard-working little grouch who just couldn't make the grade didn't set well with her pride, and she was beginning to wish she had been nicer to the captain.

"Look," Greg said, "it isn't Hilary's fault. I was the one who caused the accident. Couldn't I go and speak to her boss or something?"

Hilary shuddered. The only evidence Mr.

"Isn't it lovely? Hilary said. "You bet," Greg agreed. "I didn't know New York could be so peaceful and friendly."



Sanborn needed was the ruined painting. "Thanks," she said gloomily, "but it's no use." She hadn't meant to sigh so sadly or play the part of a wilted flower, but her dejection galvanized Greg into action.

"I'm terribly sorry," he said, "but if I can't help you get back your job, at least let me do something for your morale. How about dinner tomorrow night and a show? I'll get seats for a play."

It was impossible to remain angry with Greg when he was so darned attractive and nice. He was genuinely sorry and, anyway, why cry over spilled milk? If she didn't accept Greg's invitation she knew Julie would find a way to take over.

"All right," she said, "thanks. I'd love to go."

"I should think so," Julie said. "I haven't been to the theater in months."

There was an odd silence while Julie's pointed remark took effect. Hilary had to admire the cool way Julie sat there, just waiting to be asked to horn in.

"Why don't we make it a threesome?" Greg said. "A beautiful girl for either arm."

Julie gratefully smiled up at him. "I'd love to accept," she said. "That is if Hilary doesn't mind."

"Not at all," Hilary said. "Since Greg and I weren't properly introduced we ought to have a chaperon."

Greg grinned cheerfully at Hilary. "Sensible little thing, aren't you?" he said.

She flushed but didn't answer as she watched him gather up his raincoat and cap. What a disagreeable little cat he must think her!

"I'll pick you up tomorrow at eight, shall I, and we'll have supper after the show," Greg said.

"We'll be ready, and thanks," Hilary said. She got up to walk to the door with Greg, but Julie stopped her.

"Don't bother, honey," Julie said. "You haven't any shoes on. I'll see him out." She avoided Hilary's eyes as she put her hand on Greg's arm and steered him to the door. She didn't return at once, and Hilary heard them chatting out in the hallway. Once she thought she heard Julie mentioning her name.

When Julie returned Hilary said, "What were you saying about me?"

"Oh, nothing much," Julie said. "I just apologized for you. You were rude, you know."

"Maybe," Hilary said, "but you didn't have to rub it in. Look, Julie, why did you ask yourself along to the theater?"

"Because the captain is handsome, and I'd like to know him better."

"But he asked me," Hilary said to her pointedly.

"I know, honey," Julie said, "but you'd never be able to hang onto him. And what's the use of letting a swell lad like Greg get away?"

"Just why couldn't I interest Greg?" Hilary asked. "He's not the first man to ask me for a date."

Julie stood before the mirror, smoothing her blond hair. "I know he isn't," she said. "but Greg is different."

"You mean you want him yourself?"

"Well, yes," Julie admitted.

She had taken other men away from Hilary, just because she couldn't resist adding another scalp to her collection. Hilary often wondered why she put up with Julie, but they had known each other since they were little girls in the same Midwestern town, and somehow the childhood bond had kept them together. Of course Greg probably didn't have any more than the most casual interest in either of them at present, but Hilary had an unreasonably strong desire to change that. There was something special about the big, easy-going man that made her heart beat in a funny, stepped-up way when she thought of him.

"Julie," she blurted suddenly, "don't go along tomorrow night. Let me have this one date with Greg alone."

"No," Julie said, "why should I?"

"Because—" Hilary began and stopped. There was no use in telling Julie that she wanted Greg to herself.

**HILARY** spent the next day on Fifth Avenue, shopping for an outfit that would really make him sit up and take notice. She found a lovely violet wool with a matching hat, a mad little thing of purple and green feathers and a bit of misty green veiling.

She felt ridiculously pleased with herself that evening as she stood before the mirror in the living room, adjusting her new hat. Julie was still fussing about in the bedroom, even though she had started to dress before Hilary. It always took her hours when she had a date.

But Hilary's elation was short-lived when Julie finally appeared. She was wearing a pale blue gabardine suit and a seal-brown hat that framed her lovely face and shining yellow hair. Beside her, Hilary felt like an over-dressed gypsy.

"Like it?" Julie asked, parading gracefully before a speechless Hilary. She laughed at her roommate's look of dismay. "I thought you would," she said. "And Greg will, too. Men always like tailored suits—and they love this shade of blue."

The doorbell rang then, saving Hilary from answering. "I'll get it," she said.

It wasn't Greg, as she had expected, but a

messenger with a box of flowers and a note.

"Who is it?" Julie called.

"The florist's boy," Hilary answered, hastily ripping open the note. She stood in the little foyer, her back turned to the living room, and read Greg's note. It said:

*Dear Hilary:*

*I'm going to be a little later than I thought.*

*Do you and Julie mind going ahead to the theater? Take a cab and I'll meet you there.*

*Greg Marsh*

On a crazy impulse she hastily slipped the note and the tickets he had enclosed into the pocket of her violet dress, and she carried the florist's box into the living room.

It was Julie who opened the box and lifted out the two corsages. "Umm, camellias," she exclaimed. "How sweet!"

She was standing in front of the mirror again, pinning on her corsage when Hilary thought of a bright idea. It was crazy and idiotic she knew, but something bigger than common sense made her say:

"Julie, I'm out of cigarettes. I think I'll get some before Greg comes."

"But he'll be here any minute!" Julie said.

"You take care of him till I get back. I won't be long."

It was easy to see Julie liked the idea of having Greg to herself for a little while, because she hastily said, "Well, of course, darling, if you want me to."

Julie's cat-gets-mouse tone was enough to salve Hilary's conscience. Without giving it another thought, she picked up her purse and hurried out to the street. She hailed the first empty cab that passed and gave the address of the theater, both tickets still in her pocket.

"Hi," he said as Hilary got out, and she could see the warm look of approval that lighted his eyes. He looked back into the cab and said, "Where's Julie?"

In shaky but unhesitating tones Hilary said, "She couldn't come, Greg. Someone called at the last minute and she made another date."

There couldn't be a more insulting reason for Julie's absence. Greg was silent for a moment and Hilary could see the surprised anger in his eyes. She felt sudden remorse and said, "Oh, it wasn't just anyone. It—it was her fiancé!"

"Her fiancé! I didn't know Julie was engaged. She doesn't wear a ring, does she?"

"No," Hilary said lamely, "she doesn't."

Greg smiled then and said, "Well, there's no point in letting the ticket go to waste. Let's leave it at the box office. I'll have them give it to a Serviceman."

He took one of Hilary's hands and com-

panionably tucked it through his arm. "Come on, honey," he said, and they went into the theater.

THE show was gay and colorful. It left them with a high-spirited feeling of excitement, and when they found themselves out on the street afterward Greg said:

"It's time for dinner now, and some dancing. I know a restaurant you're going to like."

It was a French place with good food and music. They were seated at a cozy little table near the dance floor, and after they had ordered, Greg took one of Hilary's hands and said, "Do you know what? I don't think you're mad at me any more."

She made a wry face. "I was dreadful, wasn't I?"

"No," Greg said, "you were cute. I like a girl with spirit." He was thoughtful for a moment and then said, "You and Julie are so unlike that I'm surprised you're room-mates. What kind of man is she engaged to?"

Julie again! Hilary gulped guiltily. But as long as she had started this business she had better follow through.

"She's engaged to a soldier," she said, groping for inspiration. "He's been overseas and he's just come back."

"Was he away long?" Greg asked.

"For about two years," Hilary fibbed.

"That's surprising," Greg said, "she doesn't seem like the sort of girl who would wait that long. But you never know what people are like just by looking at them."

"No, you don't, do you?" Hilary said feebly.

"She's the kind of girl men admire," Greg said. "No wonder the poor kid was so anxious to go to the theater tonight. But I'm glad her own guy turned up. Waiting can be a lonely business."

"Yes, I'm sure it can," Hilary said.

Greg looked at her searchingly. "Hilary," he said, "would you wait for a man for two years? Could he go off to fight and know that whenever it was over he would find you at home waiting?"

Hilary's heart was thudding wildly. Greg's question was indirect so that she could attach no real significance to it, but no man asked such things unless he were interested.

"Yes," Hilary said softly. "I'd wait if I really loved someone. Forever, if it were necessary."

"I believe you, honey," Greg said, his voice husky, too. "You're so honest—and sweet. Any man could believe in a girl like you."

A guilty, crimson tide flushed Hilary's face. But Greg didn't see it because the orchestra had just started to play again and he got up and held out his arms to her.

She went into them, feeling little and mean. Greg thought she was so honest and good.

But the combination of Greg's arms and the music were irresistible. In a little while Hilary forgot to worry. There were other couples on the floor; boys in uniform and girls in pretty dresses. There was romance all about them, and Hilary could feel that special, stepped-up tempo that belongs to youth and love in war time. The orchestra was playing *As Time Goes By* and she looked up at Greg with shining eyes. A husky-voiced French girl was singing:

*You must remember this  
A kiss is just a kiss, a sigh is just a sigh...*

"It it?" Greg smiled down at Hilary. "Is a kiss just a kiss?" He bent down and touched his lips to hers.

It was a light, gay kiss, but Hilary knew he was feeling the enchantment, too. It made her wish the evening would never end.

**B**UT at two-thirty Greg paid their check. When they were outside he said, "I know it's late, but I don't want to take you home. How about a ride around Central Park in a hansom cab? It's the only way to wind up an evening like this."

A ride in the park did belong to this kind of early autumn night. A full, round moon lighted the path before them, and there was drowsy contentment in the clop-clop of the horse's hooves. They rode in a colorful antiquated rig with a silk-hatted driver perched on the high seat in front of them.

"Isn't it lovely?" Hilary said.

"You bet," Greg agreed. "I didn't know New York could be so peaceful and friendly."  
"New York is a wonderful place to live," Hilary said.

"So is Texas. Have you ever been there?"

Hilary hadn't, and so Greg told her about it. He was a rancher and intended to raise cattle again when the war was over. He told her about the desert and the mountains, and described so poignantly the fields covered with blue bonnets that she felt as if she had lived there, too.

"Oh, Greg, it sounds glorious," she said.

"Do you think you could ever learn to love it as I do?" he said.

Her breath caught with the excitement of the moment and she said, "I think I might, Greg."

His strong young arms reached out for her, and Hilary found her face close to his. Moonlight touched the warmth of his mouth, and the earnestness of his eyes.

"Hilary," he said huskily, "may I kiss you? I don't want to rush you, darling, but there isn't time to do things as you deserve."

For answer, she raised her lips to his. It was all the answer Greg needed, and his arms crushed her to him and he was kissing her as if he never could get enough. One lean hand tangled in the softness of her hair.

Afterward Greg hailed a cab and took Hilary home. He kissed her again at her door and whispered, "I'll call tomorrow—early."

"Yes, darling," she breathed, and carefully fitted her key into the lock.

But before she could turn the doorknob, there was a sharp click and light flooded the foyer. Julie stood in the open doorway, her hair tousled and her new suit wrinkled from lying on the couch.

Accusingly she looked at Hilary and Greg. Her tone held a note of repressed venom as she said, "If you didn't want me to go with you, you might have told me so."

Hilary didn't dare look at Greg, but she heard him say, "I don't know what this is all about, Julie. Would you mind explaining?"

There was an abrupt silence. Hilary looked up then, and she saw the light dawn in Julie's eyes.

"Oh, I see," Julie said carefully, "then you didn't have anything to do with this, Greg. But I might have known. It was all Hilary's idea."

"All what?" Greg asked sharply.

"Ditching me," Julie said. "Hilary went off to meet you and purposely left me behind."

"But what about your fiancé?" Greg said.

"My *what*?" Julie's voice was scornful. "I don't have any fiancé—unless Hilary has invented one for me."

"Is this true?" Greg asked, his eyes begging her to deny it.

She didn't answer, and it was Julie who said, "Hilary hasn't anything to say. But that's not surprising. She's a woman of action, not words."

All the things Greg had said came rushing back: "*You're so honest and sweet. Any man could believe in a girl like you... You can't tell what people are like just by looking at them.*"

I'll say you can't, she thought. How was he to know what a heel she was? Blindly she turned and rushed away. In the bedroom she slammed the door as if she could shut out the humiliating scene in the foyer.

But she couldn't, and it was a long time before the murmur of voices ceased. Presently she heard the door close, and Julie came in. She didn't say anything to Hilary, but just smirked with triumph. "In case you're interested, you're forgiven," she said finally. "Your little brainstorm just put me in solid with Greg. He's sorry you were so crude, but he's promised to make it all up to me."

And he did, during the next five days, because each evening Julie dressed with elaborate care to keep dates with him. She was careful not to bring Greg to the apartment, but she kept Hilary fully posted on their doings.

But there was no sense moping, and one of the first things Hilary did, was to find another job.

**W**ITHIN the week she found herself working out in a Brooklyn war plant. This one wasn't going to be an easy luxury job. She wanted something that would make her feel as if she were really aiding the war effort. When she was given a chance to learn riveting she welcomed it gladly.

It had been a grueling week, and on the third day at work she was asked to stay late.

Dusk had fallen by the time she finally left the plant and she hurried to the subway, intent only on getting home. When the train finally pulled in at her stop, she wearily climbed the station stairs and started up the street. It had started to rain and Hilary was glad she had worn her raincoat. She had her little red umbrella with her, too, and was just struggling to put it up when she saw Julie coming down the street, clinging to the arm of a soldier.

Hilary looked about for a doorway to duck into, because she didn't want to be seen. Julie had told her she had a date with Greg, and Hilary felt she couldn't face seeing them together.

She scurried into a doorway, her umbrella shielding her face. Covertly she glanced out as they hurried by. At first Hilary couldn't see the soldier's face because he had turned away to signal a cab. But when the cab pulled up he turned to help Julie, and Hilary got a better glimpse.

But it wasn't Greg!

Weariness clouded her eyes as she realized this wouldn't make any difference. Julie had lied to her. So what? She stepped away from the doorway and headed for home again.

Their apartment was five blocks from the subway, and she had gone only one. It was beginning to rain harder, and the wind playfully tugged at her umbrella and threatened to turn it inside out. Hilary gripped the handle harder and, head down, struggled along the slippery street.

Suddenly she heard someone call her name. She was so surprised, she turned abruptly and collided with a tall, blond soldier.

It was a repetition of the first night, with Hilary sitting on the wet sidewalk, and Greg apologetically helping her to her feet.

"Hilary, honey," he said, "are you all right? What a clumsy fool I am!"

Her umbrella had blown away, and her purse was a sodden mess on the sidewalk. But none of those things mattered. The only thing she cared about was the fact that Greg's eyes were concerned and friendly, and that his arm was about her shoulders.

"Hello," she said in a little voice, "what are you doing here?"

"I came to see you," he said.

"But why? I didn't think you'd ever want to see me again."

"Julie called me. She told me she was sorry about the whole thing, but she'd probably had it coming to her for a long time. She also told me I was a half-witted dope for taking it seriously. That I ought to be proud to have a girl like you bother about me."

"She did?" Hilary said. "Julie said that?"

"Sure," Greg said gently, "and she was right. She's not a bad egg."

"No," Hilary said wonderingly. "I guess we wouldn't have stuck together this long if we didn't really like each other."

"I thought a lot about that evening we had together," he said, "and the ride in the park afterward."

"Me, too," Hilary said breathlessly.

"I kissed you that night, and I fell in love with you, too." He put his arms around her and added, "I want to kiss you again, Hilary. Now."

Rain splashed down, leaving glistening drops on their hair and faces, but they were unaware of it.

Finally Hilary said, "I only double-crossed Julie because I wanted to get to know you better. I didn't mean to be dishonest."

"It doesn't matter," Greg said. "I followed you home for the same reason. I couldn't let you get away that night without getting to know you first. You were so cute and sassy. My damn fool pride has almost driven me crazy since I last saw you."

Suddenly they laughed, standing there in the rain. Nothing mattered any more, except that they were together.

They heard someone cough discreetly behind them, and Hilary turned. It was a big, red-faced cop. He was smiling broadly and he held her umbrella before him.

"Is this yours, lady?" he asked.

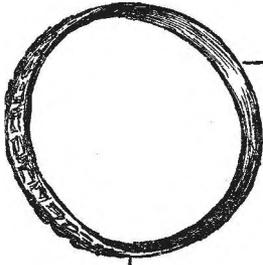
"Oh, yes," Hilary said. "Thanks."

Greg smiled and said, "I guess we need it, officer."

The officer grinned back at him. "I don't see why, Captain. When I was your age and in love, I didn't know enough to come in out of the rain, either."

He walked away, and Hilary tucked her hand through Greg's arm.

He took her hand in his, and arm in arm they hurried down the street.



# Dress Rehearsal For Marriage

By LEE LYONS

*Even a career girl has to learn  
that you can't draw up a contract  
for love.*





"The window seat is different," he added, "and the people are different. But the cocktails are the same. You and I are the same."

**W**HEN Shelly was very young, she had been taken to a birthday party for one of her schoolmates. She gave the little girl the present her mother had chosen, and watched while the package was opened, revealing a large, organdy-dressed baby doll. Immediately, she had snatched it back, crying, "She can't have it! She can't have it! It's the doll you were going to buy for me!"

Mrs. Prentiss had taken the doll from her and given it back to the other little girl. "For shame, Shelly," she had said quietly, "Louisa's your best friend. You must learn that the nicest thing you can give is that which you prize most highly. And once given, child, a gift must never be taken back . . ."

The seven-year old Shelly hadn't understood very well then, but she remembered that

scene now as clearly as if it were only yesterday. She realized with a start that one week from this very moment Brett Harlow, the man she loved, would be walking down the aisle at St. Matthew's with Louisa Warren, who was still her best friend . . .

It was two-thirty on a Saturday afternoon in late September and Shelly had come to the office to lay out a new campaign for Fashion-line Frocks.

She wasn't conscious of it, but she was following another of her New England mother's maxims: "When your mind is troubled, child, set it to work at something else." Only it wasn't her mind that was troubled; it was her heart.

She swung her yellow leather chair around and stared out of the window.

She had met Brett during the late summer, and he'd still been wearing his grays. He'd just returned from a cruise, and his face was so wind-burned that the first thing she noticed about him were his eyes that were so startlingly blue against the bronze of his skin.

That had been at Winnie Spear's cocktail party. No one had introduced them; they had just sort of drifted together and started talking. He brought her a cocktail with a tiny onion in it and they sat down on one of the wide window seats, nearly hidden by the heavy drapes. And she'd found herself forgetting to be a suave New York business woman. She found herself talking about the books she loved, modern painting and classical music. "That smooth getup of yours doesn't fool me one bit!" He told her gaily, "You're just a small-town girl thrilled to death with New York!"

She had laughed back at him and nodded. But the next day, when he came to the agency to take her to lunch, he had looked around in surprise at her beautifully-appointed office. He had waited with that slightly quizzical look on his face while she finished dictating to her secretary.

"Not such a naïve small-town girl, after all," he said to her over luncheon.

And suddenly, desperately, she wanted to make him believe that she'd acquired none of the false hardness or of the city veneer.

He looked around at the girls at Winnie Spears' party and said, "Up to their ears in careers, every mother's daughter of 'em! Each one a calculating little machine, turning on her smiles and charm where it will do the most good."

She had known then that Brett was the type of male creature who likes his women unsophisticated and not too self-reliant. By his own admission, he'd had enough of the other kind.

And so she said, "Not so naïve as I was a few ago, but still small-town, still excited with New York. Some day, though, I'll be able to give all this up without a bit of regret and settle down in a rose-covered cottage!"

"Honest!" she added quickly when she saw his smile, "I'm not sneering. I really do mean it."

It had been rather obvious, that little speech. But she hadn't cared. She had to make sure Brett understood about her.

The next three weeks would always be a rosy haze of memories for her. Of gay, laughing dates with Brett, of a kiss that started out gently and ended breathlessly, of half-spoken promises . . .

He told her about his work as an engineer before joining the Navy. He griped a little because they had given him a desk job in New

York instead of putting him on a ship. And she loved him for it.

She told him about Stoneridge, the Vermont town where she was born. She told him about her five wonderful years in New York, and her job at Ainslee's Agency. But because she'd been schooled too long in the New England tradition of reserve, there was something else she couldn't tell him. She could only hope that her eyes—and her lips, that one time he'd kissed her—would tell him for her.

Twice, she had broken a date with him because of the office. It had worried her . . . knowing as she did that he had little use for career women. But he had seemed to understand.

Then, Louisa came to New York. Louisa was her best friend. She had never questioned their relationship; it was something they had grown up with. Their mothers had been friends before them in Stoneridge. Louisa came to look for a job and it was the most natural thing in the world for her to stay with Shelly. It was the most natural thing in the world for Brett to take her out and show her some of the sights of New York on those evenings when Shelly had to work late at the office.

Louisa never pretended to any sophistication. She was always wide-eyed and eager, as feminine as the frills she wore.

"Show her Chinatown and Grant's Tomb and Radio City," Shelly told Brett, laughing over the phone, "She's a perfect tourist. Everything impresses her."

It was true. Everything impressed Louisa—including Brett.

"Shelly, wherever did you find him?" she asked excitedly, when she came home that evening, "He's wonderful! So worldly, and yet so . . . so little-boyish." And she added, "You've always been so much more clever than I, Shelly, dear. First you land that wonderful job, and then a guy like Brett!" She was looking in the mirror as she spoke, staring rather speculatively, Shelly thought, at her own blond beauty, and then at Shelly's darker, less spectacular reflection in the glass.

"I haven't landed him yet," Shelly laughed.

**S**HE glanced at her watch. She'd been sitting here for an hour and her mind was still a blank, blank except for all these memories that crowded in on her . . .

"I haven't landed him yet." She had laughed when she said it, because she'd been so confident. She was still confident when Louisa said to her one evening, "I've been thinking it over, Shelly, and I've decided not to look for a job after all. I think I'll just do some volunteer war work, instead. Brett says I'm not the career type."

"What," Shelly had asked, grinning, "is the career-woman type, Louisa?"

"Well, you for instance," Louisa smiled her lovely smile, "You're so capable and—and self-sufficient. I've told Brett all about the way you used to manage things at home after your darling mother died, and how you've always sort of looked out for me."

Then, for the first time, a small thread of doubt crept into Shelly's mind.

Louisa, she knew, despite her childlike face and dainty figure, had always been quite capable of looking out for Louisa.

But it had happened during the big Lanning Dress campaign and she didn't have time to let that small doubt worry her. She didn't see Brett very much during those two weeks, and when she did, she hardly noticed any difference in his attitude. Theirs had always been a gay, casual sort of relationship. She hardly noticed until the whole thing was over and she had all the time in the world—a whole life of time—to look back over those days, as she was looking back now . . .

And now, as it always did, her mind carried her to that summer night when she'd come home late to find Brett and Louisa together. Louisa's wheat-gold head close against Brett's dark one, Louisa's rose-ripe mouth touching Brett's.

And then—Brett's flushed embarrassment. His awkward male attempt at smoothing over a tense situation. Louisa's quick silencing of his explanation and her own sobbing explanation after he left.

She loved him, Louisa had cried, she couldn't help it. She had tried not to—truly she had. And Brett loved her, too. Shelly mustn't mind, she pleaded. After all, Shelly thought of him only as a good friend. Brett had told her so . . .

A sleepless, miserable night, then, for Shelly. And Brett's call the next day. His insistence that they lunch together. Her own cool laughter over lunch at his apologies. Her own voice, sounding distant and strange in her ears as she told him it was quite all right, really, there was no need for him to feel badly about it. They were, after all, "only good friends." She was the self-contained career girl again, the girl who had been taught, but had nearly forgotten that it's never smart to let down emotional barriers.

Brett had looked at her strangely as she spoke, but her eyes had been too blinded to try to analyze that look. He called her again, the next day. And again, she told him that he "had her blessings," and no, she was sorry, but she really couldn't dine with him that evening.

"Really, Brett, I don't know why you're making such a fuss. You don't owe me anything, you know . . ."

He hadn't called again.

Shelly ground out her cigarette. She looked down at the pages before her. "This will never do, my girl," she said aloud, "This will never, never do!"

For the next few hours, she worked quickly, sketching layouts, scribbling down copy. A few days later, the Fashionline campaign was okayed. The same day, she started work on a series of Women-in-War advertisements. If any of her friends noticed that she looked peaked, and didn't laugh as much as usual, they put it down to overwork.

LOUISA called her a few days before the wedding, bemoaning the fact that she couldn't find an apartment.

"Darling," she wailed, "I've been having a simply dreadful time. But . . ." she gave a wisp of a sigh, "as a war bride I guess I just can't expect all the advantages."

"What are you talking about?" Shelly asked.

"Apartment hunting! It's absolutely impossible to find a decent place in this town. I've combed the city. Finally, I had to decide we'd stay on in Brett's old place—stuffy as it is."

Shelly thought Brett's bachelor apartment was charming and comfortable, but she said nothing.

"Brett has given me a key," Louisa continued, "and I've been fixing the place up during the day while he's at the office." She laughed gaily, "Brett thought I ought to wait until after the wedding, but I told him this way he could get used to it quicker!" She laughed again. "It's sort of a dress rehearsal for marriage. I . . . I've even stayed a couple of nights and fixed his dinner for him. You see, Shelly, this way we're learning all about each other and . . . and the adjustment won't be so hard later."

"I think it's a swell idea," Shelly said. But she couldn't help feeling there was something a little indecent in Louisa's haste to make herself so completely a part of Brett's life.

"Oh, I'm glad, Shelly! Now look, I want you to come have dinner with us tomorrow evening at our—I mean Brett's apartment. Please do," she pleaded when Shelly started to protest, "It's going to be *your* party, really."

"My party?"

"Why yes, darling. After all, I—we both owe you a great deal. . ."

Ouch! Shelly thought.

"And," Louisa continued, "there's someone coming whom I *specially* want you to meet!"

"Who?"

"No fair asking questions! Wait 'til you

see him. She wouldn't say anything more.

Oh my gosh, Shelly thought after she'd hung up, she's already trying to matchmake!

When Shelly went over the next night she had to admit that Louisa had certainly done wonders with Brett's three-room bachelor apartment. Striped chintz covered the worn leather easy chairs, and flower-splotted drapes picked up the tones of the newly-painted walls. Old rose and silver-green was the color scheme. They were Louisa's favorite colors.

Shelly noticed with a queer little pang that there was nothing left of Brett in this room. And Brett himself looked oddly ill at ease, standing in front of the fireplace where a modern decor of pastel-tinted shells replaced the huge logs.

"Louisa, I'd never have recognized it!" she said truthfully. "You've really done a job on this old place."

"It wasn't very easy," Louisa smiled complacently, "Brett was difficult about removing some of his precious clutter."

"Louisa found the 'precious clutter' of my bachelor days in poor taste, I'm afraid," Brett said drily.

A few minutes later, the doorbell rang and Louisa ushered in a husky young Navy lieutenant.

"Shelly dear, I want you to meet Lieutenant Mike Bailey. He works with Brett." Then, turning to the boy, she said, "And *this* is Shelly Prentiss." She paused and added dramatically, "Well, Mike, did I exaggerate?"

Lieutenant Bailey flushed and mumbled something polite as he took Shelly's hand. His eyes, which had been openly admiring, immediately became guarded. Shelly squirmed inwardly. A very obvious introduction, that.

The evening was not a success. Louisa, in her sweet fluttery way, made Shelly feel as though she were being bounced like a rubber ball against the indifferent chest of Mike Bailey. And when she wasn't extolling Shelly's virtues, Louisa was suggesting in her light voice that Brett shouldn't have a second cup of coffee because he always complained about it keeping him awake nights.

Brett, aside from navy talk with Lieutenant Bailey, had little to say.

After dinner, the four of them sat around listening to Brett's really fine collection of records. It was about nine o'clock when Louisa got up suddenly and said, "Brett darling, how about you and I running down to the drug store for some ice cream?" She turned and put her arm around Shelly in an almost motherly fashion. "I'm sure," she said meaningly, "that Mike won't mind spending a few minutes alone and unchaperoned with our Shelly."

Shelly blushed a deep, painful red. Before

Mike could say anything, Brett walked across to the telephone, his eyes cold and angry.

"That won't be necessary, darling," he said in an even voice, "I'll call up and ask them to deliver the stuff."

Louisa's face had the disappointment of a small, hurt child's. "Really Brett . . ." she started to say in an injured tone, then seeing the expression on his face, she caught herself and added, "Very well, ole lazybones, call up if you like!"

When Shelly finally arrived home, after skillfully outmaneuvering Louisa's arrangements for her transportation via Lieutenant Bailey, she didn't know whether to burst into laughter or have herself a good cry.

And then she recalled the look of distaste on Brett's face, his neat puncturing of Louisa's plan that would have given Shelly and the lieutenant a ghastly half hour alone together.

"Thank you, Brett," she whispered softly, "for not being party to Louisa's matchmaking schemes."

**B**RETT called her at the office the next morning.

"Shelly," he said, "I don't know how to apologize to you for last night. Louisa was outrageous . . ."

"Forget it," she laughed. "Louisa meant well. She just isn't very subtle." And then, the startling new thought occurred to her that perhaps Louisa was very subtle, indeed. She had managed to make Shelly appear as a rather pathetic, hard-up spinster by the simple ruse of denying it too loudly. But for whose benefit had she done it? Surely, not Mike Bailey's!

Shelly put this new thought from her swiftly. No, that was ridiculous! Louisa had gotten her man, why should she rub salt into the wound in Shelly's heart? No, it was better to believe that she had acted out of misplaced kindness.

"You might," she said into the phone, "explain to your friend that I'm definitely not in the market for a husband!"

"I know . . ." Brett said, and added, "Look Shelly, why don't you have lunch with me today? It . . . would be nice talking to you."

She took a long time answering. It would be hard, being alone with Brett again and not letting him know by word or gesture what she was feeling in her heart.

"Hey! Are you still there?"

Shelly laughed. "I was looking through my appointment book. Okay, pick me up at one." She might as well get used to the idea of seeing Brett—alone or otherwise.

The luncheon went off better than she had expected. She was careful to maintain her new rôle—that of cool, friendly detachment. They spoke of many things. Oddly, never of

Louisa. It was almost, Shelly thought wistfully, like their dates together, except Brett was another woman's fiancé now. And she never let herself forget it . . .

The day before the wedding Louisa called Shelly. Her voice sounded high and rather strained, "Well," she said lightly—too lightly, "You can take your maid-of-honor gown back to the shop, Shelly."

"Louisa! Whatever do you mean?"

Louisa's laugh had a catch in it. "Oh, don't get upset, Shelly darling. The wedding is coming off as planned—but in City Hall! High noon in City Hall!"

"What's happened, Louisa?"

"Why, I thought you surely knew." There was something strange about Louisa's voice, "Brett's been ordered to the West Coast. He has no idea how long they'll keep him there. We won't have time for a real wedding."

"No," Shelly said slowly, "Of course I didn't know. I'm so sorry, Louisa. Will you go out with him?"

There was a second's pause, "Well—not right away. He's going to find out how long they'll keep him there. Oh dear, it does seem so unfair! I did want a big wedding!"

"Never mind, darling," Shelly said, "you told me once yourself, a war bride can't expect *all* the advantages. . . ." *I'd get married in a pair of dungarees, if I could have Brett!* she was thinking.

"Oh, I'm not complaining," Louisa said quickly. "In fact, just to show him I don't mind a single bit, I'm going to have a farewell party for him!" She laughed, "I know it's highly irregular, the bride giving the farewell party, but we won't have time for a reception *after* the ceremony, so we'll have this shindig the night before instead. You'll come, won't you Shelly?"

After she hung up, Shelly sat for a long time staring reflectively at the phone. So Brett was leaving. This was, after all, the best thing that could happen. Yes, this was certainly the best thing that could happen. Then why did she feel so miserably empty now? Why did she feel this ridiculous sense of panic as though she was losing something precious—something she never could have, anyway . . .

**A**S WAS her usual custom, Shelly worked late at the office the day of the party. She had worn the black faille suit with the frilly blouse because she knew there wouldn't be time to go home before going on to Brett's place.

"Shelly!" Louisa cried as she opened the door. She was wearing a long, full-skirted dinner dress and her shining hair was piled high on her head, giving her the whimsical appearance of a little girl trying to play "grown-up." Her face was flushed and her eyes unusually bright.

She dragged Shelly into the living room without giving her a chance to take off her hat, and started introducing her to the dozen or more guests.

"This," she said, "is Shelly Prentiss. If it hadn't been for her, I would never have met Brett."

And to another group: "Darling Shelly has always been a sort of elder sister to me. We've known each other forever!"

Shelly remembered with amusement that Louisa was three weeks her junior. She felt suddenly uncomfortably conscious of her business suit, of her casual beret and slapped-on makeup. Louisa might have warned her that everyone would be dressed. Looking around for a familiar face she wondered where Louisa found all these people. Then she saw Brett. He was standing off in a corner, holding a glass in his hand and watching her own progress across the length of the room. When their eyes met, he smiled and came toward her.

"Hello, Shelly," he said, "Swell of you to come." Then to Louisa: "Why don't you fix the gang another drink, Louisa?"

"I thought you were doing that, darling," when she looked up at him her topaz-colored eyes didn't quite meet his. "But—all right if you want me to . . ." and she went off toward the miniature bar set up in the foyer.

"Thanks, Brett," Shelly smiled at him gratefully. "Louisa has a knack for making me feel like a venerable old aunt."

"Louisa has a knack for many things."

She was surprised at the tone of his voice, but before she could say anything, he was steering her across the room to the wide window seat, and sitting her down very firmly. "You say here," he said. "I'll fix your drink, myself."

He came back a few minutes later carrying two cocktails with a tiny onion in the bottom of each. He handed her one and sat down beside her.

"Remember, Shelly?" he asked softly as he raised his glass.

Shelly glanced away quickly. This wasn't fair, not a bit. "Of course," she managed.

"The window seat is different," he added, "and the party guests are different. But the drinks are the same. You and I are the same."

---

## War Bonds Now Mean Victory to Come

Shelly stared down into her glass. Did Brett realize what he was saying? When she glanced up she noticed that his mouth was smiling but his eyes were intent and serious.

She raised her glass and clinked it against his. "To a speedy return, Lieutenant," she said, "I'm sorry about the kink in your wedding plans. Louisa will certainly miss you."

"Will she?" he asked quietly. "And what about you, Shelly? Will you miss me?"

"Brett! And Shelly darling. That's not fair, going off into corners. This is your party, Brett. Besides, you're keeping Shelly from meeting people."

Louisa was standing over them, one small hand curled around the stem of a cocktail glass. She swayed slightly. Good heavens, Shelly thought, she can't be tight!

"Perhaps Shelly doesn't want to meet any more people," Brett said, unsmiling. "Besides, this is really *your* party, isn't it? I don't know half this gang."

"Why, Brett Harlow, what a horrid thing to say! After I went to all this trouble. You . . . you could at least *pretend* you're pleased!" She looked as though she were about to cry. "And," she added, "I'm sure whatever you have to say to Shelly doesn't have to be said in dark corners!"

Shelly felt the color rise in her face, but she managed a laugh. "Run along and be a good host, Brett," she said. "Aunt Shelly can take care of herself."

She put down the partly-filled glass and made her way into the bedroom. She took off her hat and stared at her own reflection in the mirror.

For the first time, she felt an angry tide of bitterness welling up in her: *Ever since I've known her, it's been like this!* she thought. *Louisa, in her charming, helpless way, has always managed to take everything I've ever wanted away from me!*

She remembered her mother saying, "Louisa's your best friend, Shelly . . . the nicest thing you can give is that which you prize most highly." Well, Louisa had that which Shelly prized most highly. But she wasn't satisfied, it seemed she must never let Shelly forget it.

**T**HE door opened, and Louisa came into the room. "I was looking for you, Shelly," she said.

"I just came in to do a few repairs," Shelly told her quietly.

"I thought you'd like to know," Louisa said, "There's not going to be any wedding."

When she spoke, enunciating each word too distinctly, Shelly realized that Louisa should never drink cocktails. "No," she continued, "none at all." As she said it, her face seemed to crumple and her eyes widened as though

only now did she believe her own words.

Shelly stared at her in amazement. "No church wedding, you mean, Louisa," she said gently, "you're to be married at City Hall."

"No! I said we're not going to be married at all! This . . . this is *really* a farewell party. Brett's suggestion—carry it off all friendly and it would be less painful!" She laughed hysterically. "Of course you, dear Shelly, know nothing about it!"

"What do you mean, Louisa?"

"Did you really think you could keep your cozy little luncheon dates a secret? Don't you think I know what you've been up to? You've been crazy-jealous ever since I took Brett away from you!"

"Louisa, you've had too many cocktails," Shelly said very quietly.

"Not so drunk that I don't know what I'm saying. You're . . . you're still in love with him, aren't you? *Aren't you?*"

"Yes," Shelly heard herself answering, "I'm still in love with him."

Then, to her astonishment, Louisa put her face down into her hands and began to sob.

"Well, you can have him, do you hear? I don't want to see him again!"

"Louisa you don't know what you're saying," Shelly whispered. "You've quarreled, perhaps, but Brett's still in love with *you*."

"Oh, no he isn't! He never was—really. I made him *think* he was. I only wanted to see if I could take him away from you!"

Shelly's face was very white, but she said nothing as Louisa's voice hurried on. "Even back home," she sobbed, "you always had everything I wanted! You were smart and— and everybody liked you. When you went to New York everyone talked about how successful you were. And I . . ." the weeping started all over again, "I couldn't even hold a job as a stenographer in Ben Walling's law office! So I decided to go to New York, too. And you introduced me to Brett and I knew right away how it was with you two."

She raised her head and laughed triumphantly, "That's one thing I can do better than you, Shelly Prentiss, judge men. And Brett's the kind of man who likes his women soft. So I made him think that all you cared about was a career. And knowing you, I figured you'd be much too proud to try and get him back once I told you it was I he loved!"

"Why are you telling me this now, Louisa?"

"Because . . . because it doesn't matter now. I'm going home. I don't . . . don't want Brett any more. Besides, I . . . guess I'm sorry I made such a mess of things."

Shelly felt as though a thousand tiny bombshells were exploding in her brain. All these years, Louisa Warren, beautiful golden-haired Louisa had been the one who was jealous—

Louisa who was in reality the "have-not!"

She got up and walked over to the mirror again. Picking up her felt beret she perched it carefully on top of her pompadour. She powdered her nose and remade her mouth. And all the time, she was thinking: *She doesn't love him. She doesn't love Brett!*

She opened the bedroom door and immediately she could hear the voices and laughter coming from the other room. She hesitated, and then turned back. "Your friends will wonder what's happened to you," she said gently. But Louisa was already standing in front of the mirror, powdering her tear-streaked face.

Shelly tiptoed down the hall and unlatched the front door. Someone reached over from behind and opened it for her.

It was Brett. He pushed her into the outer hall and taking her arm, marched her toward the self-service elevator. With mock ceremony he handed her in, pressed the button marked "M" and then, placing his hands on her shoulders drew her to him. His kiss was gentle, but very, very firm. She started to pull away, but, somehow, her arms found their way about his neck, instead.

They didn't know when they finally separated, how long the little elevator had been standing there patiently on the main floor.

For a moment longer, Brett held her, his blue eyes looking down into hers. "That's what I had to know, Shelly," he said.

There was no need for her to ask him what he meant. All her love, all her loneliness had been expressed in that kiss.

He shook her gently. "Shelly, baby!" he

said, "What a proud little fool you are! You've nearly let all of us mess up our lives because you thought you had to bow out gracefully. You actually convinced me that as far as you were concerned, I didn't stand a chance! I had to accidentally eavesdrop tonight to find out something I should have known . . ."

Still, she couldn't find the words to answer him.

"I tried to tell you how it was," Bret continued, "But all I got was your damnably cool acceptance of the whole thing. That night you walked in on us. . . I had kissed her because she started to cry. She said she loved me. And you, my dear. . ." he stopped and smiled down at her, "you never gave me the chance to say those same words to you. Your coldness infuriated me, Shelly. And Louisa seemed so helpless and—well, vulnerable." He shrugged his shoulders and laughed drily, "Helplessness, I have discovered, is a fine art with her. She's already tried in her own sweet way to remake me as effectively as she has remade my apartment!"

"Brett," Shelly said, "You . . . you don't really think I'm a hard-shelled female . . . 'a calculating little machine?'"

Brett put his hand to his head. "Oh, God," he said, "women! Listen, Shelly, I'm leaving day after tomorrow. I'm going farther than the West Coast. Darling, can you make a career of waiting for me?"

"I'll do better than that!" She was laughing, with the tears bright in her eyes, "As of tomorrow, one Shelly Prentiss, account executive, will be hoarding her pay checks for a post-war version of a rose-covered cottage!"

THE END

## Mail-Order Bride

by Doris Knight

When Gail Marlow stepped out of the Brazilian river boat, she walked into the arms of Brett Chandler—the man whose wedding she had come to stop. Here is a story of a girl who undertook a daring masquerade to save the son of her employer from a mail-order bride. Caught in a web of tropical emotions, two people found their hate change to love as they faced together the dangers of the jungle and the intrigue of their enemies. It's in the big November issue



along with

novelettes by Lucinda Baker, Hope Campbell, Julie Paine and other favorites, as well as shorts by Ruth McCaslin, Viola Cornett, Kathleen Esmond, etc.

15¢

THE BEST IN LOVE STORIES

Romance

Now on sale

# Back From Beyond

By HOPE CAMPBELL



"I'M NUTTY as a fruitcake," Bidley Wain told her image in the washroom mirror, but without the slightest conviction.

The image simply smiled back, with one slightly raised eyebrow. It didn't believe a word of it.

"Look at this sensibly," Bidley argued desperately. "He's dead and I'm alive, but I talked to him yesterday. When you start doing things like that, you're not only on the skids, you've hit bottom. Or else I'm dead, too, and no one's told me yet. But that's a little hard to believe."

The image refused to be impressed. It was a very pretty girl, pink-cheeked, blue-eyed, black-haired, typically Irish, but with a lithe, slender body that showed the effects of two generations of California sunshine. The WAC uniform became it and, after two years in G.I., Bidley sometimes wondered if she ever would feel quite natural again in anything else.

"Maybe it's the Irish in me. Maybe I have second sight and see ghosts," Bidley offered hopefully.

The image said, in effect, "You're boring me."

"All right. All right—" Bidley broke off impatiently. "But just the same I've got troubles, lots of troubles. Be like that if you want to, but I have."

Remembering not to favor the ankle which had been broken by that shell blast in Italy, Bidley left the washroom and strode briskly along the corridors of the Army hospital. In one of those corridors, she had run into him yesterday.



*Bidley discovered that there's only room for one in a haunted heart.*

Biddy had looked into Whit's bronzed face and said, "Hm—when did you get that other bar, Captain, my Captain?"



**T**HE whole thing had been so strange, and yet so natural. Biddy knew perfectly well that Whit Williams had been killed in the same shell blast that had broken her ankle on the beachhead. The stretcher-bearers who picked her up had not even bothered to take Whit back to the hospital because he had caught a piece of shell at the base of his skull.

That ankle and the shock of the whole thing had eventually resulted in Biddy's being ordered back home for duty. But the doctors had assured her there had been no mental shock. Doctors didn't always know, Biddy decided. Because the queer thing about that meeting had been its complete naturalness.

She had been running an errand for her boss, Major Binn, which took her into a part of the enormous hospital which was unknown territory for her. She began to suspect she was lost when she saw the balcony at the end of a corridor and the tall figure of an officer idling in the sun. Biddy had noticed the broad shoulders and smooth red-blond head with no sense of familiarity, until he turned in answer to her question as to where she'd find room 1160.

Then with no sense of shock or even surprise, Biddy had looked into Whit's bronzed face, smiled and said, "Hm, when did you get that other bar, Captain, my Captain?"

Whit had grinned. He hadn't seemed surprised, either. "Oh, I just sort of acquired it. Seems there are too many lieutenants in the Army."

"On you, it's becoming. Been around here long?"

"Awhile. And how's with you?"

Still with no sense of impossibility, but only with a wonderful glad realization that it had been so long since she saw Whit and now they were together again, Biddy had cried, "Whit, it's so good to see you again. It's so awfully good. I can't tell you."

Whit chuckled, his gray eyes twinkling. "Still got a crush on the lieutenant, Corporal, even if he's a captain now?"

"I adore you. I'm mad about the man," Biddy swore.

Just how the joke had started, Biddy couldn't remember, but it had been one of their constant jokes back there on the beachhead where they snatched at anything they could laugh at and were grateful for it. She was pursuing Whit madly, the teasing ran. She loved him to desperation, and he pretended that he lived in constant terror of her advances. Whit went around begging people to protect him from Biddy and, as a matter of fact, spending whatever few spare moments he could get with her. They had been together when that shell hit and, when she regained consciousness at the hospital, they

had told Biddy about Whit as gently as possible. He had seen it coming and knocked her down, flinging himself across her to try to protect her, and he had been dead when help reached them. But Biddy remembered none of that.

She was only aware of Whit's deep drawl saying, "You're incorrigible, Corporal, but it's only fair to tell you that I like shy modest little girls. I'm a timid little fellow myself and I want nothing to do with bold hussies."

And they both laughed together at the idea of Whit's swaggering six feet of complete self-confidence being either timid or little. They always laughed at that point, just as they always repeated almost the same conversation each time they met.

"Dodge all you like, but I'll get you," Biddy threatened laughingly. "I'll get you in the end!"

"I'm running. I'm running like crazy."

Just at that point, to show how hard he was running away, Whit always kissed Biddy. He did now, and it was just like all the other kisses, his strong hands almost circling her slender waist and his lips warm and hard against hers. Biddy kissed him back, frankly and fondly and lingeringly. Then they smiled into each other's eyes for a long moment.

"You aggressive hussy," Whit said affectionately and gave her a teasing spank. "Room eleven hundred and sixty down the corridor to the left. I'll be seeing you."

Perfectly happy and humming under her breath, Biddy turned down the corridor to the left.

And it wasn't until Biddy was back in the office, where Major Blinn, Biddy and two other WACs labored over seemingly endless admittance and discharge records, that the truth hit her.

**B**IDDY had a date with Dan Meredith that evening, as she did at least three nights a week. Dan was practically any girl's dream man, the soundest possible husband material, steady-going, sweet and successful. That he was handsome too, in a dark clean-cut way, was just the frosting on the cake. Biddy knew she was the luckiest girl on earth to have Dan seriously interested in her and tried not to be disturbed by the differences in their dispositions. Dan was apt to be impatient with anything that wasn't a matter of fact as his own job of production manager in a small parts plant. Biddy had more than a touch of Irish gaiety and whimsy and fantasy. But she always assured herself that those things could be worked out. People who were not alike often complimented each other very happily.

Usually Biddy tried not to bother Dan with anything he would consider just odd little

womanly whimsies, but tonight she was so upset she had to tell him what had happened. Even when he was most impatient with her, Dan, at least, listened courteously.

"Daydream," Dan said briskly when Bid-  
dy had finished. "You say you just repeated  
the same things you always said? An un-  
usually vivid, remembering daydream, that's  
all. Perhaps you're working too hard."

Considering how Dan felt about her, Bid-  
dy didn't think she should mention that kiss. But  
she did insist stubbornly, "He wasn't dim  
and misty, in a dark corner, or anything like  
that. I saw him in full sunlight. And it  
wasn't exactly the same. He was a captain."

Dan smiled indulgently, a smile that  
crinkled his dark, square face and lit sparks  
in his hard brown eyes. "Perhaps all good  
lieutenants become captains when they die,"  
he said lightly, brushing the matter aside,  
and went on to talk of what that fool assistant  
of his had done to mess things up this time.

Biddy knew that was not lack of considera-  
tion on Dan's part. He simply did not be-  
lieve in encouraging any broodings about the  
things she had seen in Italy, and he was  
quite right.

Now, as Biddy stepped out of the wash-  
room and walked down the corridor, she was  
suddenly tense. Once again she was taking  
some papers to room 1160. If she saw the  
balcony again, she didn't quite know what  
she would do. Because then nothing could  
convince her that the incident yesterday had  
been merely an unusually vivid remembering  
daydream.

But, as before, Biddy lost her way and had  
to stop and get directions from a nurse at  
one of the desks in the hall. This time the  
way was different. There was no balcony  
and no turn to the left.

Coming back, Biddy stopped again at the  
desk and asked, conscious that her face must  
be unusually white, "Is that the only way to  
room eleven hundred and sixty? I thought I  
passed a balcony and took a turn to the left  
the other day."

The nurse looked at her oddly, but her  
voice was completely convincing. "Of course  
it's the only way. You know how this build-  
ing is laid out. How else would you get  
there?"

"No other way," she had to admit, but her  
voice sounded strange in her own ears.

Biddy's hands were still shaking when she  
reached her desk. She was sure now. She  
wasn't just kidding with her image in the  
mirror, putting off the moment when she  
would know. She had walked down a cor-  
ridor that didn't exist, in this squarely laid  
out building, to meet a man who was dead in  
Italy. She was stark, raving mad, only they  
called it battle shock these days.

Biddy knew she should talk to Major  
Blinn. It was her duty as a good soldier to  
confess there was something seriously wrong  
with her. But she put off the talk. If the  
delusion never repeated itself, there was no  
use making trouble about it.

**B**IDDY had trouble getting to sleep that  
night. She was restless and over-alert,  
and finally dozed off in tense, restless snatches  
to wake with sudden, frightened starts. Fi-  
nally she called Dan, needing the sound of  
a human voice, and chatted of nothing, and  
knew when she hung up that he wondered  
why she had called. At last, when sleep  
really came, it was heavy and unnaturally  
deep. Out of that sleep, the telephone aroused  
her.

She groped for it with her left hand and  
answered sleepily, twice because the con-  
nection seemed far away and very poor.

"Hello. Hello," the other end repeated.  
"Biddy, it's Whit. Do you hear me? I just  
wanted to tell you not to worry about me.  
I'm all right. Don't worry about yourself,  
either. These things happen. There'll come  
a time when you can pursue me like mad  
again."

Biddy was so heavily drugged with sleep  
that when the connection broke, she simply  
hung up and dropped back on the pillow. But  
in the morning, the full realization of it struck  
her the minute she awakened. She stared at  
the telephone with horrified dilating eyes that  
grew even wider a second later. The re-  
ceiver was hung on crookedly. She must  
have done that after she talked to Dan. No  
real call could have come through.

Biddy, for the first and only time in her  
life, went completely to pieces then. She  
simply shook all over quite uncontrollably and  
the blood thundered in her ears and her teeth  
chattered as icy, nervous chills shook her. It  
was not that she was afraid of ghosts, par-  
ticularly Whit's ghost. Part of it was an  
instinctive terror of insanity. Part of it was  
the old hereditary superstitions that were  
deep in her blood.

The Irish were supposed to have intuitions  
and knowledge that stretched a little past the  
edges of the real world. If that were so, the  
man she loved had twice promised they would  
be together again, and he was dead. That  
could be one of those death premonitions.

At that point, Biddy's sense of humor and  
reality asserted itself. She was scaring her-  
self sick with a ghost story and that seemed  
a little silly even to her.

So, with a hard jauntiness that did her  
good, even if it were assumed, Biddy told her-  
self that if she were suffering from battle  
shock, then that was that. And like any old  
soldier, she would simply pass the buck and

her little troubles right on to her superior officer, and then it was his worry.

As for loving Whit, they had hardly had time to realize it or think about it there on the beachhead. So if she were a sensible, hard-headed little girl, she would just admit now that she had loved him but life had to go on.

Biddy tried, while she dressed, to think of Dan and the way her life would go on with him. Finally she had to admit she was not quite hard-headed enough to face that right away and she had better just decide that was something to be sensible about in the future, but first she must get Whit a little more thoroughly out of her mind and heart.

She managed to tell her story to Major Blinn coherently enough, although her voice trembled and almost died away at times, and she held her hands steady only by clasping them so tightly together that the knuckles were white.

Major Blinn listened quietly, drawing squares and circles on his desk blotter. When Biddy finished, he scowled and angrily jabbed the pen back into his holder.

Without looking directly at Biddy, he said. "I'm glad you told me about this, but don't you think it was a bit of remembering so vivid that it almost amounted to an hallucination? Then you had a nightmare brought on by worry about it."

"No," Biddy cried. "It happened. It was real."

Major Blinn still scowled. "Won't you admit that it couldn't have been? If you can do that, then the only serious thing is that you're upset about it. Probably you'll quiet down in a few days and we can drop the matter right here."

Which, Biddy had to admit wryly, was the soundest possible advice. A medical discharge was the last thing on earth she wanted. But this was a time to be honest rather than play it smart.

"I'll see if I can talk myself into that," she promised dryly. "I don't think I'll manage to bring it off, but I'll let you know."

"I'd hate to have to admit that one of my girls has started seeing ghosts," Major Blinn prodded her gently.

Biddy corrected him a bit sharply. "He wasn't a ghost exactly. I'd feel a lot better about it if he had been misty and frayed around the edges. I could have laughed at that. The thing that gets me is he was as real as you. That's something to worry about."

"I rather think it is," Major Blinn said glumly, hating to admit it even more than Biddy had expected.

That talk steadied Biddy a little, but nothing could remove that deep inner core of self-doubt.

**B**IDDY had dinner with Dan again that night and try as she would, she could not hide the fact that she was distraught and distressed about something. But she had sworn she would not discuss the matter further with Dan. Theoretically, if he loved her, anything that touched her deeply should be of concern to him. That was theory. In practice, Biddy had always had a shrewd idea that she should never try Dan's affection too far. She told herself, loyally, that all people had their limitations and it wasn't reasonable to try them beyond that point.

But Dan looked at Biddy with narrowed eyes. "You're absolutely haggard," he said sharply. "What's wrong with you? Don't tell me you're still brooding about that ghost business?"

Dan had brought it on himself, Biddy decided. "A little. In fact, it's getting rapidly no better," she said with attempted lightness. "He phoned me last night after I talked to you."

"This is absurd," Dan exploded. "It's very strange that in all the time I've known you, you never even mention this man. Now suddenly you admit that his memory haunts you constantly. I suppose that means you loved him."

"Yes," Biddy admitted wearily. "Though I never realized it until this haunting business started, so there's no need for you to be jealous."

"Then what am I expected to do about it?"

Biddy looked at him, level-eyed. "Some men might try to help me. I'm in trouble, as bad trouble as I'll ever know probably. But I'll work it out some way by myself."

"Now don't go tragic and dramatic," Dan ordered roughly. "You're simply indulging yourself in a lot of sentimental schoolgirl fantasies. Probably you're thoroughly enjoying it all and I refuse to encourage any such silliness."

Right then, Biddy decided to indulge herself in the luxury of a little honest anger. "And I refuse to admit I'm wrong and meekly apologize for bothering you with my silliness. There's something more to this than mere silliness, and if you weren't so stupid, you'd know it."

Dan's square face was always a little heavy in expression, but now it went absolutely stiff with a sort of pompous hurt vanity. "If I thought you were really ill, Biddy, I'd try to help you. Somehow, I can't believe for a minute that you are. Frankly, I don't get any part of this, but I do know I'm not obliged to put up with such childish tantrums."

"Perhaps you'd better not ask me for any more dates until I'm over this," Biddy suggested scornfully.

Dan got the scorn and didn't like it. He was

a successful man and he knew plenty of girls who were willing to tell him that he never failed at anything, particularly a human relationship. Biddy knew that perfectly well and knew exactly what his reaction was.

"Let me call you," Biddy murmured and had a distinct premonition that she would never feel the slightest impulse to see Dan again.

"Do that," Dan said with relief, his tone adding that he was perfectly sure that she was a sensible girl and would see very soon that she must behave reasonably if she expected to hold him.

This was probably, Biddy decided, the last necessary proof that she was completely crazy. Any girl was a fool to throw over a man as eligible and successful as Dan, and she was perfectly happy about the whole situation. Well, they always said crazy people were the only happy ones.

Biddy went home immediately after they finished dinner. She was thankful for the thousandth time that a shortage of space had made it possible for her to find a little room outside the hospital, which she had fixed up as an apartment. She searched out a couple of shirts which had lost buttons, got out her mending kit, turned on the radio and sat down to work.

Oddly enough, Biddy realized that she was feeling much less depressed and worried about herself. Perhaps the Major's and Dan's matter-of-fact impatience had helped steady her. She still wouldn't admit that this had been nothing more than a bad attack of nerves, but her little visions or daydreams, or whatever they had been, had helped her make up her mind about Dan.

She always had known in her heart that Dan was not right for her but he had seemed so right that she had half convinced herself she should marry him. Now she was well out of it and that was worth a slight mental crisis and perhaps the vision would not reoccur.

So what if she did die an old maid and go all her life with a distinct suspicion that for a few days she had had some very odd bats indeed winging around in her belfry? Biddy decided she could think of worse fates. Of course, she could also think of a much happier one. If Whit had not been killed, saving her . . . Biddy steadied her lips and concentrated on the buttons.

**S**HE heard a slight sound at the door and looked up. Strangely enough she felt no terror or desire to scream. There were no shivers down her spine and no chilly wind from a supernatural place seemed to sweep over her.

The idea that she was seeing Whit's ghost might frighten her frantic but the actual sight

did not. She did wonder vaguely if the door had been locked, and whether he had walked through it or opened it.

And she said the first thing that came into her mind and said it quite naturally with some annoyance. "Oh, Whit, I do wish you wouldn't keep doing this."

His lean face crinkled into a relieved grin. "I was afraid you were going to be frightened. There's a rumor around that you were all upset by seeing me."

"Of course I was upset—I am now, too," Biddy said indignantly. "It would upset anyone. And I do wish you wouldn't come walking in, just when I've persuaded myself that I'm all right if I never see you again."

"That's appreciation," Whit said with mock anger. "Apparently you didn't appreciate my phone call, either. After all, I was just thinking of you and trying to tell you it was all right when I phoned, and I assure you it's no simple matter to get a phone call through under these conditions."

"I can imagine," Biddy murmured. A little chill did touch her then, remembering the receiver crooked on the hook, but it disappeared when she looked at Whit.

"And if you think I almost literally didn't have to tear up heaven and earth to get out tonight, you really are crazy," Whit said.

"I admit I'm crazy," Biddy exploded. "I'd be even crazier, if I didn't admit that it's more than slightly disconcerting to keep seeing someone who's come back from beyond."

"I've been farther back of beyond than you know," Whit said seriously. Then he grinned again. "Want to know how I swung it tonight? I just said that you were my girl and I wasn't going to have my girl going around in a state, no matter what. So here I am."

Biddy concentrated on one important phrase. "Am I your girl?" she asked, almost shyly for her.

"Of course you're my girl," Whit said. "You don't think I'd have let you continue your mad pursuit of me if you weren't, do you?"

For a long minute they smiled into each other's eyes and then Biddy's blue one narrowed. Whit did look so terribly natural and real. Of course, his uniform was neat and new, which it never had been on the beach-head. And he was freshly shaved and his hair was neatly cut. But the laugh lines around his eyes and mouth were the same, and even the two little brown moles on the back of his left hand.

Biddy looked at him suspiciously. "Confidentially, Whit, are you really dead?"

"Confidentially, yes. My death is a matter of official record, and my promotion went through the same day that shell got me. Since then—silence. You can't be deader than that."

"I think you could be a heck of a lot deader," Biddy contradicted explosively.

Deliberately she got to her feet and walked over and kissed him full on his lips. His mouth was as warm and real and ardent as it always had been.

"Hey, stop taking advantage of a poor helpless man, you hussy," Whit ordered and took her tightly in his arms.

He kissed her until she was breathless and happier than she had ever been in her life. Then he sat down in the easy chair and held her on his lap. She snuggled into his arms perfectly contentedly. For a ghostly shoulder, his was remarkably well muscled and a wonderfully comfortable place to rest her head.

"Now I want you to promise me a few things," he said with tender sternness. "I want you to stop all this fretting and fussing about yourself. You're not to worry yourself into a state again."

"Promise," Biddy murmured.

"You'll just go on and do your work just as you've done ever since you got back here. You're all right and I'm all right where I am, and there's not a thing to fret about. Including the fact that you mustn't expect me to go on making these personal appearances. See?"

"Uh-huh."

Whit's arms tightened around her. "There was a price put on my getting out tonight, honey. I had to make a deal, and you're the one who's got to pay off."

For a minute, chill touched Biddy and then she rubbed her cheek against the shoulder of his uniform and that was reassuringly tough and real.

"You mustn't mention any of this to anyone. After all, quite aside from anything else, we don't want people getting ideas that my girl is a strange 'un. So is it all fixed?"

"Fixed right as anything," Biddy swore.

Whit stood up, dumping her off his lap unceremoniously. "Then I've got to go. We ghosts are only allowed to do our haunting at certain hours."

But Biddy clung to him, suddenly frightened. "When will I see you again, Whit? It won't be long?" She was begging him for reassurance.

"It could be a long time, honey," he said rather sadly. Then he gave her cheek a tiny slap. "But no matter how long it is, you're not to brood. You must admit it's even sillier to brood about not being haunted than about being haunted."

"You can say that again," Biddy had to admit wryly, and forced herself not to cling to him.

This time Biddy watched closely. Whit opened the door and walked out just like any-

body else. Then it occurred to her that it was entirely possible that she had put that phone back crooked after she talked to Whit, not before.

**MAJOR BLINN** looked at Biddy very closely the next day. "Are you upset about that hallucination now?"

Biddy thought there was a little emphasis on that now, but she still remembered her promises to Whit. "Not a bit upset now," she said cheerfully.

"So you've stopped seeing ghosts?"

"I've stopped worrying about it," Biddy evaded neatly.

"But you still think you saw something?"

Biddy looked him straight in the eye. "No one ever really saw a ghost."

"I'm glad you've decided to be sensible, and you understand I never want any more such nonsense from you again," the major said sternly, but his eyes were twinkling.

He went on worrying about other matters after that, seemingly content that Biddy was all right. But the other two WACs in the office began to regard her with increasing suspicion. They couldn't help noticing that Dan was no longer around, and they knew Biddy had no one special overseas. Biddy wasn't dating anyone. Yet she was going around as radiantly happy as any girl in love, even if her happiness did seem a little shadowed by worry and doubt at times. But worry was a natural part of being in love in war time. Biddy was even picking up odds and ends of trousseau stuff. One of her sister soldiers went so far as to announce openly that she thought Army life had finally driven Biddy really whacky.

Things happened overseas and the hospital filled up and then emptied again as hospital trains pulled out for other parts of the country. Biddy plugged away at the hospital records, singing love songs as she worked. But sometimes the songs were a little muted. It had been a long time, a very long time, and sometimes she wondered if it hadn't all been a delusion and she was being happy over nothing but a crazy dream.

Then one afternoon when she and Major Blinn were strolling along a corridor, on their way back from a ward where they had been trying to straighten out a series of badly tangled records, he seemed suddenly to remember something.

"I believe there's some stuff in eleven hundred and sixty they're holding for us to pick up," he said. "Down this hall here. I'll go on back to the office."

And he gave her a light shove in the right direction.

Biddy took only a dozen steps before she

saw the balcony. She started and then her eyes narrowed and she deliberately walked back to the point where she had turned into the corridor. One look told her what she wanted to know. This corridor could be shut off with a sliding panel that appeared from the other side to be a part of a solid wall. Unless the panel were open, no one would know this hall existed.

“NEAT, isn’t it?” Whit’s voice drawled behind her. “Unless you study the floor plans of the place very carefully, you wouldn’t guess this section existed. Even the balconies and sun porches are placed so they can’t be observed or overlooked from any spot around.”

“A whole secret section, right in the hospital!” Biddy gasped.

“That’s the idea and no one knows who left the panel open the day you wandered in here. It’s supposed to be shut at all times.”

Whit reached past Biddy and closed it carefully.

“Oh,” she said slowly. “I can see how it might have advantages.”

“A lot when there are some patients everyone would just as soon keep under cover for a while. Like me. That nurse was horrified when she realized you must have been in here. She may have been the one who forgot the panel. Anyhow, she came dashing in and asked if you had seen anyone. I got her aside and said maybe I could quiet you down, with no trouble for anyone, if she would fix it so I could phone you. Of course, that just made it worse, and you needn’t think there wasn’t plenty of consternation around these parts after you talked to the major.”

“Someone of the gang of you might have trusted me enough to tell me the truth,” Biddy said indignantly.

“Uh-uh. That ain’t the policy. This visit today is strictly unofficial, made on my personal guarantee that you’ll never talk. The best I could manage before was to get out to see you on my solemn word that I could get you to stop talking and spilling the beans where it might have done the most harm. Somebody with connections on the other side might have been smart enough to guess it wasn’t battle shock that made you think you’d seen me. That would have spoiled more than the secret of this ward.”

“Are you ready to come clean now?” Biddy demanded with mock sternness but she couldn’t

sound really cross. It was too wonderful to have Whit with her again.

“Within reason,” he chuckled. “You won’t get a full explanation until after the end of the war. Here’s all I can say now. That blow on the skull just knocked me silly and I went wandering off in a daze and got captured. I was crated around the country and escaped, and was recaptured, and finally escaped again. By that time I’d seen some very interesting things. The Germans undoubtedly would have shot me if I’d been caught again.”

“I know,” Biddy said, and caught his hand and held it very tightly.

“Anyway I got back with my information. Then it occurred to some one high up that it would be very nice if we could use it without letting the Germans know we had it. So I had to stay dead. After all, there’d been no great fuss made when they couldn’t find my body at the beachhead. So we just let the Germans think I’d been caught in all the hurly-burly of the retreat and killed and never identified. It could have happened easily.”

“When can it be admitted you got back with the information?” Biddy asked.

“As of now. Last night we advanced past the point it concerned. You don’t need to think I haven’t been watching the maps with interest.”

“I still think you might have told me some of this the other night, instead of that batch of nonsense,” Biddy insisted stubbornly, still arguing for the sheer joy of having Whit around to argue with.

“You knew just how much of it to believe and I didn’t tell you anything actually untrue,” Whit grinned.

“And now you’re a free man? Not the secret prisoner of the non-existent corridor any longer?”

“Not exactly free,” he said and caught her in his arms, kissing her hard and long. “I’ll never be free as long as you keep on pursuing me. So will you please chase me like crazy all the rest of our lives?”

Biddy closed her eyes and for a long moment was only conscious of the strength of Whit’s arms, binding her to him, and their two hearts beating in rhythm together. Then she looked up and smiled mistily at him.

“I’m pursuing,” she said unsteadily. “I always will.”

“Then just see how I’ll run,” Whit promised and kissed her again to show her what he meant.

---

**DON'T WASTE WASTE PAPER!  
PUT YOUR SCRAPS INTO THE SCRAP.**

---

# Rings on Her Finger

By CLAYRE MICHEL



Spence came up to Evon. "I was just going down after you," he said.

*Evon found that an engagement ring can't encircle an insubordinate heart.*



**W**YNN STANLEY was going to ask her to marry him. Evon could see the question forming in his intense blue eyes. And because Wynn was so much like Spence Graeme, Evon was going to say yes.

The pleasant warmth of the white swim suit drying on her body seemed to draw out the unhappiness of the past few months. It was a comfortable, peaceful, feeling. She could

never have been so drowsily content with Spence. She would have been a quiver with excitement, thrilled with his presence, feeling witty and clever and sophisticated just because she was with him.

Wynn was toying with a blade of grass. There was a briefcase, as well as his pipe, on the wrought iron bench near them.

Captain Wynn Stanley, veteran bomber

pilot, had been resting at Andrea Bay Lodge before taking up instructor duties at Monroe Field. As assistant manager of the resort hotel, it was Evon's job to entertain the guests. But all her free time had been devoted exclusively to Wynn.

They both liked the same books. They both collected things—an 1870 sewing machine—anything and everything. They had laughed hilariously over the attics they were going to fill with antique bird cages and old glass lamps. They'd fill the attics and then leave suddenly; preferably in the middle of the night, and then imagine the landlord's facial expression when he discovered the junk.

"Something in your briefcase for Attic Number One?" Evon asked innocently.

"Something you'll need before we can get the attic . . ." He reached over then and retrieved a small jeweled box from the case. He opened it, his deeply tanned shoulders touching her golden ones.

"Oh!" Evon exclaimed at the gorgeous topaz solitaire entirely encircled with diamonds. "It's lovely, Wynn."

He's so like Spence, she thought, for perhaps the hundredth time. Not dashing, like Spence, not exciting; not quite as handsome as Spence somehow, but strong and eaglelike, with his thin, brown face.

"Like to try it on?" he asked with quiet persuasion. "And wear it for keeps?"

**H**ER heart had almost stopped the day when Wynn entered the lobby of the Lodge. Evon had been at the desk. She had thought for one glad moment that Spence had come back to her.

The two men had the same dark curling hair, parted on the right side, the same thick eyebrows that cast deep shadows onto flashing blue eyes, with lashes any girl would envy. They were both tall and broad shouldered, but most of all they had the same devilish smile that pulled at the corners of their strong lips.

Perhaps that was why she had made up her mind about Wynn. If she couldn't have the man she loved, she might as well marry a reasonable facsimile! And life with Wynn would be pleasant.

She held out her hand, and was surprised to find her heart beating a little faster.

His eyes were on hers, searching, intense. "You'll never regret marrying me, Evon." He slipped the ring on her finger. He raised her hand to his lips and kissed it, reverently.

"I'll never regret marrying you!" She repeated solemnly.

She had promised to marry Wynn. She looked about her. There was never a more romantic spot than this garden. A song sparrow, trilling gloriously flew down and perched upon the redwood fence. A pair of humming

birds flew over her head, soared back and forth and finally began picking at dandelion fluff. They were building a nest. A pair of bluejays calling sharply to each other, flew down upon the brick terrace.

It was a letdown, somehow, becoming engaged this way. Evon had never really been engaged to Spence though she had taken it for granted that they would be married, but that was all past now.

He had gone away, after his last leave with that flashing, bright smile and careless wave of the hand. He had promised to write, but she didn't believe he would. A couple of postcards had come; a stuffed panda he had picked up somewhere. Each had raised her heart to delirious heights. He hadn't forgotten; he might come back. . . . And then, finally, that news item in the paper a week ago:

Captain Spencer Hatfield Graeme, fighter pilot, returns to San Francisco to marry Miss Joan Banning, a student nurse at Mt. Davids Hospital.

She'd have to forget about Spence, forget the emptiness that was still within her. She owed that to Wynn. Perhaps, if she were careful, he would never know she didn't love him!

Wynn held her hand as though he would never let it go again.

"We can be married right away," he said, "so as not to waste any of my leave. I don't know where I'll be, or what they'll have me do, but the war will be over one of these days, and then we'll begin to live!" A tiny suggestion of a smile curved his lips. "We'll get a great big attic with a house under it. . . . Say. . . my golden honey chick, I haven't kissed you yet!" His hand gestured expressively. "The mood, somehow, hasn't been quite right." His arm slipped around her shoulders.

And then a voice, a strangely familiar voice, called, "Hi, Evon, where are you?"

Her heart leaped in one jump to her throat. There was only one voice like that in the world!

"Spence!" she cried. "Spence Graeme! Here we are! Down by the pool!"

Wynn withdrew his arm. There was a twisted smile on his lips and an angry gleam in his eyes. "Fine time for your boy friends to appear!"

Excitement flushed Evon's cheeks rosy gold.

Spence Graeme swung around the curve of the gravel path, white teeth gleaming in a broad smile, his officer's cap tilted at a jaunty angle.

"Evon! They told me at the office you'd be somewhere around the pool. Gosh, it's good to see you! And prettier than ever. . . ."

you sure can soak up our California sun!" Wynn jumped up and helped Evon to her feet.

"This is a real surprise, Spence," she declared. "You're. . . you're here on your honeymoon, of course. I'll be awfully glad to meet your wife. She must be a darling. I read all about it in the papers."

Spence laughed. "You're a little premature, Evon. I'm not married."

"Not. . . not married? The papers said. . ."

"Oh, we were engaged, but things didn't work out so well." He shrugged his shoulders and smiled the little smile that had always caught her heart in a delightful little skip and jump.

Mechanically, she heard herself say, "Spence, I'd like you to meet Wynn Stanley, Wynn, Captain Spence Graeme."

The two men shook hands and mumbled the conventional things. If either of them noticed the resemblance of one to the other, he did not mention it.

Why, they're not so much alike! Even realized it suddenly. Wynn is taller, his hair is darker and more unruly. His eyes are a deeper blue.

The shock of Spence's sudden appearance had numbed her thoughts and reactions. She was confused, thrilled, excited, and frightened.

She was engaged to Wynn and here was Spence, handsome, charming as ever, standing before her, free and unattached.

"You won't be running off right away, will you, Spence? There's a dance tonight you won't want to miss. . ."

"I'm staying for a few days, then to gunnery school, and then back to the Southwest Pacific as an instructor. I'll run along—have to see about my bags. I'll be back. I want to spend every available moment with you, Evon." He smiled and nodded to Wynn. "See you again, Stanley," and was swinging quickly up the path.

There was a new glow in her eyes and a tiny, happy smile on her scarlet lips as she watched him go.

Spence was back!

For a moment she had forgotten the ring on her finger, forgotten Wynn. She began humming a gay little tune.

Abruptly Wynn's voice broke into her thoughts, "And who is the dashing captain?"

She was caught up, then, in a quick rush of anger. "Just because we're engaged doesn't mean you can shout at me!"

"I wasn't shouting at you!" His voice was deep with controlled passion. "I was just wondering. . ."

"Spence stayed here some months ago." Color flooded Evon's face. "We had fun together," she said defiantly. "Did you notice

how similar you are to each other in looks?" Wynn nodded. There was still that strangely twisted, angry smile playing at the corners of his mouth.

"We seem to bear each other a superficial resemblance. I imagine, however, that we are dissimilar in a good many ways."

"Now that I know how disagreeable you can be, I see a great deal of difference. Until I saw the two of you together, I. . ."

"Were you engaged to this fellow?" he asked quietly, so quietly that Evon did not realize the importance of his question for a moment.

"No, not exactly engaged, but. . ." she looked at him, startled. He was bringing back all the agonizing miserable moments of Spence's last leave, moments when she thought Spence was going to ask her to marry him. He hadn't.

"So what?" she snapped. "Must I now confess my terrible past?"

There was an inscrutable expression in Wynn's blue eyes. They were as cold as a mountain lake surrounded by snow. "I had hoped," he said, "that some day, somewhere, there would be a girl whose face would light up when I came into sight. . . as yours did when Spence arrived. A girl whose eyes would sparkle, who would be thrilled and excited at the sound of my voice—a girl who would be alive and vibrant, and warm, just because I was there." He laughed. "A dream, of course."

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said. "We're engaged!"

His deep blue eyes held her dreamy mauve ones. "Evon, my dear, I'm not a child. I flatter myself that I can look at a situation without the blindness of personal interest, that I can see what is plain before me."

**S**HE felt a surge of anger. It was annoying that she should be so transparent. "And just what do you think is so plain, Wynn?" she asked tartly. . . her heart beating furiously.

"That you're in love with Spence! That he walked out on you before, and took up with another girl and was going to marry her. . . Then I came along. I look something like Spence. I'm the same physical type, anyway. And so you thought I'd be fair enough cushion for a broken heart. You thought you'd be satisfied with a reasonable facsimile and pretend you loved me!" Bitterness and scorn filled his voice and made it hard.

"How dare you talk to me like that?" she cried, and to her horror tears burst through her angry eyelids. "It wasn't that you looked like him—that's a lie. . ." she broke off. She knew in her heart that, unconsciously at least, she had been attracted to Wynn for that very reason.

"It's true, Evon."

"If you say another word, I'll scream," she threatened. "And faint just like a gay-nineties belle!"

"You made a bargain, Evon," he said, "and I think you would have lived up to it honestly. But I can't hold you to our engagement—under the circumstances."

She slipped the ring from her finger and handed it to him. "I hope you don't waste any time getting over being in love with me!"

"In love with you?" His voice was suddenly hard and mocking. "I don't recall having mentioned being in love with you!"

She jerked her head up to face him, startled at his words. "You—you! I hate you, Wynn Stanley."

"That was probably the shortest engagement on record," Wynn said. There was a terrifying coldness in his voice, and something else, a deep undercurrent of emotion stirring in the lovely garden. "And now, to prove that I am not angry, I'll even kiss you a fond farewell!"

Evon's heart began to race in panic. She did not want this strangely grim captain to kiss her. But he had taken her into his arms with almost impudent assurance.

"No!"

His voice was vibrant with sardonic laughter. "It's quite all right. I don't mind it a bit!" His eyes were twin devils.

"That's not what I . . ."

His lips interrupted her protest. There was a shock, almost electrical, in the first gentle touch. She tried to pull away, but his mouth followed hers, pressed more eagerly, more demandingly.

This was no gentleman's kiss, no light, sweet peck. This was something primitive and bitter, hungry and possessive. And worst of all she felt herself beginning to respond to its challenge.

She wrenched herself free, swung with all her strength at his thin, lined face. Her hand stung with the impact.

Wynn hardly moved. "Sorry it was so bad," he said with that same faint suggestion of amusement. "I must be slipping. Let's try again."

Before she could protest or escape, his lips burned into hers. And Evon felt her face grow warm, then hot, with blood that raced like maddened fury through her body. He couldn't make her feel like this—he couldn't!

But if he did, it was only because he looked so much like Spence. For of course Spence's kisses would make her feel ever so much more limp and warm and utterly befuddled. Only she couldn't stand any more of this!

And that was when Wynn's lips reluctantly left hers.

Huskily he said, "I'll be seeing you around."

He left her standing there, dizzy, frightened—her eyes blurred with sudden unaccountable tears. It seemed hours since Wynn's lips had touched hers. And yet it couldn't have been so long, because the palm of her hand still stung from the violence of her blow.

**E**VON didn't wait for Spence in the garden. She went to Seashell Cottage, one of the many that filled the grounds of the lodge. She threw herself on one of the low, wide couches, her tawny amber hair, dark against the creamy-white linen covers.

Suddenly nervous energy filled her body. It was reaction from Wynn's kisses, she thought angrily. She got up, changed her white bathing suit for a soft red-striped sports dress and hurried up to the lodge.

She needed action, movement—something to do after that furious quarrel with Wynn. Her face still burned in frustrated anger.

Spence was in the lobby. He looked at her admiringly.

"You're lovelier than ever, Evon. I've missed you terribly," he said.

She answered tremulously, because her lips were quivering close to a smile and because her eyes were all misted over. "So terribly that you went and got yourself engaged to another girl!"

"Jealous?" he bantered.

"Of course!"

He smiled, and her heart turned cartwheels. He had lost none of his charm in the months he had been gone. "We'll have to do something about that!" he promised.

At that moment Mr. Hollister, the hotel manager, came up in a near panic. "You'll have to come right away, Miss Hughes," he gasped. "The ice-cream freezer has broken down; the squabs haven't arrived for dinner, and the chef is having another fight with the under-cook and wants to quit . . ."

"I'll see what I can do," she said, competently. "Call me on the house phone, Spence, about seven-thirty, and we'll have dinner together."

"I shall wait with ill-concealed impatience!"

She flashed him a smile and followed the tubby little manager.

Evon dressed carefully for her dinner date with Spence. She had decided to be sophisticated. Her quarrel with Wynn had filled her with a strange devilish don't-care mood.

She wore a turquoise blue dress that brought out the bronze in her skin and the amber lights in her tawny hair.

It was seven-thirty when she finished dressing and sat down to wait Spence's call. A half hour dragged by before she decided to call him. But the desk clerk replied, "His

room doesn't answer, Miss Hughes. He was in the lounge with Captain Stanley about five. I haven't seen him around since."

If she went into the dining room now, Wynn would be there and he'd see her come in alone.

To save herself that embarrassment she decided to eat in her cottage. Throwing a gold coat over her shoulders, she went up the tree-lined path that led to the service entrance, then into the kitchen.

"Henri," she told the chef, "would you mind fixing me a sandwich to take back to my cottage?"

The chef scowled. "Sandwich! For a young girl who works as hard as you do around here? A sandwich for dinner! No! You eat what I tell you. Here . . ." Quickly he piled a large portion of roast beef on a platter, followed it with potato and vegetables.

"Thanks, Henri," she said, and started back the way she had come. And there, on the path as if waiting for her, was the very person she had wanted most to avoid.

"I'll take that tray," Wynn drawled. "No gentleman lets a lady . . ."

"You're no gentleman!" Evon turned on him furiously. "What have you done with Spence?"

They were at the cottage. "If you'll open the door," he said.

She led the way in. He put the tray on a coffee table.

"I said, what did you do with Spence?" The hours of pent-up emotion and frustration suddenly broke through Evon's reserve. "If you smile I'll push this roast beef in your face!" She collapsed on the *chaise longue* and burst into a torrent of sobs.

Wynn was beside her in an instant, his voice husky with compassion.

"Come on, Evon, baby, that won't do. Is it that Graeme guy? Because if it is, I'll beat him to a pulp for you, and throw him at your feet."

She shook her head, too miserable to speak.

"He stood you up at dinner, because we met a bunch of fellows from Alexander Field. You didn't want me to know it, so you tried to sneak some food in here. Mmmmm. Don't tell me he hasn't proposed yet? I guess old Grandpa Stanley will have to take a hand and fix things up for baby Evon!"

"Wynn, if you don't stop interfering in my personal affairs, I'll, I'll . . ." she choked with anger. "Go away!"

He ignored her command. "Tell me something about the Graeme fellow you're in love with."

She met his eyes and there was a sympathetic pity in their intense blue depths.

Rage flowed over her in waves. "He's wonderful! He's handsome and charming and

decent! He's not a bit like you!" she snapped.

"And all the girls just go for him in droves!" He grinned devilishly. "Eat your soup before it gets cold!"

It was nine-thirty when the phone rang. It was Spence.

"Evon, darling, I ran into a bunch from Alexander Field, at the Skyline Inn. We had a few drinks, and a bite to eat. Don't wait dinner for me. I'll see you at the dance."

"You took Spence to the Skyline Inn!" she accused, glaring at Wynn.

"Better fix your face, honey chick, your sophistication is slipping, beautiful," Wynn smiled. "I'd hate to be seen escorting a girl whose face is all streaked with makeup."

Strangely she did as she was told. When she returned she felt better.

Wynn raised cool eyebrows. "Let's go!"

Rather to her surprise, she heard herself say meekly, "Yes, Wynn!" She felt drained of all emotion.

ABOUT fifteen couples were dancing to the soft music of a small orchestra as they entered the lounge of the Lodge.

Spence came up to them. "I was just going down after you, Evon," he said. "Hi, Stanley. There's quite a little crowd here."

"Good. We need new faces around here!" Wynn said sharply.

"Evon, I'd ask you for this dance, but I'm rather tied up at the moment . . ." Spence evaded.

Wynn broke in, there was a sardonic lilt to his voice as he said, "Hope you're busy all night, Graeme. I had to work like blazes to get dibs on the first one with Evon. If I can get rid of you, maybe I can wangle 'em all!"

The next thing Evon knew, Wynn had whirled her out into the middle of the floor.

"You've made him angry," she gasped. "What are you trying to do?"

"Competition," said Wynn smugly, "is what that young man needs. You watch now. He'll be after you like wolves after a bunny. Don't worry, baby, we'll have you all engaged-up before the night's over."

A funny sense of misgiving clutched at her. Suspiciously she asked, "Just why are you so anxious to push me off on another man, Captain Stanley. I'm perfectly capable of managing my own affairs!"

He smiled indulgently. "I'm fond of you, child. I want to see you get what you want."

Spence cut in, then. "Sorry, old man," he said.

"You're doing me a favor," Wynn bowed. And as Evon looked back at him over Spence's shoulder, he grinned broadly, and closed one eye in a deliberate wink.

Spence's arms around her were disappointingly cold. She had waited so long for

this moment. But then, this is no place for romance.

The music stopped and he led her to one corner of the lounge. "Some people I want you to meet," he said. "Fellows, Evon Hughes, Lieutenant Peters, Lieutenant Moran, Captain Cranson, and a swan among the ducklings, Flight Officer Lisa Lund, of the Civil Air Patrol."

Evon's heart froze. If this were competition, it was tough. She had heard of Lisa Lund. If anyone rated the title "glamor girl," it was Lisa, in a glittering white-and-gold dress, her dark hair high on her head. Lisa appeared on the covers of the best magazines—at chic parties, at the smartest night clubs, and now, Flight Officer with the CAP.

There was a brief exchange of gay remarks, and as the music started, Lisa Lund calmly danced away in Spence's arms!

Lieutenant Peters said, "May I have this one, Miss Hughes?"

But another officer had suddenly appeared. "Sorry, Lieutenant," Wynn said, "I had this one spoken for since last Tuesday."

"Wynn," she said impulsively, "You've been sweet to me, after I've been so utterly horrid. But it's no use. He's gone off with Flight Officer Lund, and she's ten times as pretty as I . . . and glamorous, and clever."

"That is no obstacle to true love, even if it were true!" His voice was satirical. "I shall personally attend to Flight Officer Lund!"

And sure enough, it wasn't two numbers later that she found herself in a rhumba with Spence, and Spence was saying, with a trace of annoyance in his voice, "Stanley is certainly fast . . . just barged right in and off with Lisa under my very nose!"

But his pique soon vanished and he was once more the gay and lovable companion she remembered from other days.

Later, walking in the garden, he said, "It's moments like these with you, Evon, that kept me going all those months."

"I wonder that you found time to remember with all the other girls . . ."

"It's true, there have been other girls, Evon," he said, thoughtfully. "But, somehow, you've been the one who always came to mind during the lonely moments. There's something about you . . . something steady and constant . . . something deep and splendid and utterly lovely."

"Spence, I'm not any of those things."

He said, "I'll take a chance on it." He drew her to him. "Evon, darling, you're the reason I came back here. You knew that, didn't you?"

"I wasn't sure . . . I don't know."

"Marry me, Evon!"

She could feel a wild throbbing of her pulses. This was the moment she had been

waiting for all the weary months. The man she had loved so madly was asking her to marry him. She swallowed hard, and there were tears in her eyes. Somehow the rapture she had dreamed of was missing. It would come back in a moment, as soon as he kissed her.

"Yes, Spence," she said.

"Evon, darling!" Exultantly he found her lips in a long, experienced kiss. There was only one thought in her mind. Wynn would be pleased now. Evon had what she wanted.

Out of an inner pocket, Spence drew a jeweler's box. He opened it and took out a lovely ring—a square-cut emerald. He placed it on her finger.

In the short space of six hours she had worn two engagements rings on her finger! One for seconds, and now, this one?

"It's beautiful, Spence. Beautiful!"

"We'll be married tomorrow afternoon, Evon?"

"Yes—I'll be free between two and four." There would be no honeymoon of course.

**E**VON was up early next morning. There were many things to be done as well as get ready for her wedding.

Wynn found her in the kitchen.

"Guests aren't allowed back here, Wynn," she said severely, "and especially not at this hour of the morning."

"My scientific curiosity got the better of me. I saw you and Spence go down to the garden last night. I had to know how you made out."

She looked at him, standing there in his uniform, smiling lightly against the background of the pots and pans. And suddenly she knew why she hadn't felt the expected thrill when she walked Spence in the garden—why she had hesitated when he had asked her to marry him; she had thought of Wynn when Spence was kissing her!

It was Wynn who had stolen her heart!

"Spence and I are getting married this afternoon at three," she said. She felt suddenly ill. It was fantastic, incredible. She was a dumb little chick! She was going to marry Spence Graeme when she was in love with Wynn!

She was engaged to the original while her heart cried out for the man who called himself 'a reasonable facsimile'! She now knew the real from the unreal.

"See you later, Evon," he said carelessly. "Happy wedding day!"

She could only nod as he walked out of the room. Out of her life! If she had spoken, the tears in her eyes would have trickled down her cheeks. She had lost Wynn, forever.

Evon had never been busier than she was that morning, but somehow, she found time to breeze through the dining room. As she

thought, Wynn was having a late breakfast with Lisa. The dark-haired girl was laughing delightedly at something Wynn had said, while every male in the place had turned to stare admiringly.

Later, she saw that Spence had seated himself with Wynn and Lisa and was chatting animatedly. It was almost noon before she had a chance to talk to Spence.

Excitedly he said, "I've made all arrangements with a minister a few miles from here, Evon. We'll be married in three hours!"

They had a bite of lunch together—Evon had only twenty minutes. Everything seemed to be going wrong today.

At two, she went to her cottage, showered and put on the desert-gold suit, so like her hair, that Wynn had, from then on, nicknamed her Golden Chick. She decided it would do to get married in, and she could get a new one later.

For *what?* she thought with a sickening lurch. For her life with Spence?

With cold, shaking fingers she dabbed at her mouth with a flame lipstick.

She wandered out by the pool, hesitated in the romantic garden. Spence would be coming for her in a few minutes.

Voices, a man and woman's, low, intense, from beyond the hedge floated to her ears. She recognized Wynn's husky tones. The girl was Lisa.

Lisa and Wynn! It didn't matter to her, of course.

"It's no use, Wynn," Lisa's golden voice came clearly. "Your plan didn't work. They're being married this afternoon!"

"We're a couple of dumb bunnies" Wynn mumbled in reply.

"You thought," Lisa went on, "that by pushing Evon at Spence she'd come to her senses and realize that she can't handle a man like that. She'd go to pieces at the first blonde or redhead who looked at him. I'm an old hand at the game—I could do it if I ever got the chance . . ."

"Well—what are we going to do now? We've got about twenty minutes . . ."

"I could jump in the pool," Lisa said hopelessly. "Spence really loves me, but he just won't admit it. He's been spoiled by too much flattery. He thinks he has to be engaged to every girl he meets."

Evon turned away, then. She didn't need to hear any more. So that's what they've been up to. "Lisa loves Spence! Lisa loves Spence!" her heart sang, "And I . . . I . . ."

She hoped Spence was waiting in the lower drive. She hurried. He was there in a borrowed roadster.

"To the minister's," she cried "and hurry."

Two blocks from the Lodge gates she said,

"Stop here, Spence. I've got something to tell you!"

"What do you want to talk about, Evon?"

"About Lisa. She's in love with you!"

"Oh, Lord, pass the wedding bells!" Spence groaned. "I'll be glad when one of you girls finally manages to get me to the altar!"

"I'll get you to the altar, but first, drive downtown to a store. You've got to make a phone call!"

**W**ELL, Evon thought, as she climbed out of the pool an hour later. There'd be no broken hearts because of her! Only her own heart.

The bluejays in the garden were screeching and playing, quarreling because Evon was unhappy, she imagined. She had to think of something else beside Wynn. She had to forget him. The jays stopped their ribald chattering and flew to nearby trees. Someone had come down into the garden.

Wynn was standing before her, his eyes flaming blue torches. "Congratulations, Evon . . ."

". . . are not in order!" she added.

"Don't tell me, honey chick, you've broken another engagement!"

"Yes! Lisa and Spence are on their way to Blue Lakes Inn—honeymooning! Spence won't be breaking any more hearts!"

"And neither will you, Evon Hughes! In order to protect all the susceptible young men in the world, I'm marrying you—at once!"

"No. I won't have it. You're only doing this to save my pride."

"No?" he chuckled. "If you could only see how your eyes are shining right this minute, you wouldn't say such ridiculous things."

"They're not ridiculous." But the lump in her throat made the words faint.

"They are, because you love me. And before I forget to mention it a second time, I love you, Evon—and besides, what are you doing in my arms? You *could* get away, if you struggled the least bit."

"Oh, Wynn, Wynn, don't tease me, darling. I've shed enough tears because I've been a silly, foolish little idiot. Sure I had lost you. Lost you because I was so blind. I couldn't tell the original from the facsimile."

"I've loved you, darling, ever since we first became partners in that eighteen seventy sewing machine! You just had to get Spence out of your heart where he never belonged . . ."

"And you in my heart—your ring on my finger . . . Oh, Wynn, surely you're not going to make a girl wait and wait . . ."

He kissed her then; thoroughly and completely, and he kept on kissing her until she was breathless.

# All The Lovely Yesterdays

By NANCY CROSBY

*When a girl chooses between a man and a memory she has to run the risk of reviving an old romance.*

LYNNE looked across the big room, and she couldn't believe her eyes. The man coming toward her was Reff Dare! Reff looking just as recklessly dare-devil, and a lot more lean and bronzed and much more intriguing in Marine green than he'd been in tweed. Which was saying a lot.

But what was he doing in Hunt's apartment? It couldn't be that he was looking for her! Reff was the sort who stuck to his convictions. It didn't matter that he'd made violent love for over a year. In the end his violent theories had been strong enough to make him walk out on her and she'd never thought for one minute he'd come back to her. Reff just wasn't that way!

The day the news had come about Pearl Harbor he had decided that blond models would be all wrong for war wives. He had said vehemently that a man would be a heel to drag a girl through that sort of hell. He'd said, "I'm enlisting at once. I'm going to be a flyer, or else. Find some nice home chap, darling, someone who will cherish you. Just forget me for the duration."

He'd gone then, and she hadn't seen him until this very moment. Not that she'd forgotten him. He wasn't the kind you forget. She went sick with shame remembering the way she'd cried over him—a man who brushed her off with a theory!

So when she had met the famous airplane designer, Hunt Larkin, and she'd gone about with him quite a lot. At first it had been out of a sort of bravado, to show her heart she was over Reff. But eventually her feeling for Hunt had grown into a genuine liking.

He was a quiet, steady man, older than Reff. His admiration soothed her bruised ego. Maybe "cherished" was the right word for the way he treated her. Anyway, here at today's cocktail party, she knew that most of the guests were expecting some sort of announcement about Hunt and her.

And now here was Reff, walking back into her life, like a triumphant ghost, sitting down beside her as if he'd never been away, glancing quizzically at Hunt mixing drinks at the por-

table bar, and saying with a sardonic smile:

"So you actually found him—the cherishing person—I mean. Appearances indicate he can do it rather well."

Then, with the old lightning change of mood, the devil gone from his eyes, his mouth gone wry, he said, "Lynne, do you realize we've been apart almost three years?"

Lynne thought wildly: *He mustn't be like this! We've got to stay flippant about us. He always got me with wistfulness.*

She asked casually, "Is it really that long? And why are you back now? Have they stopped the war?"

Reff shook the olive around in his glass. "Don't you ever read the news? I was in all the best papers."

"Oh, so that hero was you!" But her heart winced at the idea of making such a silly remark after that heavenly year!

She said "I really must go. Hunt's busy tonight. I'm catching up on my reading, or something."

She looked across at Hunt, trying to catch his eye. She hadn't realized until now how square and middle-height he was. Not until she got up now, and found Reff on his feet, too, towering above her. She'd sort of forgotten how deep and eager Reff's voice was until he said now:

"I've got to talk to you. It's such a beautiful new theory, darling . . . about us; the right one this time. I followed you into this building just to tell you."

She pulled on her soft yellow gloves. "Too many Martinis, Reff dear. And, naturally, I don't trust your theories."

He grinned down at her. "You're afraid," he taunted her. "It's something that came to me in the jungle, the night I was shot down. If you weren't a coward, you'd come to the Moonlight Club, and let me prove it to you. We left a lot of rather sweet yesterdays there. Remember? This theory says you get back lost yesterdays; that they wait for you to re-

**Looking down at her tenderly, he turned her palms upward to crush his mouth against them.**



turn to them. I thought a lot about ours, Lynne . . . nights out there over the Pacific. I thought what a fool I'd been about us, and how I'd like the chance to find *our* lost yesterdays again."

She whispered, "You're crazy!"

But his eyes were very dark and his nearness had all the old high-power current. Suddenly and quite against her will, her own mood changed. She was caught in the old thrill. The crowded room seemed nothing. Hunt didn't matter. She was going to the Moonlight Club with Reff. But just one thing mustn't happen. He mustn't guess how eagerly she had slid into his mood.

Patting a yawn, she said carelessly that even if Hunt were to be busy tonight, she had to eat, and so . . .

She left the idea in the air. And the next thing she knew she was out in the street with Reff, without even a good-bye to Hunt.

**R**EFF found a taxi. His first proof probably that the old hours come back. He'd always found taxis, even on the most crowded nights. Getting in beside her, he asked if she wanted to go home to dress.

She wanted to tell him she'd wear what she had on, because she couldn't bear the thought of that one lost hour with Reff roaming her living room while she dressed. But she thought of the sweet black lace hanging in the closet, and her feminine pride got the upper hand.

And so the scent of his cigarettes was wafted through her apartment once more, and his impatient voice was calling through the closed bedroom door that they'd miss the whole evening, if she didn't hurry. The warm approval of his eyes when she came, at last, was worth three years of heartache.

But she had no defense against the Moonlight Club. They'd been there so often and enjoyed the blue moons around the walls . . . the grinning moons, the sad moons—all with a silver light behind them. The orchestra still played the *Moonlight Sonata* theme song and it was as if the three dreadful years had never been. Reff still held her close, looking down at her tenderly as if he never would let her go. Their steps matched just as they used to do and Reff's eyes, meeting hers, defied her to deny that this was a lost hour recaptured.

When he danced her through a long window, the shadowy terrace beyond it was just the same. Their table was still there in that dimmest corner, and Reff was catching her hands across it, not bothering to order yet, just turning her palms upward to crush his mouth against them. And the blood drained from her heart, just as always when he touched her. The deep, warm urgency of his voice was making her listen.

"See angel, it did wait for us, all of it. In spite of the damned young and cocky know-it-all way I walked out on you that night, our lovely hours knew I'd have to come back and tell you what a fool I'd been. Lynne, won't you believe it, and give me a chance?"

His passionate sureness, his pleading, was sweeping away her last defense. She wanted to believe him. It was a pretty, sweet thought, this zany idea of being able to forget all the bitter hours and keep the heavenly ones. She was listening with her heart as Reff went on.

"I learned my lesson the hard way, darling. The night I was shot down, I lay there in the jungle, hearing the fire roar through my plane, expecting any minute to hear it explode, and knowing clear down under the hide of me that all any man needs for a war-time wife is the girl he loves and the chance to get home to her. It was then I got this theory about lost hours. Maybe it was fever, maybe just my old complex for theories. I wouldn't know."

His fingers tightened on hers. "But I do know that all I could think of was your yellow hair, and how violet your eyes are, and how your mouth always drove me crazy. And I wanted you so that nothing else mattered, not even the thing that had just happened to me. Lynne, if only you can forgive the idiotic way I left you! Oh Lynne, don't you *see*?"

She made a choked little sound of assent. Of course none of it made sense, not as a man like Hunt Larkin would see it. And she still was practically engaged to Hunt. But right now this was Reff, and she and Reff had never bothered with anything as practical as sense. And she should have more pride than to let Reff talk himself back into her life again. But she'd never had much pride where Reff was concerned.

And somehow the bright, blinding mist of the old glamor was lying across the path of common sense, blotting out any chance of pride. She was listening to her heart, the heart that had belonged to Reff for one long, heavenly year, that still belonged to him in spite of everything.

Suddenly with a swift, lithe movement Reff was beside her. He pulled her to her feet and into his arms. This end of the terrace was deserted. The twilight shadows enveloped them. She could feel the drum of Reff's heart, the hard young strength of him. A new and deeper strength, she thought, breathless. Yet still holding the old reckless passion, the old crazy boyish tenderness. He'd always be the old Reff, along with the new. But maybe that was what marriage meant, keeping hold of all the old things, all the old memories, no matter what came afterward.

Reff was saying now, against her lips. "Funny the things a chap remembers, out

there. Crazy perfume, a silly little hat, the way lipstick smears—things like jukeboxes and the subway, and Central Park in spring. I know this theory is right, Lynne, else why would I have got to come home to you? How else would I have got a chance to tell you I'm sorry about that night?"

Lynne knew now that he was right. She felt so sure that they both had grown up, about love and war. She knew she'd have to tell Hunt she'd made a mistake. It wouldn't be easy. Hunt didn't understand people who changed. Hunt never would understand Reff's crazy theory.

Then she looked at Reff, and suddenly stopped thinking about Hunt.

Reff was saying, "This is a celebration." He was calling a waiter to light the table candles now, ordering an extravagant dinner with champagne.

The shadows on the terrace had deepened into night. A real moon hung above them, bright and high over Manhattan's towering silhouette. They talked on and on, forgetting the dancing in the room beyond, the music of *Amour, amour, amour*, and a man's sweet, husky baritone.

Lynn asked suddenly, "Were you really badly wounded, Reff? Will you be going back to the Pacific soon?"

He carefully stubbed out his cigarette, evading her eyes. "I'd rather not talk about it, if you don't mind."

Then he added vaguely that he was here for hospital checkups. "You know," he grinned, "one of those ambulant cases, the sort that make people ask what a great, strong lad like me is doing off duty."

He had her hands again, his voice deepening. "Look, angel you know I want to marry you. But until the medics come through with their decision. . . Well, maybe we'd better not set a definite date."

And even with that, Lynne was satisfied. She turned her hands palm to palm with his and let her fingers tighten. She gave him a small, twisted grin.

"Okay, mister, as long as you don't run out on me again."

"Lynne!" There was real hurt in Reff's voice.

So she was sure of Reff's love now. She felt it in the warmth of his arms, in his kiss as they parted at dawn in her little foyer.

She said, "It's good tomorrow is Sunday. A gal needs to sleep late after a night like this has been."

He pulled her closer. "Not later than noon, you lazy wench. Remember you've got to tell Larkin about us. I'll feel much better when that lad is definitely out of the picture. He's got too many things I don't have. I'm still no saint."

The laughter went out of his eyes. "Will you try to remember that, Lynne?"

"Uh, huh," she nodded, laughing. Yet for a long minute Reff held her fiercely tight, as if suddenly afraid of more lost hours. But when he looked back from the turning of the outer hall, his voice was gay again. "I'll be seeing you, angel, in just a few hours."

A FEW hours? Two long weeks went by without so much as a word from him. Two weeks in which Lynne realized he hadn't even told her where he was staying. Days of such sick humiliation as she'd never dreamed she could possibly endure. To have the same man walk out on you twice! It was revolting to find she'd been taken again, by a theory. A theory that this time had probably been just a plain gag, something to relieve the boredom of waiting for medical verdicts. Reff probably hadn't even expected her to believe it. And now he had found some more exciting way to pass that waiting time!

But why couldn't he have done that in the first place? There were plenty of places in Manhattan and plenty of girls who were suffering from the man-power shortage. Why did Reff have to pick on her again? And why had she been such a zany to let him? Why had she been fool enough to break with Hunt the very next morning?

And so it was Sunday night two weeks later, and she was raging up and down her small apartment, flinging things right and left, remembering that night at the Moonlight, the way Reff had talked, the way he'd kissed her.

Finally she threw herself into her big chair and cried knowing that her tears weren't all anger. She hurt, way down inside of her, a bruised sort of feeling that wanted comforting. That was the weak spot in her make up. That childish longing for comfort when she was hurt.

It was terribly hot, that lifeless heat that so often strikes across New York in early fall. Drained of tears at last, she got up and washed her face. She put on a striped Mexican skirt and a cool peasant blouse. She brushed her hair until it shone. Not that it mattered. All there was to do was to eat supper and go to bed. It was a sample of all her evenings to come. She was through with men. When she went to work down at Navy Information tomorrow, she'd make those fresh young ensigns understand that definitely. It was good she hadn't told Reff she wasn't modeling any more. He so likely would have thought she had changed on account of that first theory.

She set the gate-leg table for one, and opened the door into the outer hall to get more breeze. When she came back from the kitchen with her supper on a tray, Reff was in the

(Continued on page 83)



# Sorry--He's Mine

★ By LUCINDA BAKER ★

*Tip was in the middle of a dream until Jingle woke him up.*

THE door-bell rang insistently, peeling through the old-fashioned house in Hanover Square. Jingle hurried downstairs, two steps at a time, which was quite a trick since she was so tiny.

The late afternoon sun came across the little square of private park outside and speared its way through the stained glass of the old door, splashing vivid color. Splotches of rose and gold spotlighted Jingle's thick, shining gold-brown hair, which she wore straight and pinned back with a bow. Her starched white pinafore made rustling music as she walked.

She opened the front door to a young man. "Is this the Mason Wake-Up Service?" he inquired.

"Yes," Jingle said, in her ordinary voice. She'd never had trouble breathing before, certainly, but she did now. It didn't make sense. The young man on the porch reminded her of something or someone. At first she didn't know what or who. And then, suddenly, she knew. He reminded her of a dream she'd had, without quite being aware of it, for most of her nineteen years.

He wasn't in uniform, which was unusual, because he couldn't have been more than twenty-five. Without meaning to, Jingle stared at him.

The young man burst out angrily, "You're right, I'm not in uniform, even though I look young and healthy." His voice was bitter and young and hard. "I've got a steel plate in my skull from a plane crash when I was an air cadet. But I'm doing a war job to the best of my ability."

Jingle flushed hotly. "I'm sure I don't care anything about your reasons." She was furious with herself for having liked him at first.

The young man relented, then. "I'm sorry," he said, tiredly. "I don't know why I exploded. You did seem to stare, and—I've had four fights recently, and been asked by nine women

why I was home and their sons weren't. I suppose I'm over-sensitive."

Jingle determined not to feel sorry for him, he'd been so rude at first, but she felt herself slipping when he smiled apologetically. It wasn't quite comfortable to have a man realize you'd stared at him.

She said stiffly, "What did you want?"

"I read about your wake-up service in the paper and since it was so close to where I live, I decided to subscribe. I've an alarm clock, but I always forget to set it, and when I do, I sleep right through the alarm." The young man smiled again, as if he hoped she'd forgotten about his first outburst.

"I'll need your telephone number," Jingle said primly. Mentally she told herself, "Jingle Mason, this is ridiculous. What's wrong with you? He's just another man, another subscriber. He was rude to you, besides. You ought to turn him away." But she didn't, and she still felt breathless. It wasn't because of the way he looked. He wasn't spectacularly handsome, just tall, thin, with a thatch of red hair and a hard, cleft chin so determined it hurt. His eyes were gray.

"Name, please?" Jingle asked, efficiently.

"Tip Van Dyck. My phone number is Drexel one—seven-one-nine-one. I want to be called by five-thirty every morning. I've got to be at work by seven, and it's a long way. You may have to ring me twice. I'm hard to waken. But my job is desperately important, and I've got to be on time, so keep on ringing."

"Address?" Jingle asked, with a coolness she didn't feel.

"Sixty-two Hanover Square," Tip Van Dyck said. "I have the old chauffeur's quarters at the Scott place, across the Square, over the garage. Maybe you know which place it is."

"TIP, darling, hurry!" someone called possessively from the outside. Jingle could see Cynda Ames' roadster at the curb, and Cynda herself tripping up the path to the porch. She was lovely and very, very smooth. Her keen, knowing eyes took in at once that Jingle was impressed by Tip. A wise, sardonic

"There'll be someone for you, some day, someone who'll think you're glamorous and wonderful. Anyone would," Kip said gallantly. "Your eyes are pretty and your lips are definitely kissable."

little smile touched her lips, and she said, in amusement, "Yes, he is rather wonderful, isn't he, Jingle, the first time you see him? You stay home too much, Jingle. You ought to have dates and go out and meet people."

Jingle's nerves froze. So he was Cynda's private property. She'd probably even suggested he rent the Scott garage-apartment, next door to the Ames home. Jingle ignored Cynda's remark, but flushed. There was nothing you could say to a girl like Cynda. Even her cattiest remarks were made gaily, teasingly, so you couldn't quite be sure they were malicious.

Cynda said, "Well, good-bye, Jingle dear. It's so wonderful to see you!"

Tip had laughed in an embarrassed way when Cynda said he was wonderful, but now, helping Cynda down the path, he had forgotten Jingle ever existed.

Jingle watched them drive around to the opposite side of the grassy little park, where the roadster stopped before Cynda's home. Then, slowly, Jingle turned and went back into her own house. She felt disappointed, mysteriously, because Tip belonged to Cynda. It shouldn't have mattered, but it did.

From far away upstairs, a child called, "Jingle, where are you?"

Jingle ran up to the nursery, to Poppy, her small niece. Poppy was three. Her Navy father was in the South Pacific, and she had never known her mother, who had died when she was born. Poppy was the reason Jingle wasn't going to college, or working in a war plant, the reason she'd had to invent a job she could do at home. Poppy was a golden elf of a child who made up for everything whenever Jingle grew impatient about missing out on fun and a career.

Later she put Poppy to bed and listened to the radio. At ten o'clock she started to telephone people all over the city to get them to work on the night shifts at various defense plants. When that was finished, she decided she'd take a walk around the Square.

It was just coincidence, she told herself, that she passed Cynda Ames' house four times. And it actually was an accident that she happened to be nearby when Cynda came out, dressed in something filmy and gleaming escorted by a lean-framed young man whose hair looked red even in the dark.

Jingle stood very still, in the shadows, hoping to avoid discovery and conversation. But Cynda saw her.

"Oh, good evening, Jingle," she said. "What are you doing standing out here in the dark? I'd almost believe you were spying on Tip and me, if I didn't know better!" Cynda's joking laughter sounded to Jingle like acid-flavored molasses. A second later, Cynda and Tip were gone, driving out of the Square,

forgetting completely that Jingle was alive.

But even in that moment in the dark, Jingle had seen Tip's smile. It had met her own, for a moment and was especially intended for her, she was sure.

Jingle realized she hadn't even denied Cynda's implication, it had happened so quickly. Besides, she'd been speechless, seeing Tip's smile. It was unthinkable that one man could make such an impression on her in such a short time. Her renewed dislike of Cynda couldn't be jealousy—but it was.

Jingle was still more furious with herself later, when she tried to sleep. She kept remembering Tip, with the sunlight making a bonfire of his hair that afternoon when he'd appeared at her door.

At five the next morning she was up calling her customers for the early shifts. Tip was the last one, and when she came to his number her fingers were trembling, and so was her heart.

She got his number, and waited while the little buzzing sound repeated six, eight, twelve times, unanswered. Tip had said, "You may have to ring twice." She laughed, sardonically. He was certainly a master of understatement. But he'd also said his job was desperately important, that he had to be there on time.

Jingle told herself, "Maybe he just isn't used to the telephone ringing. Maybe it's in the next room." Then two minutes later she was outside, crossing to the opposite side of Hanover Square, to the Scott's old-fashioned garage apartment.

She went up the outside stairs and rapped on the door sharply. Only the screen door was closed, since the weather was early fall. She called Tip, but there was no answer. Finally, she gingerly stepped into the little living room. She was very crisp and businesslike, even if she had to step over two tremendous black shoes, a crumpled tuxedo, and a wilted carnation.

She called his name and after several attempts was answered by a sleepy "Go away."

Jingle flushed, angrily. After all, this was certainly beyond the call of duty, but Tip had said his job was important, and her contribution to the war effort was to get him there.

She said, menacingly, "I won't go away. If you don't wake up I'll get some ice water."

At that, he roared, "What are you doing, you snooping old maid?"

"I'm Jingle Mason. You paid me to wake you up. I rang the telephone twelve times and you wouldn't answer," she explained, awkwardly.

"Well, you can go now. I'm awake," he said in a gruff voice.

He could at least have been a little appreciative, Jingle thought, so she said primly,

angrily, "If your job is so important, you oughtn't to stay out all hours of the night at night clubs. You're a war worker, not a playboy."

With that, she left, her cheeks were blazing. "I hate you, Tip van Dyck," she muttered to herself. "After this you can sleep all day. Lose your job. See if I care if you ruin the whole war effort!"

Her anger was a strange kind that hurt, mysteriously. All that day, she kept wondering at the oddest times if Cynda Ames had said something about her to make Tip think she was an old maid at nineteen. Not that it mattered, of course!

Cynda was a post deb, one of the few remaining gliter-girls in town. Before the war, her house had been crowded with admirers at all hours of the day. The war was quite an annoyance to Cynda, because most of her old retinue was gone, and the present crop of men wasn't always sure of being stationed near the city very long. Cynda liked the permanent kind of beau, the kind that pays constant court.

**I**T was just past five when Jingle's door bell rang that second night. When she opened it, there was Tip. He seemed subdued and rather shy.

His voice was very soft. "I want to apologize for this morning. It wasn't my temper that time. I must have frightened you out of your wits, roaring the way I did. I'm like a lot of men, I guess, always like a man-eating tiger when I wake up in the mornings. I'm not human for a couple of hours. And it was such a surprise, hearing your voice outside my door that I didn't quite realize you were real until you were gone. I want to thank you for waking me up."

Jingle said, not quite knowing why, "Won't you come in? I'm giving my niece her supper, and I can't leave her long." She invited Tip back to the yellow-and-white kitchen, where Poppy was enthroned on a high chair.

In the light, Tip looked tired and much too thin, as he slumped into a chair. His eyes were outlined in shadow. He still seemed embarrassed and sorry. "Thanks for getting me to my job. It's pretty important and I'd hate to be late. I overslept because I've got a pretty stiff program. I work from seven till three, and an hour or two overtime. I go to night school, finishing up some work on my Master's degree in chemistry, from six to ten. Between five and six, I study, and at lunch time, too."

"And after ten, you go night-clubbing," Jingle put in, forgetting he'd called her an old maid that morning. But somehow, now, she felt as if they'd known each other forever.

Tip frowned, restlessly, "I know, but Cynda

enjoys it, if I expect her to go on dating me, I've got to put forth some effort to give her a good time. She's pretty wonderful. And I'm not forgetting she can have any man she wants."

Jingle felt like crying. She'd heard that tone before, from Cynda's men. Link Lorrimer had used almost those very words before he went overseas. When they were in love with Cynda, men didn't know other girls existed, especially one like Jingle, small and golden and with the look of being a fugitive from grammar school.

But she thought, angrily: You wouldn't even listen if I told you the truth about Cynda! She likes adoration but is incapable of loving any man in return, because she loves herself too well.

Aloud, Jingle said, "Surely Cynda wants you to be well and happy. She'd understand if you can't give her all the free time you have."

Tip protested, "Of course, but she deserves something out of life! I haven't much to offer her as it is, at least not until I get my degree. I've been working on it for years, and now that I've got it almost, it seems farther away than ever."

"Are you . . . really in love with her? Are you sure?" Jingle asked, needlessly.

"She's all I've ever wanted," Tip said, very low, seeming to forget Jingle and Poppy were still there. "When I was young I used to dream of her, or someone like her." The storm came back to his eyes. "I'm trying to build a future for us. But I can't expect her just to sit home and wait for the future."

Jingle felt a sudden, terrible helplessness. She wanted to do something to keep Tip from being hurt.

She tried to change the subject. "Have you had supper?" she asked. "I made some muffins, and they're still hot."

"I wasn't going to eat dinner tonight," Tip said. "I'm late for class, anyway." But he looked longingly at the muffins and a second later, he was buttering one.

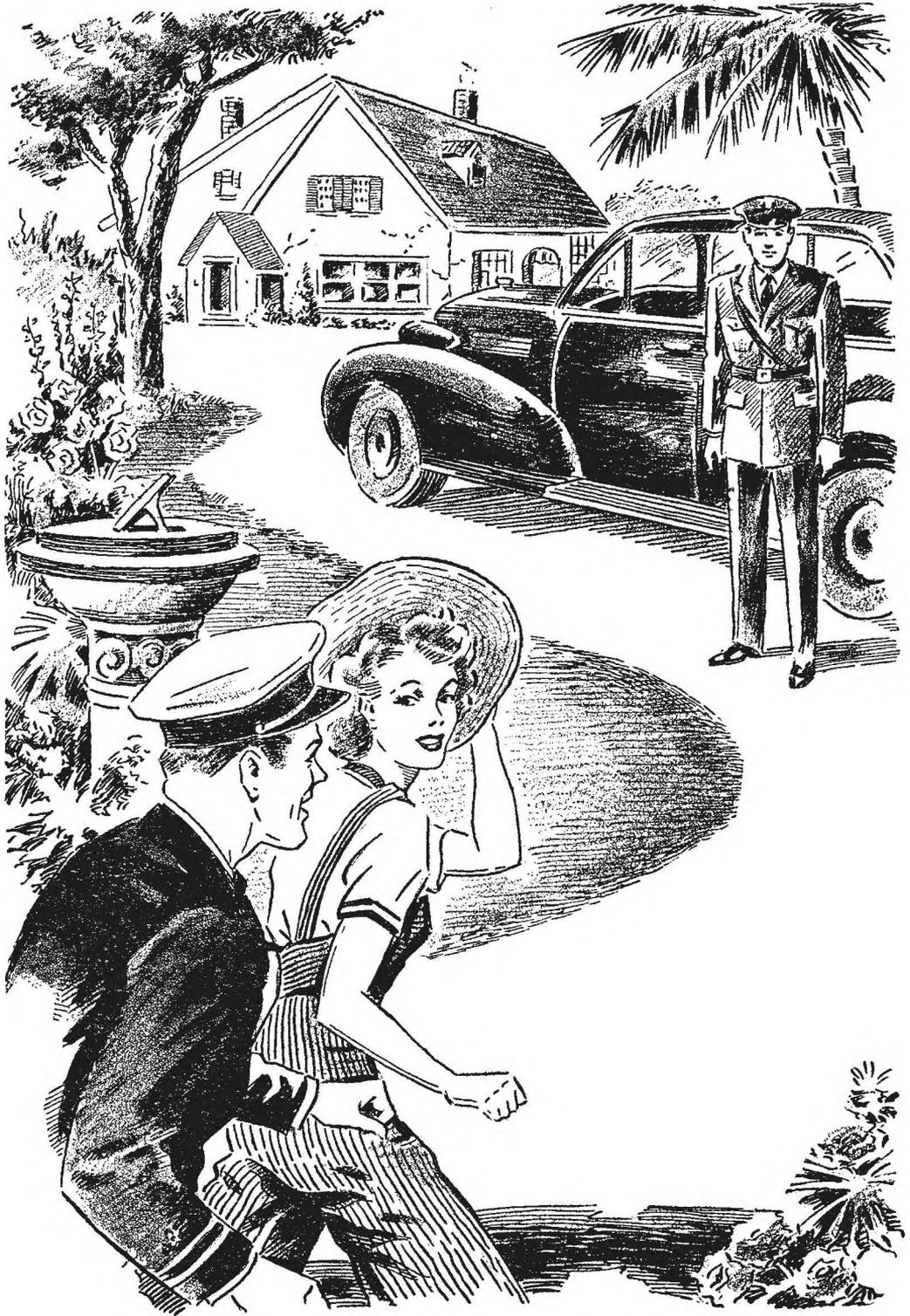
Watching him, Jingle told herself severely, "Jingle, you need to be woke up yourself. You need to have an alarm clock go off in your heart and tell you it's time to be sensible." But a second later, she was saying, "Tip, you really should take time to eat. You're too thin."

He laughed, and came over to where she stood. "You're always awfully nice, grandmother. Can I take it for granted that we're friends?"

"Of course," Jingle said, her throat dry.

"Okay. Then it's kiss and makeup?" Tip asked. His eyes had a special kind of twinkle, teasing and full of laughter. He tipped up her

*(Continued on page 88)*



# The Humble Warrior

By MAURINE GEE

*Vicky's love had stormy weather until it found  
a safe harbor in the right man's heart.*

VICKY ALLEN looked up from her work on the booster pump as a car drove in the ranch gate from Indio-Palm Springs highway and stopped in the shade of a date palm.

When she recognized the Navy lieutenant behind the wheel, she could do nothing but stare. A cold feeling rippled across her shoulders, and above the tightness in her throat she could only say, "Hi, Randy. . ." And her voice sounded far off, as though she were speaking in a dream.

"Got your letter," he said. "Thought I'd better use part of my leave to see what's cooking—"

Vicky wasn't listening. She was looking at the bright-eyed girl who sat beside him. Dark burnished hair and a piquant face; Randy's playmates were always rather special. It was just this brand of feminine explosive who'd killed Vicky's interest in him in the first place.

They had quarreled about whether or not they would get married before he went to sea. Vicky thought a war marriage was sane and sensible, but her father objected and Randy agreed with him.

"Eighteen—" he'd painted out, "you're just an infant, honey. We've years of fun ahead before we need to settle down."

He was just a fresh ensign then, assigned to the Armed Guard on board a merchant ship. In those early days of riding hot cargo the password was still, "Sighted sub, *glub, glub.*"

Secretly, Vicky had been convinced that their wedding would be then or never. Randy was a wild buckaroo, fond of racing a fast car or flying a hot plane. Anything forbidden was just that much added fun. If the thought of shipping out, when U-boats were running in packs, wasn't enough to quiet him down, then there was little hope for him.

"My, what a beautiful soldier," Randy murmured. "Did you stuff him yourself?"

Right in the midst of the deadlock, Mimi Hays, his old Pasadena flame, had sauntered across the dance floor of the Tic Toc Club with an Adrian gown on her back and a cocoa-brandy in her hand. Vicky was dancing with an Army lieutenant, just to let Randy see she wasn't the kind you could leave around unattached and Randy had turned to Mimi like a thirsty fire-fighter who stumbles onto a cool, bubbling fountain.

The lieutenant had to drive Vicky back to the ranch and Randy had followed. Everyone made accusations and said the wrong things. When the men started arguing, Vicky had turned the hose on them, just as she always did when Jigger and the other dogs got into a fight.

Randy had said she was the one who needed cooling off, and he tossed her into the swimming pool, new dress and all. That was definitely the end of their love affair.

Now here he was again, after two years, thinner and browner, grinning at her, not quite sure of his welcome. He owned the five acres of neglected date palms next to her father's own well-manicured ranch and Vicky wanted to own that five. That was her reason for writing the letter.

She slipped off her work gloves and went to meet his girl friend. She was Cheryl Stanley, daughter of the Los Angeles attorney who looked after Randy's affairs.

"Bet your folks don't know you're out here playing in the mud," Cheryl said, smiling sweetly.

"They're all in the Service," Vicky replied. "One's an Army flyer, one's a Navy pilot and my father has a desk job in Washington. I'm the boss here."

"Excuse it, please," Cheryl sighed. "I'm surprised, that's all. You're not what I expected."

"And what did you expect?"

"Oh, more bulge and muscle, I guess. But you're cute as a button."

"Anyway," Randy said hastily, "she wants to buy my place."

He got out of the car and looked Vicky over. She wore a checkered shirt, faded blue jeans and a rickety straw hat. Blunt-toed ski boots completed her working outfit. All very rugged, and she tried not to give a darn.

“WHAT gives?” he asked. “Why the sudden land hunger? Haven’t you got enough trouble right here to keep you busy?”

Vicky suppressed a shudder. She despised a liar, and yet she didn’t want to say the slightest thing to turn him against the sale. Instinct warned her to keep quiet about her new love, Captain Lawford. It was his money that was buying the ranch. At first the captain had hated the desert; it reminded him of Africa. But now it reminded him of Vicky, and she had talked him into buying Randy’s place. She had even dreamed of their own little cottage to amuse him. If you really want to put a deal over, you have to figure how the other fellow feels about it. You have to put yourself in his shoes, think his thoughts.

Love was dead and all that, but if Randy said, “Vicky, I’d like to buy that jade necklace your grandmother left you. You’re not using it and I want Cheryl to have it,” how would she feel? She’d spit tacks, that’s what! And certainly she didn’t want *him* spitting tacks, at least, not until the deal was in escrow.

“It just happens that I’d like to own your place,” she said. “Don’t worry, you’ll get your money.”

“What did you mean about my stuff going to pot? Dates can take a beating. Why can’t you let me have water until I can sink a well or make a deal with the new owners on Del’s place?”

Vicky shook her head. “Our little eight-inch pipes won’t take the pressure,” she said. “I forced water to your stuff just after Del sold out. Now our pipes leak at every joint. I don’t dare try it again.”

“If you get my place, what will you do for water?”

“Tear out this eight-inch pipe and put in bigger stuff.”

“But you won’t do it for me?”

Vicky shrugged. “We can’t get the labor and we can’t get the pipe. It’s all a gamble. If you’re going to keep the place you ought to put down your own well. Trouble is, you can’t get the drilling outfit in there for months. They’re booked solid.”

“Could be you’re getting tough with me?”

“Could be,” she said, and glanced at him quickly to make sure he wasn’t getting too annoyed.

“Fine note,” he said, “Del selling out and leaving my stuff to burn up. Who bought his place?”

“Canby, head man over on the Taza Del

Rey ranch.” Vicky answered briskly. “Why not get water from him? Why not pay him to look after my stuff?”

Vicky shrugged again. “Come on, I’ll show you just how bad it is.”

Frowning and intent, he started off after her. They were stopped by a low cry from Cheryl.

“Hey,” she pouted, “wait for me.”

She hopped out of the car and Vicky glanced doubtfully at her wispy slippers, her sheer stockings and the short print dress.

“The house is air-cooled,” she said. “Perhaps you’d be happier with Aunt Meribell. She adores visitors.”

Cheryl slipped her arm through Randy’s. “Whither thou goest, I will go,” she laughed, batting her thick lashes against the tiny black gnats that swam in the air. “I’m really quite rugged.”

Vicky led off, keeping to the firm, damp earth of the irrigation border. Often it was soggy and often it was muddy. Cheryl clung to Randy’s hand and jumped the worst places. She suffered quietly the mud that clung to her slippers, but when they reached Randy’s weed-grown land, she stopped with an anquished shriek.

“My stockings,” she wailed. “Just look at my beautiful stockings!”

They watched while she pulled a weed pod from the sheer stocking and wet the tip of her finger with a pink tongue to dab at the snagged spot. She glanced out over the waist-high weeds that stood dry and brittle.

“Randy, look at your shoes,” she protested. “Surely you’re not going to ruin your blues plowing through that stuff.”

He caught Vicky’s wide-eyed, innocent look and gently he turned Cheryl around facing the way they had come.

“You go back to the house,” he said. “You’ll enjoy visiting with Vicky’s Aunt Meribell.”

Cheryl hesitated, but her makeup was beginning to melt, her slippers were a mess, and those gnats were going to be the death of her fragile strip eyelashes.

Back on the firm, damp irrigation border, she called to Vicky, “Happy safari! Bring him back alive.”

She went on toward the house and Randy turned to Vicky with a smile. “They’re her wheels,” he said lightly, as though that explained everything.

“Her wheels?”

“Her car,” Roger said patiently. “I had to get someone to drive me down.”

Vicky said, “I see.”

“Obviously you don’t, he said, with a trace of bitterness. “You don’t see anything. No one who hasn’t been away from this country for months can understand what getting back

means. There isn't a guy on the ship doesn't dream of dating a girl with wheels every minute he's free."

Vicky said nothing. She meant to stick strictly to business. She pointed out the sturdiness of the first row of palms that had grown sleek off the water and fertilizer that had seeped across the line from her father's place. They walked over the rest of the five acres, eleven palms wide by twenty-two palms deep, and she pointed out the weathered ones, with only seven spaves each, because they lacked water.

They paused in the shade before turning back to the house.

"Okay," Randy said, pushing back his cap and wiping his hot forehead with a spotless handkerchief. "So it's seedy. But I like it, and I'm hanging on to it."

Vicky reminded herself to remain calm. Yelling never got her anywhere with Randy. "Don't keep it to spite me," she said, her voice cool and amused. "Even if you got water on your stuff tomorrow, you'd only get about twenty per cent of a crop."

"If you don't stop giving me that hard, brittle stare," he said, "I'll break you in two just to see where the old Vicky is hiding."

Vicky didn't pretend to understand it, but no one in the world could make her as stark, raving wild as Randy Jones. And he knew it!

"There isn't an old Vicky," she said. "There's just me—alive and breathing and having fun. You expected me to cut my throat when we broke up. Is that it?"

He caught her wrist with one hand, and he was smiling.

"Now you begin to look familiar," he said. "You're beginning to come alive. Is that color I see in those cheeks? Is that the mouth I remember?"

He was still smiling and there was a reckless flicker in his eyes that should have warned her. But mixed with her distrust was a curiosity. She felt he didn't give a hoot about her, really; it was just his masculine pride that rebelled at getting the final brush-off.

"Look, Vicky, I'm not making anything of it, but I've been where the going is tough. I've had that lost-in-the-dark feeling. For a long time I tried not to give a damn about anything, but it doesn't work out that way. Getting dunked in the drink over and over finally beats all the cockiness out of a fellow. I've grown up. I'm just a little guy, trying to get along."

He didn't look it. His shock of dark hair was unruly, his eyes were sharply penetrating and his smile as impudent and amused as ever. True, he was thinner and browner and looked much older. But she doubted he had

changed; she doubted that any cloud of personal experience could ever humble his wayward spirit. He was just playing for sympathy. The barrier was still there between them, high and wide.

He didn't seem to feel it. He had her in his arms and kissed her before she could resist. She caught her breath, her mouth a hard, stubborn line. Against her will those lips of hers curved in response to his.

She pushed away, and he let her go. She hoped he hadn't noticed. She walked rapidly toward the house and he followed.

"You see how it is," he said gently.

Then he *had* noticed.

She turned to him unwillingly. "Doesn't mean a thing," she said, her voice dry and unemotional. "It's just—just animal intensity. If you must know, I'm going to marry an Army man, Captain Lawford, stationed here at the airfield. He's wonderful. Steady and understanding and—"

Randy interrupted her, an eyebrow quirked up, "How long have you known this wonder man?"

"Long enough."

"I doubt it," he contradicted in that maddening, quiet voice. "He doesn't know you, Victoria, my love. I do. I expect you to blow up in my face; raise hell over trifles and sulk because I'm a man and not a mouse. But you're precious in a vicious sort of way and I'm happier with you than without you. Two years I've stuck it out and still you're the only woman—"

"Certainly," Vicky agreed. "You've been too busy keeping alive to worry about women." She saw that she had made her point and added, "I have two brothers, remember, and I know the peculiar workings of the masculine mind."

"Where are they now?"

"Johnny's in England, co-pilot on a Fort and Tim's on a carrier in the South Pacific." Her voice softened as she spoke of her brothers. Randy knew the boys, the three had been good friends. "We worry about them."

The three dogs came charging down from the house to meet them. Jigger, Johnny's setter, barked louder and panted harder than the others to show his welcome. He doubled around in a crescent, walking backward, in an appeal to some kind-hearted soul to scratch his back.

Randy bent to the task and glanced up at Vicky, a curious expression in his eyes.

"You really want that five acres?"

Little prickles of pleasure rushed over her. Was this the way you won a victory—when you'd practically lost hope?

"You know I do," she said.

"Okay, when we get into the house, we'll do a little figuring."

Vicky shoved Jigger ahead of her and raced him up the driveway. She was so happy, she felt that she had to get action or break out in a rash.

MEL LAWFORD'S car was parked in the shade of the paloverde tree. He got out and stood waiting for them, very neat and solid in his uniform.

"My, what a beautiful soldier," gently Randy murmured. "Did you stuff him yourself?"

The captain was older than Randy and he came forward to meet him in the manner of a gracious host.

"I see Victoria's been dragging you over her dream place," he said, with a sympathetic smile for Randy's wilted appearance. "I'll bet she even showed you where we're going to build—"

He paused, warned by the look in Vicky's eyes.

"The land belongs to Lieutenant Jones," she explained.

"Ah, Jones, to be sure," said the captain.

"You're in on this deal?" Randy asked him.

Vicky held her breath. She wanted to shriek, "No, no," to her blundering captain.

He seemed to realize that more hung on his reply than he knew. "If there is a deal," he said drily.

Randy gave Vicky a power-dive look. "As a matter of fact," he said, "I'm going to hang onto the place and see if I can't get this new man, Canby, to look after it. If you two want to build a house there, it's all right with me. It looks like a long war."

Vicky could have throttled him.

"I doubt we can get in touch with Canby before five," she said smoothly. She had heard Mr. Canby was a tough customer, and certainly she hoped he took an instant dislike to Randy. "We can phone the Taza ranch and find out."

"We?" said Randy, his eyebrow quirking.

"Certainly," Vicky said grimly, and she thrust her arm through the captain's to show that she bore him no ill will. "We Allens are good neighbors, even if it kills us."

She saw plump Aunt Meribell and Cheryl Stanley come out on the porch, squinting in the bright sunlight.

"Shall we join the ladies," she said. "Hey, Aunt Meribell, here are two of your favorite men . . . Excuse me, I'm going to see if I can get in touch with Mr. Canby so we can drive over there before dinner."

"Randy, Randy," cried Aunt Meribell and she descended on him with open arms. "Why didn't you let me know you were coming? I would have made you some cookies."

He swung her off her feet and they were both babbling sweet nothings as Vicky hur-

ried inside and closed the door behind her.

The door opened and closed again, and Randy followed her to the telephone table in the hall.

"Snooping?" Vicky asked, reaching for the directory.

He nodded. "It's like you to buy Canby's place just to leave me high and dry."

Vicky thought that over, because some such thought had been going through her mind.

"And it's like you to marry that long-nosed captain because it happens that he's everything I'm not."

"You dislike the captain?"

"I'm just trying to keep you from marrying the wrong guy."

"You did that once," Vicky said quickly.

"Thank you too much."

His annoyed frown eased to a smile. "I asked for that one!" he admitted.

She got the Taza Del Oro Ranch and talked over the extension to the Canby cottage. Mrs. Canby said that her husband would be home a little after five and would talk to them then. Vicky kept her fingers crossed. She hoped Mr. Canby would be far too busy to bother with Randy or his date palms.

Aunt Meribell had come in with the others and caught the end of the telephone conversation.

"Now we can visit in comfort," she said, motioning them all toward the living room. "Randy, we've been hearing all about those hair-raising experiences of yours. How does it feel to have your ship break in two? Weren't you frightened to death? Is it true that raw fish quenches the thirst?"

"The stock answer to that," said Roger, "is absolutely and definitely possible. If it's all the same, I'd rather hear from the captain. I understand your Ferrying Group here is tops—"

Vicky left the cozy foursome and hurried to her room. After her shower, she brushed her reddish brown hair till it lay smooth and glistening. She slipped on a white sharkskin dress and thrust the two tortoise-shell combs in her hair where they would be the most effective, and put on a pair of white sandals, even more feminine and impractical than the ones that Cheryl Stanley was wearing.

She slipped quietly back into the living room. The captain saw her. He kept right on with what he was saying about the group of nurses they had ferried back from Africa, but his eyes stared, warm and approving, and the others glanced her way.

"The captain's grounded," Cheryl laughed. She nodded at Vicky with a sudden gleam of distrust. "They ought to outlaw bubble baths. Look what it's done for junior."

Vicky was just a little fussed. Not that being

admired was a novelty, but having Randy and that Cheryl around seemed to engender a nervous feeling of competition that worried her. Cheryl was a dear, sweet girl, no doubt, but Vicky just naturally didn't like her.

"We may as well drive on over to see Mr. Canby," she said.

"Not I," said Aunt Meribell. "It's too hot. I'll stay here and see that Josephina gets us something decent for supper."

Cheryl and Randy protested that they couldn't possibly stay.

"Why not?" Aunt Meribell demanded. "The captain is staying. We'll eat in the screened porch, no trouble at all."

"Of course, they'll stay," Vicky said. "Randy knows you're a wonderful cook."

They set out in Cheryl's car with Randy driving. She sat beside him in the front seat, talking so low that her words did not carry back to the back seat where Vicky sat very close to her captain to keep out of range of the windshield mirror.

"Sorry I spoke out of turn," the captain said in her ear.

"Don't worry."

"I guess the deal's off."

"Guess again," said Vicky in a fierce undertone. "I'm counting on Canby turning him down, but if he doesn't I'll think up something, or the Navy's going to be short one lieutenant."

"Nice fella," the captain said. "I wish he'd stayed on the high seas."

Mr. Canby came outside to talk to them. He was a powerful, weather-beaten man, but his eyes gleamed approval as he spied Randy's blues. He had been a petty officer in the last war and he thought Randy had used right smart sense in turning to the Navy. Randy, oozing tact and the humble spirit, had Mr. Canby's sympathy in no time.

It was a right smart drive over to the new place but Mr. Canby had been saving for a place of his own for years and now that he owned the place, he was eager to build his house and get things in shape. In the meantime, though he had more now than he could rightfully look after, he'd be glad to help out a neighbor.

Randy drove away from the conference with a fine smirk on his face. Cheryl was wilted; the captain was thoughtful and Vicky's thoughts rushed around, seeking an out. She refused to accept defeat.

They were in the midst of dinner, when Vicky answered the telephone and found that her father was calling from Washington. Premonition stabbed her like a knife.

"Yes, Dad?" she said weakly.

"Bad news, Vicky." Her father's voice sounded blurred. "Look, baby, maybe you'd better sit down."

Vicky gave a moaning cry. "Oh, Dad, is it Johnny or Tim?"

"Johnny's missing in action over Germany—"

She didn't hear the rest of it. She was staring into Randy's white face and there were deep lines at the corners of his mouth. He seemed to fade back through the doorway and things fogged out. Not that she fainted or anything like that, but she found herself lying on the couch in the living room with everyone staring at her, and she felt they were strangers. She hated and detested each and every one of them.

"Go away," she said in a harsh voice to override the ringing sound in her ears. "Get out and close that door."

Cheryl left hurriedly and Aunt Meribell burst into tears, as she was led out, clinging to the captain's arms. Randy closed the door after them and returned to sit beside her.

"Take it easy, Vicky," he urged. "I talked to your father. There's still a chance Johnny and his crew landed in Germany. Likely they're prisoners there."

Pain closed in around her heart.

"Don't lie to me," she said. "He's dead, and you know it. I can stand anything but that blind hope business. If you want to drive me stark, raving crazy, just toss me that Pollyanna stuff."

Randy sat back on his heels and regarded her somberly. "Look, Vicky, I never talk about it, but how do you think I felt drifting seven days on a sliver of rubber raft that kept dunking the three of us overboard every chance it got. Sharks got one of the fellows and the other one went nuts and there was I, with nothing but hope and a soul full of prayers. You shake that stubborn head of yours because you think I'm too tough a guy for that sort of thing. But I've been there and I say there's power in prayer."

Vicky shook her head. "I don't deserve to have my prayers answered. I've been living here on the fat of the land, just thinking of myself. I scheme and work to get my own way . . ."

The words poured out in a torrent. She even dwelt on her moulding the captain to fit a mould he didn't like and her determination to swing the ranch deal. Randy listened with a quiet, knowing look, and when she could find no more words to voice her grief, he nodded.

"Feel better?" he suggested.

"Sort of relieved," Vicky sighed.

He nodded again. "You pumped out all the old bilge and now you know you'll do better next time. That, my girl, is prayer."

He left her and she lay staring at the faint light that streamed in through the Venetian

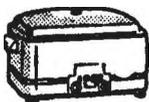
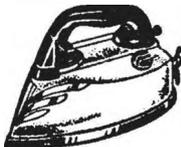
## LIMITED QUANTITIES

**Electric Stoves  
1-Burner and  
2-Burner**



**Carpet Sweepers  
Electric Vacuum  
Cleaners**

**Electric Steam Irons  
Automatic Electric Irons  
Electric Irons**



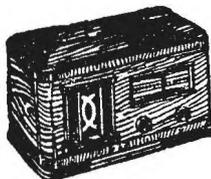
**Electric Roasters All Sizes  
Electric Waffle Bakers  
Electric Hair Dryers**



**Infra-Red  
Health Lamps**



**Schick Electric  
Shavers  
and Others**



**RADIOS, A.C. & D.C.  
Table & Console Models**



**Electric  
Food and Cream  
Mixers**



**Electric Sandwich  
Toasters**



**Electric Toasters  
Electric Broilers  
Automatic  
Pop-Up Toasters**



**Electric Room Heaters with  
or without Wire Guard**

**Electric Fans, All Sizes  
Electric Wire, All Sizes  
Heater Elements and  
Iron Elements  
Cooker Elements**



**Silverware for Home Use  
Silverware for Restaurant Use**

*Write or phone for prices*

**JOSEPH WINKLER & CO.  
667-671 N. CLARK ST. CHICAGO 10, ILL.**

## NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

blinds. She heard a rough, indignant barking from the back door where Jigger, Johnny's dog, was demanding food. Hot tears stung her eyelids and dampened the pillow under her head. Slowly, silently she said all the prayers she knew. She repeated them over and over and gradually the darkness mingled with her tears and she slept.

**A** WAKENED by the opening of the door, she sat up with a start.

"Randy?"

"We've got to push off," he said. "How do you feel?"

"I have a ton of bricks on my chest and I can't seem to swallow. My head is two sizes too large and my face feels stony."

"Those are called growing pains, Vicky. You'll get used to them."

"Never!"

He turned back toward the door and instantly Vicky was lonely. She got to her feet and straightened her crumpled dress.

"Randy, do you suppose I've got an anxiety neurosis or something? I can't bear to see you go."

She crossed to him in two quick steps and clung to him. She drew his head down until his lips met hers.

"Okay," he said, straining away from her. "You can have the damned ranch."

Her arms tightened around him. "And you, Randy? You go with the ranch?"

He stared down at her. "What about your captain?"

"He was never the one," she said with desperate conviction. "You're the only one who could ever worry me, annoy me, boss me and—comfort me. Oh, Randy, I see it now. You've grown up and I've got to follow along."

He smiled at her with the deepest understanding. He kissed her so earnestly, so delightfully, that Vicky forgot her anxiety and the long months of unhappiness. She forgot the pretty child, Cheryl, the handsome captain and even the ranch. In Randy's arms, she felt that she was whole at last.

"In the groove," he said. "Right in the groove."

THE END



(Continued from page 71)

living room standing there by the window.

She stared at him, wordlessly. Then her astonishment at seeing him was wiped out by a white-hot unreasoning anger at the way he looked. He was absolutely in the pink. Those old twin devils were rampant in his eyes, and his good-looking mouth was warm with it. All of the old Reff was back again, gay, assured, utterly reckless.

Maybe she would have forgiven him if he had shown the least sign of penitence for staying away so long, or realized how his absence

had hurt her. If he'd said something besides, "Hi angel, that salad looks darn good. Hope you've got enough for two . . ." Then she would have forgiven him. If he hadn't so obviously expected to be forgiven without explanation, she might have done it. As it was she set the tray down, and began to talk.

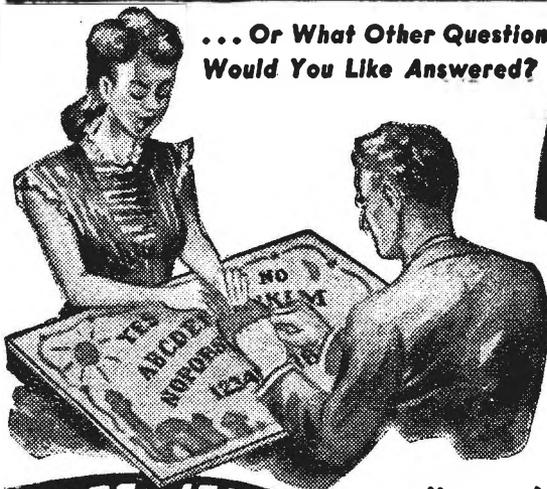
She never quite remembered what she said. She merely knew she flung words at him, fast and hot, hurting bitter words about men who picked up girls and threw them down again when they were tired of them.

Oh, it was a grand speech all right. She re-

**WILL I EVER BE RICH** **WHEN WILL I MARRY**



... Or What Other Question Would You Like Answered?



*Ask the magical Wizard*

Master Size  
Mysterious  
**TALKING BOARD**  
Complete  
With instructions on  
**HOW TO** **\$1.59**  
**MAKE BOARD TALK**

**FREE... IF YOU ACT NOW**  
**ASTROLOGICAL and PALMISTRY CHART**



Entertain your friends with what the stars have to say about their best day, their birthstone, birth flower and what the signs of the zodiac portend. Thrill them with Palmistry, too. **FREE** if you order your Wizard Board now!

**Uncanny! Answers Will Thrill and Mystify You!**

It's the uncanniest, most mystifying game of the year. More fun than the funnies. More baffling than a gypsy fortune teller. Ask the Wizard "Talking" Board any question. A thousand thrills, a thousand laughs. Anyone can become a Wizard expert in a jiffy. Bushels of entertainment for young and old alike. More fun than a circus when folks get together and personal questions start popping. And that's not all. If you act now without delay, you will receive **ABSOLUTELY FREE** a Wizard Astrological and Palmistry Chart mounted ready for use on the reverse side of your Wizard "Talking" Board. Yes **TWO** games for the price of **ONE** if you order at once. Don't wait! do it now!

★ **MAIL THIS COUPON NOW** ★

NATIONAL NOVELTIES, Dept. C-1  
192 North Clark St., Chicago 1, Ill. ... Fill out and paste this coupon on penny postcard  
Please rush Magical Wizard Talking Board with instructions on how to make board talk. I will pay postman \$1.59 plus C.O.D. fees and mailing costs. My \$1.59 will be cheerfully refunded if I am not delighted. Please include **FREE** Astrological and Palmistry Chart.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Please Print Clearly  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
To save shipping and C.O.D. charges—check here  and send \$1.59

**Win WAR BONDS**  
 A GRAND TOTAL OF  
**\$1,000.00**  
 IN PRIZES  
 FOR YOUR IDEAS



Midwest Radio Corporation—since 1920, famous for fine radios, and their factory-to-you selling plan with savings up to 50%—looks to the post-war future. To build the kind of radio you want, they ask you now to submit a letter on the subject: "What I Want In My Post-War Radio." For the 11 best letters, Midwest will give \$1,000.00 in War Bonds. Letters must not exceed 200 words and you may send as many entries as you wish. Letters will be judged on the practical value of the ideas contained therein and the decision of the judges will be final. In case of ties, duplicate prizes will be awarded. All entries must be postmarked not later than midnight December 31, 1944. Contest is open to all except employees of Midwest Radio Corporation, their advertising agency, and members of their families. Winners will be notified on January 31, 1945. Prizes will be awarded as follows:

- First Prize .....\$500 in War Bonds
- Second Prize .....\$200 in War Bonds
- Third Prize .....\$100 in War Bonds
- and eight prizes of a \$25 War Bond each.

Send your entry to Contest  
 Editor at the address  
 shown below.

**MIDWEST  
 RADIO**

**MIDWEST  
 RADIO CORP.**

Dept. 98-B, Cincinnati 2, Ohio

REAL COMPOSER OF MUSIC WILL CO-OPERATE  
 WITH LYRIC WRITERS IN SONG PRODUCTION.  
 FINE PUBLICATION PROPOSITION.

Recordings Made. Copyrights secured. Write Now.  
 C. Isabel Mayer, Box 3896, Portland 8, Ore.

**NEVER SCRATCH**

*Externally Caused*

**ECZEMA**



Do you want to relieve that fiery redness? Soothe the painful soreness? Soften the scaly skin? Curb that tantalizing itch? Then get a jar of Sayman Salve from your druggist NOW. Apply this grand medicated ointment directly on the affected areas. See if it doesn't bring the QUICK relief you want. Used successfully for more than fifty years. Big New Economy Size only 60c—regular size 25c. At all druggists.

**SAYMAN SALVE**

membered that much. She was so carried away with her own enthusiasm that she didn't realize he wasn't even trying to answer her. He just stood there, eyes cool gray steel and utterly remote, all their brightness gone. His mouth was a hard, tight line and a tiny nerve was twitching along the side of his cheek.

She remembered that after she'd finished with him, she thought: Well, if he doesn't know exactly what I think of him, then the Marines aren't as smart as they're cracked up to be.

She remembered that finally she had said on a fierce little whisper that he'd better go, and that a second afterward she'd found he had taken her at her word.

She stared at the place where he'd been. Then with a gasp, she sat down, and reaction swept over her in icy waves that discounted the heat. It frightened her and suddenly the old need of comfort choked her. She was afraid to be alone. Afraid to think. She reached a shaking hand and picked up the phone to call Hunt. Of course it was crazy, but all she could think of was the quiet steadiness of him, the cool certainty of his voice. She must get out of here and go somewhere to free herself from the thought of Reff and the aftermath of her anger!

She was dressed and ready when Hunt came.

**H**E DIDN'T ask a single question and **H** wasn't even surprised. He took her to all the usual places and the evening was like so many they'd spent together at the best places. Gradually Lynne's tumult quieted.

It was only when he said good night at her own door that he gave her any suggestion of having noticed that something was wrong with her. He said quietly. "I've always found that problems at the plant straighten out easier if I sleep on them. If something's bothering you, let it ride until morning, then make a quick decision on it, one way or the other, and stick to it. And Lynne dear . . ." His nice brown eyes were very steady. "You know, don't you, that I still want to marry you. Think that over, too."

She found he was right. In the morning she was very sure about everything. She was going to marry Hunt. It wasn't a silly reasonless shift of affections. Reff had been just glamor, both times. She was sure of that now. What she had felt for Hunt, and what she felt for him now, was real, the sort of thing that lasted, secure and untorn by treacherous emotions. It was the sort of life she must find for herself, a way to put men like Reff out of her silly heart.

Last night she had thought maybe she'd been unfair, because she hadn't given Reff a chance

## ALL THE LOVELY YESTERDAYS

to defend himself against her accusations. But this morning she could reason about that, too. If there had been a valid excuse Reff would have made her listen. It was as simple as that.

She called Hunt and told him she'd taken his advice, and she knew now what she wanted.

She put on a pale gray suit with a thin black pull-over sweater, and a tiny gray hat. Her mirror told her she looked very smart. But when Hunt met her for lunch at the Pierre, he took her into the flower shop and bought her a huge bunch of dewy violets with a red rose nestling in the center. As he pinned the violets carefully to her lapel he said she looked too somber for a renewed engagement party.

Their fragrance haunted her all through luncheon, and almost took her attention from the ring Hunt bought at Tiffany's.

As he presented it, he said "If we're starting over, you must have a new ring, and we'll make it emeralds this time, so you can always wear it, even if you change your mind."

"But I won't change, Hunt. I know now just what I want." But she wished he hadn't given her violets. Reff always had bought them for her from the little old woman on her corner. And one night at Coney Island with Reff, a fortune teller told her she never should wear emeralds.

But her engagement to Hunt went right on from there. Most of their friends didn't know it ever had been off. The wedding was to be at once, very quiet and with no honeymoon. Hunt was too busy to get away. Lynne would move from her place over to Hunt's penthouse in the East Sixties.

Today, Hunt was taking a few hours off and they were going shopping for silver. She was ready when Hunt came. She never kept him waiting in her living-room while she dressed.

But when she opened the outer door to him, he came in and sat down, fumbling restlessly for a cigarette. This was quite unlike Hunt, who always smoked a pipe. He said, "Wait a minute before you put on your gloves. I want you to take this."

He handed her a wisp of newspaper clipping, and went to look out the window, while she read.

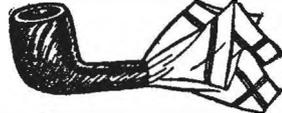
The date-line was the usual, "Somewhere in the Pacific." The big caption said:

**A YOUNG MARINE WITH A THEORY STAGES A ONE-MAN BOMBING MISSION OVER A SMALL ENEMY-HELD ISLAND.**

Lynne sat down suddenly. Hunt didn't move. Maybe it was because of the new fine newsprint that it took her so long to read the thing or maybe her eyes were blurred:



### HANDKERCHIEF TEST



**PROVES VITAL ZONE SPOTLESS  
AND FREE FROM "GOO"—no matter  
how often you smoke it!**



## HESSON GUARD MILANO



Just to get acquainted we will send you smart, new 10K yellow gold engagement ring or wedding ring. Romance design engagement ring set with flashing, Rose cut diamond solitaire in sentimental, sweet-heart mounting. Wedding ring is deeply embossed, 10K yellow gold, set with 3 genuine chip Diamonds. Either ring only \$5.95 or both for \$9.95 plus postage and 20% Federal tax. SEND NO MONEY with order, just name and ring size. Pay on arrival, then wear rings 10 days on money-back guarantee. RUSH order now! EMPIRE DIAMOND CO., Dept. 713-DB, Jefferson, Iowa.



# PULVEX FLEA POWDER

*Kills fleas* **25¢**  
AND 50¢  
JUST APPLY TO ONE SPOT

## High School Course at Home **May Finish in 2 Years**

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H. S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school admission is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dept. H-849, Drexel at 58th, Chicago 37

You Can  
Learn To

## Be an ARTIST

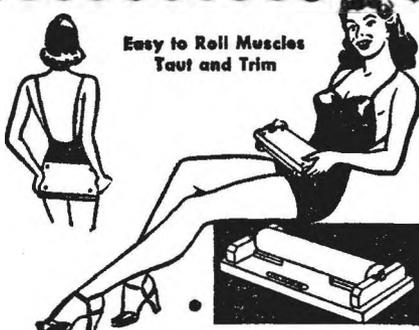


Trained Artists Are Capable of Earning \$30, \$50, \$75 Weekly. Many of our graduates are now enjoying successful Art careers. By our practical method, famous since 1914, we teach you COMMERCIAL ART, CARTOONING AND DESIGNING in ONE complete home-study course. Two art outfits furnished. Write for details in FREE CATALOG—"Art for Pleasure and Profit," explains course and commercial opportunities for you in Art. State age. STUDIO 9911K WASHINGTON SCHOOL OF ART  
1118-15th Street, N. W. Washington 5, D. C.

## POEMS WANTED

To be set to music. Send your song poem today for free examination by nationally famous hit composer, who has had over 325 songs published. Our new 6 step plan is most liberal and complete ever offered. Write today for free booklet. SCREENLAND RECORDERS, Dept. P. Hollywood 28, Calif.

## Why LET "POT-TUMMY" SPOIL A LOVELY FIGURE!



Easy to Roll Muscles  
Taut and Trim

### New Kind of Exercisor Helps Keep Body Neatly Streamlined

Why tolerate ugly bulges caused by weak, flabby muscles? Amazing how swiftly such muscles are made firm and trim by regular use of the Peter Walcher Magic Exercisor. Gentle kneading, rolling, massaging action really works wonders! Why not start streamlining your figure right now? Send only \$4.95 for a MAGIC EXERCISOR—use it up to 30 days! If not 100% satisfied, return for money back in full SPECIAL! For limited time, trial bottle of TROPICO Massage Oil included with every order. Used for aching muscles—tired feet. Also Free Food Chart-V. Walcher, Dept. 40, 4740 N. Western Ave., Chicago 25.

## NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

"Lieutenant Reffton Dare, lately released from an Eastern hospital where he'd been as the result of an eye injury received in a former mission, has personally demolished enemy positions on an unnamed island. When withering anti-aircraft fire killed several of his crew and disabled others, he miraculously managed to get all his bombs away, and do a swell job with them before returning to base, although he had also been seriously wounded. When asked how he performed such a super feat, he grinned and said he had a zany theory about getting back lost hours. And as he'd lost a lot because of being hospitalized he merely gave his idea a tryout. He just figured he'd be given back enough flying hours to blast those so-and-sos, before he conked out with loss of blood from his wounded arm. Later, after being flown home to the Marine hospital on the West Coast, we hear he added that he had been so darn thankful that he didn't lose his eyesight in an earlier flight that he'd just felt like celebrating, out over that dinky island.

Hunt turned, as Lynne crumpled the paper in her shaking fingers. "I checked up on the whole thing Lynne. I'm not asking what happened between you and Dare, that night you called me. But I think if you have any sense at all, you'll go to him now, and straighten it out."

"Hunt!"

He gave her a dry smile. "I've managed to get space for you on a plane to the Coast. You're a one-man girl, my dear."

"Hunt," she began again.

But he brushed it off. "For God's sake, don't thank me," he told her curtly. "There's a limit to what I can take. And don't think because I've got you plane accommodations that you'll necessarily keep them."

**S**HE didn't. She was put off with others, at Cleveland to make room for brass hats, and again later on to give space to a group of Navy nurses. But she managed to go on. Even if her man didn't want her now, she still was a one-man girl. Hunt had been right about that. She must put things right between Reff and herself. She knew now that you couldn't straighten out your love life by running into another man's arms for safety.

Oddly enough on the bus from the airport to the hospital, two young Marines sitting in front of her were talking about Reff.

One of them said, "That guy with theories about lost hours? Don't you believe it. It's just some hooley the reporters dreamed up. That baby's tough, the toughest looey in the outfit. The only reason he got that island was because he had the guts to take it. And don't let anybody tell you differently. I know him I tell you. Theories! Lost hours! My

## ALL THE LOVELY YESTERDAYS

eye! Why I don't believe he's even got a girl."

Lynne grinned softly to herself. Reff was so many different kinds of man, and all of them hers . . . she hoped. Maybe he wouldn't even want to see her. Maybe they wouldn't let her see him. That wounded arm might be worse than the paper made it out.

But she found the hospital was expecting her, because Hunt had wired ahead. Dear patient Hunt! Someday she must find a girl for him, the sort of girl he deserved, not a crazy idiot who didn't know her mind two minutes at a time.

But now all she could think of was Reff. Reff there in that high white bed, holding out one arm to her . . . the left one that pulled her against his heart. Reff saying to his much-too-pretty nurse, "Yeh! Didn't I tell you a guy gets back his lovely, lost hours?"

Lynne said, shaken, "So you tell that to all the girls!" But she knew her eyes were saying more. And the next second the pretty nurse was gone, and all the laughter had left Reff's mouth. It was just the old warm, aching line of wanting Lynne.

His voice was deep with the old tenderness.

"Lynne, if you think I'm going to waste time asking why you came, you're nuts. What's there to explain between you and me?"

Lynne said shakenly, "But darling if you'd only explained that night about your eyes . . . That clipping said . . ."

**H**E made her climb up and sit beside him on the high bed. He traced her eyebrows and the soft curves of her mouth with one finger.

"But angel, you talked so fast, and then I got mad, too, and . . . Well you see what I should have explained was that they put me in a dark room at the hospital, that very night after the Moonlight Club—and there wasn't even a phone. And anyway I didn't want you to know, until I was sure about my eyes. You see the trouble was something that might make me blind later, and . . . Oh hang it all I'm explaining!"

"Uh huh," said Lynne, "And so I'd better tell you that it was because you looked so darn jaunty that night, and . . . Oh, Reff what a heel I was, when all the time you were gay because you'd come to tell me your eyes were all right. I bet that was what Hunt knew when he sent me here."

"Hunt?" Reff shouted. "Is he still in this?"

She shook her head. "Not any more. Reff, I was such a darn fool about Hunt. And I know I really hurt him."

"So what?" Reff wanted to know callously. "He'll get over it. Besides you're my girl. Oh sure I'm a heel, but right now I can't seem to think of anything except the way they

## How to enjoy starched collar neatness and soft collar comfort



The answer is **SPIFFY** —the invisible collar stay

with the self-adjusting springs. Smooths away wrinkles and collar curl—holds down the points—keeps a fellow looking neat, smart and trim the whole day long.

### 19 Million Sold to Servicemen!

It's a "Must" with the boys in khaki . . . they're easy to mail. Why not send two or three to your man in the service!

Every man should have three or four—25c and more at men's stores everywhere.

# "Spiffy" COLLAR STAYS

CREST SPECIALITY COMPANY

663 W. Washington St. • Chicago 6, Ill.



## Follow This Man!

Secret Service Operator No. 38 Is On The Job!

Follow him through all the excitement of his chase after the counterfeit gang. See how a crafty operator solves a murder with tell-tale finger prints! Thrill! Mystery!

## FREE! The Confidential Reports No. 38 Made to His Chief

Earn a Regular Monthly Salary

Write for reports and free "Blue Book of Crime." Learn how YOU can become a Finger Print Expert at home, in spare time, at small cost. 53% of all Identification

Bureaus in U. S. employ our students or graduates! Get list of 540 bureaus employing I. A. S. trained men. Write today! Literature sent only to persons stating age.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE

1920 Sunnyside Avenue Dept. 7038, Chicago 40, Ill.

# TAKE OFF UGLY FAT

**12 TO 15 LBS. A MONTH  
Safely . . . Pleasantly  
NO REDUCING DRUGS**

It isn't as difficult as it sounds. If you follow the simple directions given here you'll find it easy, pleasant and safe to lose as much as 12 to 15 pounds of ugly fat this very month. Ask your own doctor. You don't go on strict, harmful diets—in fact you **EAT EVERYTHING**. Here's all you do:

1. Eat your regular meals but avoid eating between meals and over-eating.
2. Don't cut out starchy foods or sweets—**JUST CUT DOWN ON THEM.**
3. Be sure you get enough of a certain essential vitamin and minerals while reducing—take 2 Bee-Fit Tablets after each meal.

They are **ABSOLUTELY SAFE** and help you feel fit while losing those unwanted pounds and inches. Try the Bee-Fit Way for 10 days. You'll shout for joy at the improvement in your figure. **SEND NO MONEY.** Just name and address. When postman brings package pay him \$1 plus 27c postage. If you send \$1 with order, we pay postal charges—you save 27c. (Economy Size containing 3 times as much \$2.50—you save 50c.) Order today. **BEE-FIT VITAMIN CO., 303 W. 42 St., Dept. 45, N. Y. 18**



## PICTURE RING \$1.



Exquisite Onyx-like Picture Ring—made from any photo. Send No Money! Mail photo with paper strip for ring size. Pay postman only \$1.00 plus postage. Hand tinted 25c extra. Photo returned with ring. Money back guarantee. Send photo and ring size now. **PORTRAIT RING CO., Dept. B-119 CINCINNATI, O.**

Made from Any Photo or Picture! **SEND NO MONEY!**



## WOMEN EARN MONEY Selling HOSIERY

**Your Personal Hose FREE As Sales Bonus**  
Sell beautiful, sheer Wear-Tested Rayon Hosiery to friends, neighbors. Earn welcome cash in spare time and your personal hose **FREE**, as sales bonus. Longer wear proven by certified tests. Individual Length Service. You need no experience. Write for **FREE** complete outfit and Bonus Hosiery plan today. **AMERICAN HOSIERY MILLS, Dept. D-6, Indianapolis 7, Ind.**

## It's YOURS ENLARGEMENT

Take Advantage of this **ASTOUNDING** yet unacquainted offer

To show you quality of our photo enlarging and give you photo coloring details, we will beautifully enlarge your favorite snapshot, photo or kodak picture (either print or negative) to 8x10 inches—**NO OBLIGATION**, (10c for handling and return mailing appreciated but not required.) Information on hand tinting in colors sent immediately, as include color details (particularly hair and eyes.) Your original returned with **YOUR** enlargement. Send photo today. **Geppert Studios, Dept. 124, Des Moines, Iowa**



## NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

shipped me back to the Pacific after they found my eyes were okay, so quick and hush-hush that I had no chance to go back and tell you we'd both been a couple of nitwits.

"But you listen to me now, wench." He took her chin in stern fingers, and looked at her mouth. "We're having plenty time now to find those lost hours, because this time I'm not going back. I'm staying here on the Coast as an instructor in how everything should be done. Think you can stand being away from New York?"

Lynne smiled, "Well, I'm here! After I read about that one-man bombing, do you think I'd let my hero escape again? Reff, what did you think about, out over that island—I mean?"

He still looked at her mouth. "Crazy perfume, like you're wearing now. And lipstick that smears . . . like this."

"Uh huh," Lynne whispered. "All the lovely yesterdays. Somebody put that in a poem, Reff."

"Hey, they couldn't have! It's my theory. I dreamed it up, all by myself. And I'll stick to it."

Lynne grinned. "I heard a couple of Marines say today that you're a tough baby, the toughest looney in the outfit."

Reff looked at her. "Maybe. . . in a war. But in love . . ." he pulled her very close. "I'm the easiest mark alive."

"They said they didn't believe you even had a girl."

Reff's eyes darkened. His voice went very deep. "Have I?"

She put her arms around him. "Always and forever, dear. And I know you were the one who thought first about lost yesterdays, because all mine have come back . . . now that I'm with you again."

"Angel," whispered Reff. "Crazy, yellow-headed angel."

THE END

## SORRY—HE'S MINE

(Continued from page 75)

chin and kissed her lips, lightly, mockingly. It didn't mean a thing. It was just friendly, a gesture to seal the bargain of their friendship. She kept telling herself there shouldn't be a thrill in a kiss that was merely a gesture.

But she didn't believe that, really, not once, because this was different. This was forever.

It was just coincidence, she insisted to herself, that she was at her window when Tip hurried home from school. And she was still at her window when, across the tiny square, she heard Cynda's gay voice saying, "Tip, darling, you were late tonight! We'll miss the

## SORRY—HE'S MINE

floor show I had my heart set on seeing. Now we'll have to wait till the last one, after one o'clock."

Jingle went to bed, but she was still awake next morning when it was time to make her first telephone calls.

**T**HAT morning when she reached Tip's name, she felt crazily the same way she had when he had kissed her, thrilled and hurt at the same time. She had to ring his number again and again and when he finally answered, she said firmly "This is the Wake-Up service! Get up this instant, Tip. This instant. Do you understand?"

He mumbled, "Yes, I understand." Half an hour later Jingle saw him rush out of Hanover Square to get to the bus stop.

It was when she was out walking Poppy in the park, that she decided impulsively to call on Cynda Ames. Knowing Cynda, she should have realized the decision was a mild form of insanity. But not stopping to think, she turned in at the big Ames house, giving her name to the one maid left in Hanover Square.

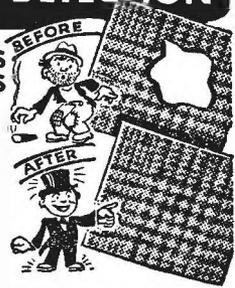
Going upstairs, she planned, "I'll reason with her. I'll—speak from purely a professional point of view!"

It was long past noon, but Cynda was having

## Send **GLOBE** your damaged garments for **RE-WEAVING** THAT DEFIES DETECTION

### MOTH HOLES • TEARS BURNS • DAMAGES

Don't throw your damaged clothing away! Globe's skilled craftsmen re-weave anything originally woven—silks, rayons, wool, linen, velvet, lace, etc. Our work is so excellent, only you will know your garment was re-woven. Costs so little—prices start at \$1.50. Ship (insured) your damaged suits, coats, pants, dresses, knitted



garments, etc., for free estimate. All work guaranteed for life of garments.



## SAVE YOUR NYLONS

### WITH GLOBE INVISIBLE MENDING

Keep those precious Nylons in service. Send them to us insured for free estimate. All work guaranteed. Lowest prices. Fast, 48 hour service.

## GLOBE REPAIR SERVICE

AMERICA'S LEADING REPAIR ORGANIZATION

17 N. STATE ST., Dept. P, CHICAGO 2, ILL.

# WHAT IS WRONG WHEN PRAYER FAILS?

Thirty years ago, in Forbidden Tibet, behind the highest mountains in the world, a young Englishman named Edwin J. Dingle found the answer to this question. A great mystic opened his eyes. A great change came over him. He realized the strange Power that Knowledge gives.

That Power, he says, can transform the life of anyone. Questions, whatever they are, can be answered. The problems of health, death, poverty and wrong, can be solved.

In his own case, he was brought back to splendid health. He acquired wealth, too, as well as world-wide professional recognition. Thirty years ago, he was sick as a man could be and live. Once his coffin was bought. Years of almost continuous tropical fevers, broken bones, near blindness, privation and danger had made a human wreck of him, physically and mentally.

He was about to be sent back to England to die, when a strange message came—"They are waiting for you in Tibet." He wants to tell the whole world what he learned there, under the guidance of the greatest mystic he ever encountered during his twenty-one years in the Far East. He wants everyone to experience

the greater health and the Power, which there came to him.

Within ten years, he was able to retire to this country with a fortune. He had been honored by fellowships in the World's leading geographical societies, for his work as a geographer. And today, 30 years later, he is still so athletic, capable of so much work, so young in appearance, it is hard to believe he has lived so long.

As a first step in their progress toward the Power that Knowledge gives, Mr. Dingle wants to send to readers of this paper a 9000-word treatise. He says the time has come for it to be released to the Western World, and offers to send it, free of cost or obligation, to sincere readers of this notice. For your free copy, address The Institute of Mentalphysics, 213 South Hobart Blvd., Dept. K-278, Los Angeles 4, Calif. Readers are urged to write promptly, as only a limited number of the free books have been printed.



# Flash! Amazing Opportunities NOW Open in these practical money-making trades watch and clock repairing



## LEARN AT HOME—IN YOUR SPARETIME

Prepare for a happy future of prosperity, security... and get a big-pay job now. Fascinating, high-grade occupation. You can EARN WHILE YOU LEARN. Excellent field for part-time work at home.

### COMPLETE COURSE in HOROLOGY

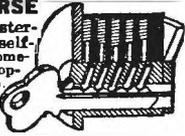
Thorough self-instruction training in American and Swiss watches, clocks. Special sections on alarm clock repairs. New, practical LEARN-BY-DOING instruction method. Learn QUICKLY easily. No previous experience necessary. Watchmaking is basic training for aircraft instrument work, and other scientific precision jobs.

**Amazing LOW PRICE • MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE**  
Get into this fast-growing field NOW... big opportunities... don't delay. Mail coupon below for FREE information. There's no obligation.

## locksmithing and key making

### COMPLETE UP-TO-DATE COURSE

Howto pick locks, de-code, make master-keys, repair, install service, etc. New, self-instruction lessons for every handy man, home-owner, carpenter, mechanic, service station operator, fix-it shop, hardware dealer, gunsmith. **\$3 EASY ILLUSTRATED LESSONS** Bargain Price! Satisfaction guaranteed or money back. Write now... no obligation!



Free Details—Mail Coupon Today!

NELSON CO., Dept. 81.05 321 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago 4, Ill.

Please send me—FREE and without obligation—illustrated Success Catalog containing information about the course (or courses) I have checked below. No salesman will call.

Watch and Clock Repairing.  Locksmithing and Key Making.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

## SONG POEMS WANTED

We want song poems and lyrics on all subjects. We offer the services of a noted Hollywood motion picture studio composer and arranger. Send your poem today for our consideration and liberal offer. HOLLYWOOD MELODIES, P. O. Box 2168K, Hollywood 28, Calif.

**TOOTHACHE?**  
DUE TO CAVITY

Get QUICK relief with Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops! "Cavity Toothache" frequently strikes at night. Be prepared. Buy either package from your druggist today. Keep it handy for children and adults. Follow easy directions.

**DENT'S TOOTH GUM 25¢**  
TOOTH DROPS



## MEN

This Horseshoe Ring, Handmade, Hand-engraved, inlaid with simulated pearl, is a **KNOCK-OUT!** Shoe and shank of everlasting Monel Metal is

**GUARANTEED 20 YEARS**

Supply is limited... rush your order! SEND NO MONEY. Pay Postman only \$3.85, plus excise tax and postage. Return for refund in five days if not delighted. State size. Address:

**AMERICAN JEWELRY CO.,** Dept. 100-H  
Wheeling, W. Va.

## NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

her breakfast in bed. Much as Jingle hated to admit it, Cynda was pretty even in the morning. She looked pampered and rested. But the sight of her still in bed at this time of day infuriated Jingle. For a moment she forgot her hasty plan to reason with Cynda.

She said, baldly, "Cynda, wouldn't one date a week be enough for you, as long as Tip has to go to school at night and work overtime, too? I mean—maybe you don't understand how hard it is for him. Maybe he hasn't told you. I know, because—I wake him up every morning. Sometimes it's terribly hard, because he needs sleep."

Cynda stared at Jingle with what seemed to be astonished amusement. And Jingle woke up, with a jolt, realizing she'd certainly not been reasonable. She blundered on, nervously, "He has to get up so terribly early. He hasn't time to sleep or study, if he stays out late at night. He's too thin, and his eyes are tired-looking. I don't mean to interfere. I was just speaking from a professional point of view, of course."

At that point, Cynda drawled, "Don't worry over him, darling! It's none of your concern, is it?" Her voice had its usual honeyed sweetness, with a touch of cyanide. "It's very obvious of course, that you're in love with him. But let me give you some advice, won't you? You're going at it all wrong.

"You're too practical. You sound like a nagging wife before you've ever had a date with him. I'm taking for granted that you've acted this same way when you're with him, worrying about him and telling him what he ought to do. Many girls make that mistake. Let a man think of you as a luxury. What if he does have to go out of his way to take you dancing? What if he is a little tired? You're worth it, aren't you, if really wants to date you? If you were too easy to get, he wouldn't bother."

Jingle was stunned and humiliated, of course, and couldn't think of anything that would be a good reply. Cynda didn't give her a chance to speak, anyway. "Don't be angry. Jingle darling. I'm more experienced with men than you are, though I'm not older. I just have more dates. But I certainly don't intend dropping Tip at your command. He's dependable, even if he isn't spectacular. It's always nice for a girl to have someone she can count on. That's difficult, nowadays, with most of the men overseas. Tip isn't really from my crowd but..."

At last Jingle spoke, whitely, without meaning to, "You're just dating him while your regular men are overseas, is that it? You're letting him think you might be serious, just so you can have some one you can always depend on!"

**SORRY—HE'S MINE**

Cynda said sweetly, "The trouble with you is that you're too serious, Jingle. I was telling Tip so, last night. You're apt to get serious with every man you meet, which is a mistake. Maybe it's because you're starved for romance."

"There's no use trying to explain to you that you're wrong," Jingle whispered. "Nothing I could say would change you." With Poppy's small hand in hers, she walked out of the room.

She was tense with humiliation because she'd been so obvious, without meaning to, and because Cynda had probably been making fun of her to Tip, too. Cynda had a way of making the most ordinary things seem ridiculous. She was so beautiful, so frighteningly smooth.

Jingle felt weary and completely frustrated. It was ridiculous, but even while her heart seemed to crack into a network of jagged breaks, she was still sorry for Tip. It didn't make sense that you could love a man to distraction and still be sorry about the way another girl treated him. She told herself sternly, "Jingle, you'd better resign yourself to being the girl in Tip's life who wakes him up on time in the mornings, but not the one who could wake him up to the truth about Cynda, the girl he loves."

A week later, Tip called again one evening,



**One Best Home Way To  
BUILD UP  
RED BLOOD**

**To Get More Strength  
If You Lack Blood Iron!**

You girls who suffer from simple anemia or who lose so much during monthly periods that you are pale, feel tired, weak, "dragged out"—due to low blood-iron—try Lydia Pinkham's TABLETS at once!

Pinkham's Tablets are one of the greatest blood-iron tonics you can buy to help build up red blood to give more strength and energy—in such cases.

Just try them for 30 days—then see if you, too, don't remarkably benefit. Follow label directions. Well worth trying!

**Lydia Pinkham's TABLETS**



**YES-KREMOLA**

Kremola is a medicated M. D. formula, especially for pimples, blackheads, and muddy skin. Enlist Kremola aid to clear up your skin. Ladies will envy gentlemen admire. Gently hastens removal of old cuticle, revealing fresh skin. After others fail—put Kremola to the test. \$1.25 plus fed. exc. tax at drugist or department store. Or write to Kremola for sample, enclose 20c for mailing. Or . . . is your trouble

**FRECKLES? DR. C. H. BERRY'S FRECKLE OINTMENT**—used for over 40 years fades freckles—so lift the freckle veil and reveal your true beauty—\$1.25 for 2 oz. Jar or 65c for one oz. Jar plus 20% Fed. Exc. Tax. Address, Kremola Company, Inc., 2975 Michigan Ave., Dept. PX-101, Chicago, 16, Ill.

# REDUCE!

## LOSE UGLY FAT

NO EXERCISE—NO DRUGS—EAT PLENTY

**USERS SAY:** "Lost 5 lbs. in 5 days." Mrs. A. C. "Lost 2 inches around waist first week." says Mrs. G. H. "Lost weight and ate everything. Kel-Ray is wonderful." Mrs. J. C. "Doctor approved. now I have a slim figure." says J. G.

Thousands of users report remarkable results with new, KEL-RAY method. Many lose 3 to 5 lbs. a week, yet eat plenty. No strict diets, no exercises, absolutely harmless! You DON'T CUT OUT starchy, fatty foods, you MERELY CUT DOWN on them. Take half teaspoonful of KEL-RAY (a purely vegetable product) daily . . . follow easy, lazy plan . . . and fat vanishes!

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT!

**MAIL COUPON**

McRAE HEALTH PRODUCTS CO., 1457 Broadway, New York 18, N. Y. Dept. 18  
I enclose \$1 for Kel-Ray method for reducing and month's supply of Kel-Ray to be sent postage-paid. If not satisfied I may return unused portion and my \$1 will be refunded. (C. O. D. orders accepted. Same guarantee)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_

**LOSE 3-5 LBS. A WEEK OR YOUR MONEY BACK**

ONE MONTH'S SUPPLY

**\$1.00**

3 month's supply  \$2.00

# Gas on Stomach

**Relieved in 5 Minutes or  
double your money back**

When excess stomach acid causes painful, suffocating gas, sour stomach and heartburn, doctors usually prescribe the fastest-acting medicine known for symptomatic relief—medicines like those in Bell-ans Tablets. No laxative. Bell-ans brings comfort in a jiffy or double your money back on return of bottle to us. 25c everywhere.



## EARN MONEY PAINTING PORTRAITS

• No previous training or talent necessary. Unique Stuart System teaches you, by mail, in 11 simple, easy-to-follow lessons, to make exact charcoal and oil likenesses. Detailed guidance for your every step. Send for free book today. 121 Monument Circle, Room 3411, Indianapolis 9, Ind. Please send me free book and outline of lessons.

Name .....  
Street .....  
City ..... State.....



## LEARN MEAT CUTTING At Home — In Spare Time

Get into the vital meat industry. Concise, practical Home Training based on 25 years proven instruction methods, uses at National's famous resident school. Prepares you for bigger pay as Meat Cutter, Supervisor, market manager or more money in your own store. Go as rapidly as your spare time permits. Diploma. Start NOW to turn your spare hours into money. Send for FREE bulletin today. No obligation. No salesman will call. \$1.50 money order only. Order today.

National School of Meat Cutting, Inc., Dept. K-3, Toledo 4, Ohio

## MAGIC LIQUID MAKES PHOTOS APPEAR

On Scarfs, Ties, Stationery, Etc.

Reproduce any snapshot on cloth, leather, wood, paper. Simply apply liquid. Like magic photo appears within 2 minutes in broad daylight. Harmless to negative. Won't wash off. Full colors included. Complete kit for 100 photos only \$1.25. Send no money, just name. Pay postman \$1.25 plus few cents postage on delivery. Or send cash with order and get postpaid. (Canada \$1.50 money order only.) Order today.

L. & M. Mig. Co., Dept. 354, 223 W. Breckinridge, Louisville 3, Ky.



# ASTHMA

W. K. STERLINE, 610 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio

**SYMPTOMS RELIEVED.**  
Write today for free information and special money back offer.

## LEARN NURSING AT HOME



High school not necessary. No age limit. Send for FREE "Nursing Facts" and sample lesson pages. Earn while learning. Act now!  
Post Graduate Hospital School of Nursing  
Dept. M-160, N. Wacker Drive Chicago 6, Illinois



## WEDDING AND ENGAGEMENT RING BARGAIN

**TEN DAYS' TRIAL—  
SEND NO MONEY**

Introductory offer: With every order for smart, new, Sterling Silver Solitaire engagement ring we will include without extra charge exquisite wedding ring set with eight imitation diamonds matching in fire and brilliance the beautiful imitation diamond solitaire engagement ring (the perfect bridal pair). Send no money with order. Just name, address and ring size. We ship both rings in lovely gift box immediately and you make just 2 easy payments of \$2 each, total only \$4. We trust you. No red tape as you make first payment and 20% Federal tax to postman on arrival then balance any time within 30 days. Money-back guarantee. War conditions make supply limited. Act NOW.

**EMPIRE DIAMOND CO.**  
Dept. ST-254, Jefferson, Iowa

## NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

and then Jingle's heart seemed to be filled with music when she saw him, until she saw how tired he looked.

He had bought a present for Poppy, and a geranium for Jingle. "That," he grinned, "is for your achievement every morning. When I talk to you, I stay up. I have been known to just take the receiver off the hook and go to sleep again. But you're so firm, I recognize authority."

Jingle took the geranium, wanting to cry over it. Only Tip would have thought of such a homely, gay little thing. Only Tip would have known she loved it. She said, "You're going to be late for your class, aren't you? It's way past time to go."

He slumped down into one of the kitchen chairs. A gray shadow seemed to age him. "I'm not going tonight. I didn't get the assignment done, anyway. Besides, it isn't fair to Cynda for me to spend all my time off with my head in a book."

Jingle said tensely, "Surely it's fair for you to try to make something of yourself."

"But Cynda deserves something too," he said desperately. "She's young and gay and beautiful. Why should I deny her all the fun some other man could be giving her? She has to stay home all day because her mother is so old. If I monopolize her free time, I ought to at least see that she has a little fun."

Jingle wanted to remind him that the Ames had a special nurse, and that the only time Cynda spent at home was when she was asleep.

Tip continued, "She's so lovely. I don't want to lose her. It would be like losing my dreams. And I could lose her so easily."

Maybe, when you were hopelessly in love, you said crazy, obvious things. You didn't think straight. Somehow all that registered with Jingle was the fact that Tip was impressed by Cynda's glamor.

She said, in a small voice, "I could be glamorous if I had the time. But—I can't. I have to live by Poppy's schedule, because she's only three, and it takes all my time to look after her! It's not that I'm oldmaidish or too serious, as Cynda says. Maybe if I had more time, I could be glamorous, too!"

Tip seemed to snap out of his dream of Cynda. He laughed, and pushed a drift of gold-brown curls away from Jingle's forehead, as if she were about six. "There'll be someone for you, some day, someone who'll think you're glamorous and wonderful. Any one would. You've pin-up possibilities! Your eyes are pretty and your lips are definitely kissable," Tip said gallantly.

Somewhere along the way, Jingle had forgotten all common sense. She said, "Are you just saying that, or would you really want to

**SORRY—HE'S MINE**

kiss me yourself? I mean, if you weren't in love with Cynda?"

"Of course," Tip said, as if to humor her, as if he thought she was just a baby. To prove it, he kissed her, and though, like that other time, it was just a mocking, friendly, kindly kiss, it was ten times more devastating. Jingle realized that she never should have been such a little fool as to let it happen. It went through her like a shower of exploding stars. It was the beginning and end of all happiness.

Suddenly she knew she and Tip would never be friends again the way they had been. A wall seemed to have come between them, and for a moment they were strangers, as she took Tip to the doorway and said lightly, "Have a good time on your date."

**T**HE next morning, when she called his number, she was completely business-like, and all the mornings thereafter. As yet, she hadn't admitted her feelings in actual words even to herself. She was frozen inside, but some day her heart would shatter like crystal, if it hadn't happened already.

When Tip began dropping in once in awhile, in the evenings, briefly, she even learned to joke in her effort to make him forget, in case he remembered that one day in a moment of insanity she'd betrayed her real feelings for him.

But she couldn't help seeing the sadness in his eyes. He was cutting more classes. Once he said, "Maybe I won't try to study next term. Maybe I won't finish."

Jingle said, dangerously close to revealing her feelings, "But you can't give up. This is what you've always wanted. It's too big to throw away."

But she remembered that Cynda had been a dream he'd always wanted, too. And dreams came at high prices. Cynda had said, "Let men think you're a luxury. Let them pay the price."

And then one morning when Jingle read the paper, the headlines popped out at her:

Link Lorrimer, Pacific Ace, Comes Home.

Link Lorrimer had come back with twenty-nine Jap planes to his credit and a permanent instructor's job in the States. He hated not going back, he told reporters, except for one thing—he'd be with his girl again. And this girl was a post deb named Cynda Ames. The famous Cynda Ames. In the old days, the story said, Lind had always been in the lead of all the ranks of men who competed for Cynda's favors.

Yes, Jingle could remember that. It wasn't so long ago, even though Cynda was really a year or two older than nineteen.

**REDUCE**  
with  
**V-TABS!**

Anti-Acid . . . .  
Anti-Fatigue . . .  
Vitamin Tablets



**"LOST 17 Lbs. IN 14 DAYS" . .**

"Lost 17 lbs. in 14 days and feel as good as ever" says Mrs. E.F. "Reduced 15 lbs. and never felt better in my life"—J.V. "Used to wear size 42 . . . now wear a 20." R.M. "Doing me a world of good. Don't have gas . . . losing weight . . . more energy"—Mrs. R.S. "Most amazing—lost 7 lbs. in 1 week . . . can't thank you enough"—Mrs. L.I. "Lost 14 lbs. and feel so much better . . . don't bloat and have gas"—Mrs. O.K. These are but a few of the many letters in our files. Why don't YOU see what V-Tabs will do for you!

**NOT A CATHARTIC!**

V-TABS are not a cathartic. They help reduce fat by supplementing your regular diet when taken instead of a heavy lunch, and also tend to take away that abnormal appetite caused by over acidity or fatigue. If you are overweight, always tired, full of acid, and yet like to eat, try V-TABS. As fatigue and acidity disappear your normal appetite will return and you will no longer crave the quantities of food that cause the excess fat deposits.

**QUICK . . . HARMLESS . . . PLEASANT**

With intake curtailed, the body feeds on its own surplus fat, and weight goes down . . . quickly! Mail coupon today with \$1.98 and save postage, or order C.O.D. plus postage. Take the full month's supply according to directions in the booklet. If not satisfied with results . . . if you do not lose weight and feel better . . . we will refund the cost. Act NOW!

V-TAB CO., Dept. PW-1, P.O. Box 205, Times Square Sta., New York

**MONEY BACK AGREEMENT**

V-TAB CO., INC., Dept. PW-1, Box 205  
Times Square Station, New York City

Send me one month's supply of V-TABS (120 tablets)  
 I enclose \$1.98  
 I will pay postman \$1.98 plus postage

Name .....  
Address .....  
City ..... State .....  
No Canadian orders. Please print plainly.



**Do You Want LONGER HAIR**

Just try this system on your hair 7 days and see if you are really enjoying the pleasure of a **attractive** hair that softens captures love and romance. **HAIR MAY GET LONGER** when scalp and hair conditions are normal and the dry, brittle, breaking off hair can be retarded. It has a chance to get longer and much more beautiful. Just try the **JUELENE SYSTEM** 7 days, let your mirror prove results. Send \$1.00. (if C. O. D. postage extra). Fully guaranteed. Moneyback if you're not delighted.

JUELENE Co., 1930 Irving Park Rd., Dept. A-627, Chicago 13, Ill.

## CASH WHEN NEEDED MOST!



**NOW**  
\$1 A MONTH PROVIDES

### AMAZING NEW GOLD SEAL POLICY

Provides all-around protection, cash for almost every emergency! Issued by old-line LEGAL RESERVE company, yet actually costs less than \$1 a month. Protection you need at a price you can afford!

Pays for ANY and ALL Accidents, ALL Common Sicknesses, as provided, even minor injuries. Disability benefits paid from first day. No waiting period. NO, this is NOT the usual "limited" policy. NO jokes. NO trick clauses. It's extra liberal!

#### NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Policy issued BY MAIL at big savings. Ages 15 to 69. Actual policy sent for 10 DAYS' FREE EXAMINATION. Write for it today. No cost! No obligation. Send name, age, address, and name of beneficiary. Do it today! Provide for tomorrow!

**The SERVICE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**  
433G Service Life Building Omaha 2, Nebraska

Accumulated CASH BENEFITS for Accidental Loss of Life, Limb or Sight up to

**\$6000.00**

for ACCIDENT DISABILITY up to \$100 a month for as long as 24 months, or

**\$2400.00**

for SICKNESS DISABILITY a regular monthly income up to

**\$100.00 PER MO.**

HOSPITAL EXPENSES for Sickness or Accident including room to cover

**\$650.00**

## NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

The afternoon editions of the papers were full of Link, too. Cynda had been interviewed by then. She'd been photographed with Link, and was radiantly lovely with joy over his surprise home-coming. And she admitted:

Yes, it's true. Link and I are being married, now that he's home for good. There was nothing really definite, before, because—Link wouldn't marry me until he was sure he'd be coming back. Everything was so uncertain.

Jingle made her swing-shift calls, and then stayed glued to her front window. She saw Tip at last, hurrying home in order to change and take Cynda out. Apparently he hadn't read the papers.

Jingle gave Poppy her supper and put her to bed. And then she waited. She sat out on the front steps in the dusk. Across the Square she could see the Ames home, blazing with lights. A parade of automobiles came and went.

And then at last, Jingle saw Tip start to Cynda's. He was carrying a florist's box, so he still thought he had a date with Cynda. Jingle tried to call to him, to give him some warning, but no sound came. She stood frozen endless minutes and then she saw him walking slowly back across the Square. When he crossed the drive an automobile almost hit him and he didn't even notice. In the headlight's glare his face was shocked, unreal.

Jingle caught up with him before he turned in to his own driveway. "Tip! Tip, don't—don't!" she said crazily.

As long as she lived she knew she would remember the hurt in his eyes. Jingle hadn't cried in all those days of heartbreak, but she did now. She cried over Tip as if his hurt were her own. "I'm sorry. I could see this coming, but there was nothing I could do. I saw you breaking your heart, giving up your dreams. I hated her! She just—wanted a date she could always count on, someone who wouldn't be transferred. She didn't want love. She wouldn't marry Link Lorrimer before he went away because she didn't want to give up her fun."

Tip said, "Good night, Jingle," and slowly went on home.

Jingle went home, too. Well, she'd done it, really betrayed her love this time. But she couldn't give in to her grief because of Poppy. She couldn't run away from Poppy or her job.

She didn't think she would sleep, but she did finally.

**T**HE telephone pealed noisily about an hour before dawn and she thought at first she was having a bad dream; that maybe it would

## Gain Power of Mind Study Ontology At Home

Ontology is a clear exposition of Christian Psychology. A simple interpretation of Practical Metaphysics. Explanatory 32-page book will be sent without obligation. Includes such subjects as Cosmic Rhythm, The Seventh Sense, Mental Healing, Prayer That Works, etc. Astounding revelations. Send for your Free book today.  
**ALEXANDER KEENE, Box 375, Sedalia, Mo.**

## STAMMER?

This new 128-page book, "Stammering, Its Cause and Correction," describes the Bogue Unit Method for scientific correction of stammering and stuttering—successful for 43 years.

Benj. N. Boque, Dept. 2950, Circle Tower, Indianapolis 4, Ind.

GET THIS  
**FREE**  
BOOK!

## Getting Up Nights Makes Many Feel Old

Do you feel older than you are or suffer from Getting Up Nights, Backache, Nervousness, Leg Pains, Dizziness, Swollen Ankles, Rheumatic Pains, Burning, scanty or frequent passages? If so, remember that your Kidneys are vital to your health and that these symptoms may be due to non-organic and non-systemic Kidney and Bladder troubles—in such cases Cystex (a physician's prescription) usually gives prompt and joyous relief by helping the Kidneys flush out poisonous excess acids and wastes. Get Cystex from your druggist today. Take it exactly as directed and see the results in your own particular case. Under our guarantee unless completely satisfied you simply return the empty package and get your money back. So get Cystex today. Three guaranteed sizes Only 35c, 75c, \$1.50 at your druggist.

**Cystex**  
Helps Flush Kidneys

**SORRY—HE'S MINE**

stop. But it went on ringing while she ran down the big staircase.

It was Tip, who said simply, his voice shaken and harsh, "Jingle, could you possibly care about me? My heart isn't broken. It's just wide awake. It woke up when you cried. Believe me, darling, you aren't second best. You couldn't be, to anyone. You're first in my heart, forever. You have been since that first day, I guess. But I was in the middle of a dream, and I just went on dreaming. Maybe I should wait, to tell you, but—I can't. First you've got to believe you aren't second choice, whether you love me or not. I'm awfully hard to wake up, Jingle, but when I do I know the score. I know the difference between a worn-out dream and something warm and real."

"Tip," Jingle whispered.

They were both silent a moment, and yet the silence was full of wonder. Tip said at last, "May I come over? Now? There's so much I've got to say. It'll take a long, long time."

"Yes," Jingle said, "Please come." Then she put down the receiver very gently, as if the moment were magic. She belted her trim little robe about her and went out onto the front porch.

Somewhere in the old-fashioned square a bird was singing, a tune to match the one in her heart. And down the street came the sound of running steps. She went to meet Tip.

**THE END**

**I SAW YOU IN MY HEART**

*(Continued from page 27)*

ward swiftly, on cat feet. He smiled, a smile that showed flashing white teeth.

"While the girls are speechless with happiness, I'll introduce myself. The name is Lamb, Nick Lamb. And you're Marvin, I know. Just happened to drop in on my old girl, Lilith . . ."

"Oh!" Lilith put her hand to her mouth, swallowing the quiet protest.

Color flamed over Chloe's face, and she threw herself into Tony's arms.

"Tony, my darling, Tony," she said huskily, "I am so excited I can't stand it. I couldn't believe it when I walked in and found Lilith here and she told me. Oh, Tony, it's so wonderful to see you again, so wonderful to be in your arms . . ."

Lilith watched them kiss. Lilith watched Tony turn from Chloe, to her. He said, in a queer voice, "Lilith . . ." and bent, as if to kiss her, then he stopped.

Nicky laughed foolishly, "Better not kiss my girl, Marvin. I don't let guys kiss my girl, I'm the guy that kisses my girl—"

Before Lilith knew what he was going to

**TAKE OFF UGLY FAT**

**Many Lose 3 to 5 Pounds a Week— Yet EAT PLENTY!**

**T**HOUSANDS now take off pounds of ugly fat quickly, easily, without harmful drugs, exercise or strict diets, following the Easy Reducing Plan of Dr. Edw. Parrish, physician and former state public health officer, as given over the radio to millions.

Here's all you do: For lunch, take 2 teaspoonfuls of Cal-Par in glass of juice or any beverage. For breakfast and dinner eat as usual, but eat sensibly. Don't cut out fatty, starchy foods; just cut down on them! Thus you cut down your caloric intake, lose weight naturally. You needn't suffer a hungry moment.

Cal-Par is not a harmful reducing drug, but a dietary product fortifying your diet with certain essential minerals and vitamins. Most overweight people are helped by the Plan. Try it. Your friends will marvel at the improvement in your figure. Get \$1.25 can (30 days' supply) of Cal-Par at any health food or drug store.

If your dealer hasn't Cal-Par, we will mail you postpaid a special introductory can **FOR ONLY \$1**. First box must satisfy you or money back. Pin dollar bill to coupon and mail today. We'll include **FREE DR. PARRISH'S BOOKLET** on reducing containing important facts you should know, including weight tables and charts of food values.



**Physician's Wife:** "I lost 15 lbs. in 24 days."  
**Hospital Dietitian:** "Lost 45 lbs. in 31 days; never felt better."  
**Miss H., Wash., D. C.:** "Reduced 64 lbs. in 3 mos. It's great wearing youthful clothes!"

CAL-PAR Dept. 64-P  
 685 Broadway, New York 12, N. Y.

I enclose \$1.00 for introductory can CAL-PAR and Dr. Parrish's Booklet under your money-back offer. (C. O. D. orders accepted.)

Name .....

Address .....



**14 Karat GOLD Wedding Band**

**5 DIAMONDS**

**So with 5 Genuine**

**Greatest Value**

**5.95**

Diamonds have risen in price—and they're going even higher! Think of a genuine 14K Gold Wedding Band, in beautiful new modernistic style, with chip diamonds, at the unheard of price of \$5.95! Don't be confused by this sensational Low Price. We guarantee the elegance and beauty of this Wedding Band will thrill you beyond your fondest expectations. We defy you to match this value anywhere else at this low price. If after wearing and examining this Ring you don't feel it is positively the greatest value you've ever seen, return it within 10 days and we'll refund your money in full.

**SEND NO MONEY!** Just name, address and ring size. We'll ship C. O. D. Pay postman only \$5.95 plus postage and 20% Federal Tax. Rush order now!

**ILLINOIS MERCHANDISE MART**  
 800 N. Dearborn St., Dept. 7019, Chicago 10, Ill.

# Classified Advertising

## Agents Wanted

**MAGIC RACES**—At cigarette touch six horses are off. New, different. Sample order 40 Races \$1. Fast seller, big profits. Barkley Company, Dryden 7, Va.

## Auto Supplies

**PLASTIC TIRE PRESERVER**, puncture proof tubes. Details free. Box 699, Borger, Texas.

## Back Dated Magazines

**Outdated Magazines**—Catalog 10c. Cicerone's Service, 863—1st Ave., New York 17, N. Y.

## Detective Training

**DETECTIVES**—Make Secret Investigations. Experience unnecessary. Particulars FREE. WAGONER, R-125 West 86th, N. Y.

## Educational

**MEN—WOMEN**, earn CGA degree at home, analyzing handwriting. Graduates report up to \$1.00 hourly. 3000 word illustrated lesson, **GRAPHO-ANALYST** and surprise free. **INSTITUTE, (AD)**, Joplin, Missouri.

## For Inventors

**PATENTS SECURED**. Low cost. Book and advice free. L. F. Randolph, Dept. 573, Washington, D. C.

## Money Making—Business Opportunities

**LEARN METASCIENCE**. Remarkable drugless healing. No manipulation. No apparatus. Unbelievable simplicity and results. Inexpensive correspondence course. Write **Metascience, De Land, Florida**.

## Nurses Training School

**MAKE UP TO \$25—\$35 WEEK** as a trained practical nurse! Learn quickly at home. Booklet Free. Chicago School of Nursing, Dept. D-10, Chicago.

## Old Money Wanted

**WILL PAY \$10.00 EACH FOR CERTAIN LINCOLN PENNIES!** Indianheads \$50.00; Dimes \$1,000.00. Catalogue 10c. Federal Coin Exchange, 10-PP, Columbus, Ohio.

We purchase all indianhead pennies. Complete catalogue 10c. Waltman, 398 Broadway, New York.

## Patent Attorneys

**INVENTORS**: Learn now—without obligation—how to protect and sell your invention. Secure "Patent Guide" Free. Write—**CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN & HARVEY JACOBSON**, 426-L Adams Building, Washington, D. C.

**INVENTORS**—Patent Your Invention. Secure book, "Protect, Finance and Sell Your Invention." No obligation. **McMORROW** and **BERMAN**, Patent Attorneys, 150-R Albee Building, Washington, D. C.

## Photo Finishing

**ROLLS DEVELOPED**—25c Coin. One Day Service. 8 Gloss Deckle Edge Prints. **CLUB PHOTO SERVICE**, Dept. 16, La Crosse, Wis.

## Poems—Songwriters

**SONGWRITERS**: Melodies supplied without charge by recognized Hollywood composers. Lead sheets and records furnished. Cinema Song Company, Box 670A-11, Beverly Hills, Calif.

**POEMS WANTED** to be set to music. Free examination. Send poems. McNeil, Master of Music, 510-A South Alexandria, Los Angeles, California.

**SONGWRITERS**: Send poems for Immediate Examination and FREE Rhyming Dictionary. **RICHARD BROTHERS**, 30 Woods Building, Chicago.

**SONGWRITERS**: **PROTECT YOUR IDEAS!** Hold Your Poems. Write: **SONG SERVICE**, 545 Fifth Avenue, New York.

**POEMS WANTED FOR MUSICAL SETTING**. Five Star Music Masters, 620 Beacon Building, Boston.

**SONGWRITERS**: Interesting Proposition. Write: **PARAMOUNT SONG-RECORDING STUDIO**, L-71, Box 190, Hollywood, Calif.

**SONGWRITERS**: Royalty Contract Free. Write for details. Puritan Publishing Co., 343 S. Dearborn St., Chicago 4, Ill.

# NEW LOVE MAGAZINE

do, he had pulled her into his arms. His mouth was ugly on her own. Lilith jerked free, and raised her hand in a reflex. The sound of the slap was sharp in the sudden quietness in the room. Lilith picked up her hat and rushed out, banging the door.

Outside she took a deep breath of the fresh winter air to counteract the ugly, burning kiss. She walked without knowing where she was going, her only thought to get away from the three back in the apartment.

She turned, startled, when a hand fell on her arm. The hand belonged to Tony, and he almost lifted her into a taxi.

She said, fiercely, "Let me go. Where are you taking me? Why did you follow me? What do you want?"

"Don't breathe so hard," Tony said. "Don't look so frightened. What should I want? You shouldn't walk out on your boy friend that way, Lilith. Unless, of course, you've been drinking as much as he and Chloe have. Your boy friend passed out, just after you left. Don't you think you ought to go back and look after him? If he is your boy friend, that is?"

"Of course he's my boy friend," Lilith said, bitterly. "I'm just the sort of girl to have a boy friend like that, don't you think. It's just my type. But since it's none of your business, please let me do as I please. You go back to Chloe, that's where you belong, and let me figure out my own life."

"But you're so dumb about your own life," Tony said.

There was a look in his eyes which made Lilith blink her own. There was a sound in his voice which made her sit straighter.

"For instance, you're dumb enough to walk out on a boy friend who makes a crack about you after you go. And what did that leave? Me, I just naturally socked him, because I don't like cracks about girls like you. Maybe the sock was what made him pass out, I don't

# Classified Advertising

(Continued)

## Salesmen Wanted

**START YOUR OWN BUSINESS** on our capital. Always your own boss. Hundreds average \$6,000 to \$12,000 annual sales year after year. We supply stocks, equipment on credit. 200 home necessities. Selling experience unnecessary to start. Wonderful opportunity to own pleasant, profitable business backed by world wide industry. Write **Rawleigh Co.**, Dept. K-U-PBL, Freeport, Ill.

## Smoking Tobacco

**BARGAIN BARREL** Smoking Tobacco. Blended from \$5, \$4 and \$3 mixtures. Only \$1.75 per pound. Send for free catalog trial offer. Sidney Ram, 69 West Monroe, K-38, Chicago 3, Illinois.

## Used Auto Parts For Sale

**HAVING CAR TROUBLE? USED, GUARANTEED** auto, truck parts save money. Transmission specialists. Describe needs; immediate reply. **VICTORY**, 2439-B Gunnison, Chicago 25.

## I SAW YOU IN MY HEART

know. But it seemed to do something to Chloe because she jumped at me like a tigress. I sort of think that for a moment Chloe forgot who everyone was, and thought she liked your boy friend, Lilith. In fact, I sort of got the idea that maybe he was hers."

His voice was flippant, but his eyes were not. His mouth was hard, hurt.

He said, shakily; "Correct me if I'm wrong. But I think the boy friend was Chloe's, and as usual she was taking the easiest way out. I even think maybe when Chloe came to the hospital it wasn't all kind heart . . . it might be because she wasn't above trying to grab another girl's man. I think that when I couldn't see, I fell in love with you. The bandages have been off for a long time, Lilith, but this is the first time I've really seen you—tonight, with your head high and your eyes clear, and no tarnish on your loveliness . . ."

Lilith said, almost furiously, "Stop talking, stop arguing. Because I've been in love with you so terribly long, and it hurt so terribly much. Just hold me like that, just kiss me. The minute you kissed me, back in the hospital, I knew. The minute you kissed me, my heart said, 'This is it!'"

"My heart," Tony murmured, against her lips, "is going to keep on saying that for the rest of our lives."

## ARE YOU GETTING FAT? DANGEROUSLY FAT?

You can Look Better  
Feel Better Safely

Just Skip-O-Meal  
and EAT IT TOO!

Eat Plenty the Skip-O-Meal  
Way

NO DRUGS—EXERCISE

Ugly fat not only spoils your good looks—it may shorten your life. Insurance figures show. Reader's Digest Article

"ONLY ONE WAY TO GET THIN" tells how college professor reduced all types of fat people. "Take care to include full supply of minerals, vitamins and proteins," it warns.

SEND FOR GUARANTEED  
INTRODUCTORY OFFER!

Get Reader's Digest article reprint, weight charts, scientific protein planner to help allay hunger, 15 vitamin tablets, 30 mineralized soup tablets for low calorie noon lunch which helps eliminate vitamin mineral hunger pang at cost of less than a sandwich a day!

Money back guarantee. Get started now. Thrill to new sense of fat-free beauty. Order your kit today. 15 Day Supply—\$2.00. 30 Day Supply—\$3.75. We pay postage if cash accompanies order.

NUTRITIONAL PRODUCTS CO.

305 Continental Bldg.

Des Moines, Iowa

OTHERS LIKE IT  
"I like your Skip-O-Meal program and look and feel better in just nine days." Many such unsolicited, enthusiastic letters in our files.



New!  
Amazing  
"Hair  
Glamour"  
Treatment



Men love a woman's long wavy beautiful hair—*one of the secrets to a woman's charm in winning the one she loves.* Now you, too, can use this NEW AMAZING "HAIR GLAMOUR" TREATMENT. Its SECRET FORMULA helps retard dry, brittle hair from breaking off due to lack of natural oils. Therefore, this formula may help HAIR GROW LONGER if other hair, scalp conditions are normal. And if you also like your HAIR WAVY, beautiful and soft you shouldn't miss trying this sensational treatment!

FREE 10 DAY TRIAL! SEND NO MONEY!

Don't send a cent. Try this "HAIR GLAMOUR" TREATMENT at our expense for 10 days and then see if he will notice and thrill to the new glamour of your hair. Also FREE DETAILED DIRECTIONS. Just deposit with postman on delivery 98c plus postage, or send only \$1 and we pay postage. MONEY BACK GUARANTEE if not completely satisfied. Every day you delay—romance passes you by! WRITE NOW! GUARANTEE SALES, 21 W. 45th St., Dept. 878, New York City



THIS BEAUTIFUL NEW  
SERVICE FLAG  
SHINES AT NIGHT!

Only \$1.00

- 1-Star Flag - \$1.00
- 2-Star Flag - \$1.15
- 3-Star Flag - \$1.25
- 4-Star Flag - \$1.35
- 5-Star Flag - \$1.45
- 6-Star Flag - \$1.55

Here is the most thrilling Service Flag of all — a gorgeous, colorful flag by day, and a shining, glowing flag by night! Folks who pass your home on the darkest night can see the star shine and glisten to tell the world that your loved one is in the service of his country! Made of fine quality Celanese, in rich red, white and blue colors, with a gorgeous golden fringe, and sturdy twisted cord for hanging.

SEND NO MONEY  
Just send your name and address today — a postcard will do, telling us if you want one, two, three or more stars. Pay postman correct amount as listed above, plus postage, when flag is delivered. Or save money by sending price of flag wanted with your order and we'll pay all postage. If you are not delighted, return flag in 5 days and your money will be refunded. Rush order today!

GLOW-FLAGS CO. 72 W. Washington Street  
Dept. L257, Chicago 2, Ill.



New ENLARGEMENT

Just to get acquainted, we will beautifully enlarge your favorite snapshot, photo, Kodak picture, print or negative to 5x7 inches, if you enclose this ad with a 3c stamp for return mailing. Please include color of hair and eyes and get our new Bargain Offer giving you your choice of handsome frames with a second enlargement beautifully hand tinted in natural lifelike colors and sent on approval. Your original returned with your enlargement. Send today.

DEAN STUDIOS, Dept. 558, 211 W. 7th St., Des Moines, Iowa

3¢  
STAMP

# NEW SICKNESS AND ACCIDENT PLAN PAYS \$25 WEEKLY BENEFITS

**Costs Only \$12 a Year—Down Payment \$2.50  
—Hospital Benefit Included**

NEWARK, N. J.—The 58-year old North American Accident Insurance Company of Chicago, announces a new plan that pays \$25 a week for 10 weeks for both stated accidents and sicknesses. Plus an additional \$25 a week for 4 weeks for accidents requiring hospital confinement. Yet the total cost is only \$12 a year. The purpose of this new Premier Limited Double Duty Policy is to bring sickness and accident protection within the reach of men and women who do not have large savings with which to meet sudden doctor or hospital bills, or lost income.

This new plan also has a double-indemnity feature covering travel accidents. You receive \$50 a week if disabled by an accident in a bus, taxicab, street car, train, etc., and \$75 a week if the accident requires hospital confinement. There is another new special feature that pays up to \$25 cash for doctor bills, even for a minor accident such as a cut finger. In case of death by a common accident, the policy pays one thousand dollars cash to your family. Two thousand dollars if caused by a travel accident.

In addition, it covers many common sicknesses such as pneumonia, cancer, appendicitis, etc., paying the weekly

benefits whether confined to home or hospital.

The entire cost is only \$12 a year, and that applies to men and women between the ages of 15 and 64 inclusive. Between the ages of 65 and 75 the cost is only \$18 a year. No reduction in benefits regardless of age. No medical examination is required.

North American Accident Insurance Company of Chicago is one of America's great insurance companies, the largest and oldest exclusive health and accident insurance company in this country. It has paid out over \$35,000,000 to grateful policyholders when they needed help most. North American is under the supervision of the Insurance Departments of 47 States and District of Columbia.

Men and women who would like full details about this new plan are urged to write a letter or postcard for a revealing booklet called "Cash or Sympathy". This booklet is absolutely free. It will come by ordinary mail, without charge or obligation of any kind. No one will call to deliver it. We suggest you get a free copy by sending your name and address with postal zone number to Premier Policy Division, North American Accident Insurance Co., 830 Broad St., Dept. 1944, Newark 2, New Jersey.

**"YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN!"**

Among men who live  
in work clothes all day long,  
this label

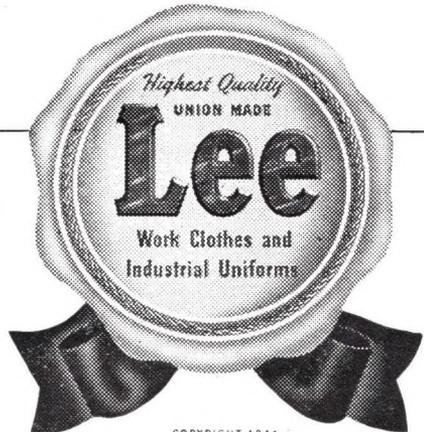


**TOPS  
'EM ALL!**



*There's a Lee  
for every job!*

JELT DENIM OVERALLS  
UNION-ALLS  
MATCHED SHIRTS AND PANTS  
WHIPCORDS • DUNGAREES  
COWBOY PANTS  
INDUSTRIAL UNIFORMS



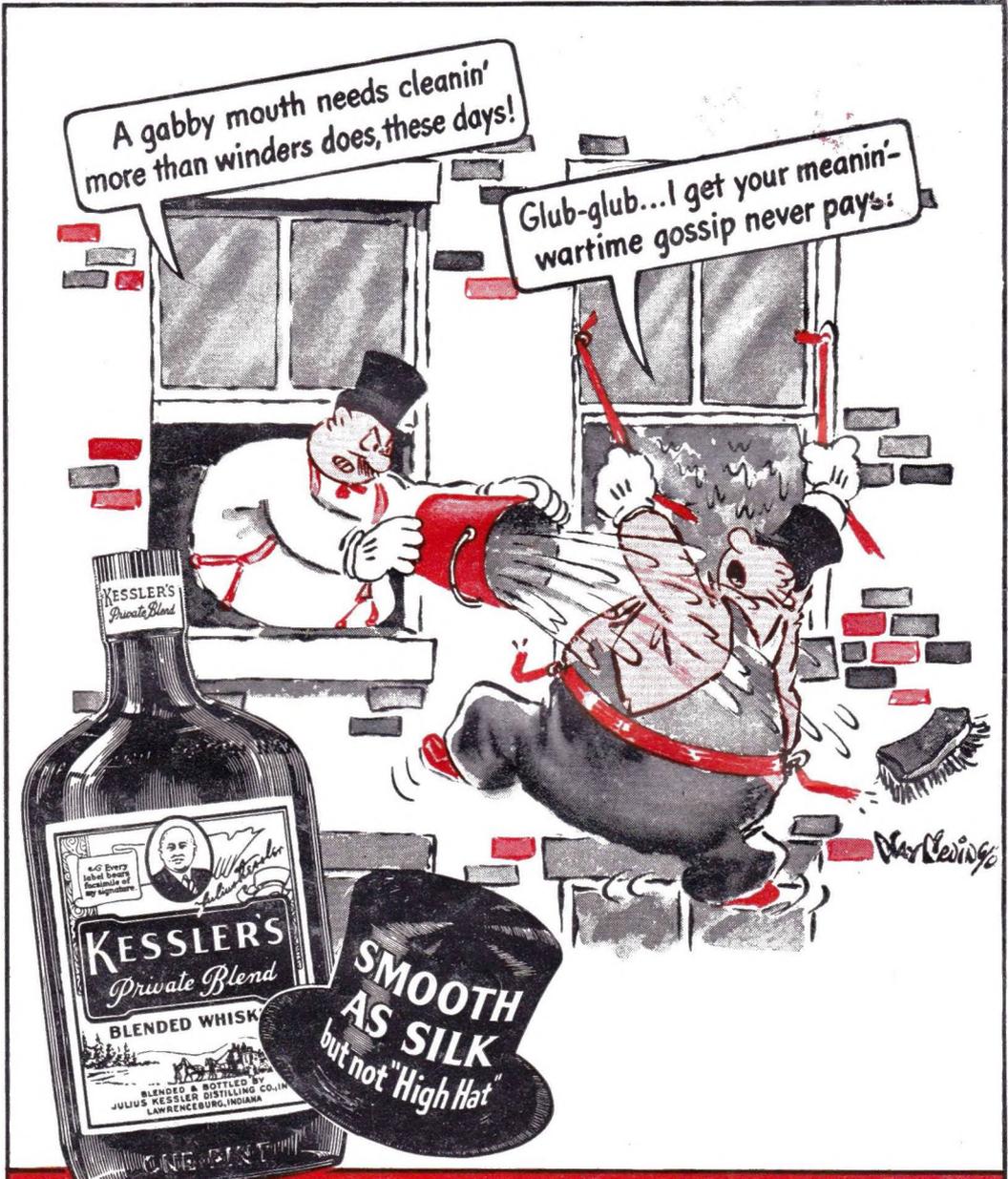
COPYRIGHT 1944.  
THE H. D. LEE CO., INC.

**THE H. D. LEE COMPANY, Inc.**

Kansas City, Mo. • Trenton, N. J. • South Bend, Ind. • Minneapolis, Minn.  
San Francisco, Calif. • Salina, Kans.

**THE LARGEST SELLING LINE OF ITS KIND IN AMERICA!**

**"Douse the war gossip!"—says HI to HATT**



# **KESSELER'S** BLENDED WHISKEY

**KESSELER'S PRIVATE BLEND. 55% Grain Neutral Spirits. 85 Proof. Julius Kessler Distilling Co., Inc., Lawrenceburg, Ind**