"A MAGAZINE OF SPEED, SPICE AND SPARKLE"

# TELLING TALES

## OTHER MEN'S WIVES

By **Peter Chance**

That's the altar on which Roddie sacrificed his life

SECOND MAY NUMBER

## SHIPWRECK

A Daring Novelette

By **C. S. Montanye**

20c

## THE ENFANT TERRIBLE

a regular **Arthur T. Munyan** thriller

IN TWO PARTS

What *are* little girls made of? Sugar and spice—and that's why Jacqueline was naughty, instead of nice.

A limited number of artists' proofs of this cover, without lettering, can be supplied by the publishers at 35c each.

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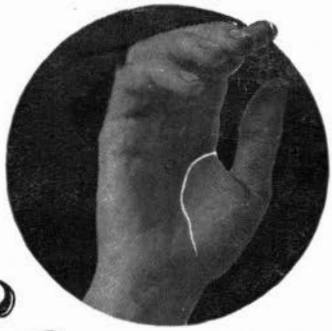

*Your lifeline tells how long you'll live. That's how long Kum-a-part Kuff Buttons are guaranteed to last-for Life!*

# Lifetime Wear! Guaranteed!

—but only if you see the name KUM-A-PART on it. Many separable cuff buttons look like KUM-A-PARTS but in no other can you be sure of lifetime wear.

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And how rarely is utility combined with such good looks. KUM-A-PARTS are beauty-spots in your cuffs. Their smart designs are the quiet signs which distinguish the exceptional from the merely good.

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THE BAER & WILDE COMPANY, ATTLEBORO, MAS.

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# $3500 to $10000 a Year is Easy to Earn in ELECTRICITY!!

Never before was there such a demand for electricity and *trained* men to handle it as there is now. $75 a week, $100 and even $200 is easy when you are properly trained—trained as I will train you right in your own home. Step out of your small-pay, no-future job. Be a "Cooke" Trained Electrical Expert, and get the big jobs in Electricity.

**Be a Cooke Trained Electrical Expert**

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I give you *16 definite guarantees* when you enroll for my Course, including a signed bond to return every penny you pay me if you are not satisfied. These guarantees cover FREE Consultation and Employment Service, FREE tools, FREE use of laboratory, FREE Engineering Magazine and other things previously unheard of in home study training. I spare no expense to make you a big, quick success.

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Being a college trained engineer with 25 years of practical experience and now Chief Engineer of the great Chicago Engineering Works, a Million Dollar Institution, I know exactly what kind of training you need to succeed in this big profession. *That's what I give you*—practical training by a practical man—the kind of training big electrical companies are looking for and are willing to pay for—the kind of training you will need to be successful in business for yourself.

## Investigate—Big Electrical Book FREE!

You want proof! You want facts! These I *give* you in my big book—"The Vital Facts About Electricity"—proof that opportunities more wonderful than you ever dreamed of await you—proof that I can do more for you than anyone else. Send for my new book now. Be a "Cooke" Trained Electrical Expert—Earn $70 to $200 a week. Mail the coupon NOW!

## Start Earning Money at Once

You can turn my training into money quickly. I give you FREE a whole outfit of tools and electrical apparatus and show you how to get and how to do spare time jobs. *"Cooke" training pays its own way.*

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Chicago Engineering Works
Dept. 145, 2150 Lawrence Ave., Chicago

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Send me your book, "The Vital Facts About Electricity," full particulars of your Home Study Course and your sixteen guarantees, including your plan for putting students in business. This does not obligate me to enroll for your Course.

Name.....
Address.....
City.....State.....

## Read the Proof From My Students

### Earns $800 in 23 Days

Earl R. Montrose, Mono Lake, Calif., gets electrical contract, completes it in 23 days and collects $200 profit.

### $7,000 a Year From Electricity on Farm

Herbert Dickerson used to earn $30 a week. Now superintendent of Electrical equipment at North Wales Farm, Warrenton, Va., at $7,000 a year.

### Makes $750 in Spare Time Work

Before completing course, John J. Burke, 3332 East Baltimore Street, Baltimore, Md., made $750 doing odd electrical jobs in spare time. Now runs his own Electrical business.

**These Are Just a Few of Hundreds!**

## The "COOKE" Trained Man is the "Big Pay" Man!

*Notice the change of date— the June Issue will be on the newsstands May 20th. Don't miss it!*

# TELLING TALES



Cover Design Drawn by Seymour Marcus


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## *In the June Issue:*

## REMEMBERED NIGHTS

A Novelette by Alan Williams

Some nights come and go without leaving their effect—but moonlight nights—on the beach, with hot kisses, under the palms, in her lover's arms—these were the nights Leonie remembered.

# $68,000,000

# INCREASE IN PAY GIVEN TO U. S. POSTAL EMPLOYEES!

## *Average Increase* $300 *Per Year Per Employee*

## SALARIES NOW *ABOUT* $36 to $50 PER WEEK to Start!

### Now as Never Before is the Time to Prepare for One of these Fine Government Jobs!

WHEN on February 28th, President Coolidge signed the Postal Pay and Rate Raise Bill which had been passed by both houses of Congress, it marked the dawn of an even rosier era for postal employees. If you have been jumping from job to job, getting ahead slowly, worried about being fired, unhappy in your work, now is the time of times for you to prepare for a government civil service job. Think of it!—no strikes or lockouts, eight-hour day, automatic yearly salary increase, retirement pensions, vacations with pay, tremendous opportunities for advancement—and now this wonderful new pay raise.

## What They Get!

Following is a list of salaries paid under the increase called for in the Postal Pay and Rate Raise Bill.

Postmasters: First class, $3,200 to $8,000; second class, $2,400 to $3,000; third class, $1,100 to $2,300; Post Office Inspectors, $2,800 to $4,500; Assistant Postmasters, second class offices, $2,200 to $2,500. At first class Post Offices, Assistant Postmasters, $2,600 to $4,900; Superintendent of Mails, $2,400 to $4,700; Foremen, $2,500 to $2,700; Assistant Superintendents of Mail, $2,600 to $4,100; Postal Cashier, $3,100 to $4,300; Money Order Cashiers, $2,800 to $3,900; Assistant Cashiers, $2,600 to $3,800; Bookkeepers, $2,400 to $3,300; Station Examiners, $2,400 to $3,000.

Clerks in first and second class offices and letter carriers in the city delivery service are divided into five grades, with salaries ranging from $1,700 to $2,100. Railway Postal Clerks, $1,900 to $2,700; Rural Carriers, $720 to $1,800; Village Carriers, $1,150 to $1,350.

## PICK YOUR JOB QUICK!

With many more people trying for Civil Service jobs now than ever before, it is more necessary than ever that you *prepare* for Civil Service examinations so that you can pass with a *high rating*. For eight years I was a Civil Service Examiner, and since then I have prepared thousands of Railway Postal Clerks, Customs Inspectors, R. F. D. Mail Carriers, Postmasters and others in the Civil Service. Let me prepare *you* NOW to get the Government Civil Service job that you like best. I give you the strongest guarantee ever offered by a school—that you will be tendered a position within one year after receiving your rating or I will refund your money in full!

## Send Me Your Name!

If you are eighteen years old or older, and an American citizen you are entitled to apply for a government civil service position. Just mail me the coupon and I will send you my 32-page book and I will tell you how to qualify in your spare time. Don't wait. Rush this coupon to me, or just write me a postcard. Remember there will be a great rush for these jobs, so write me quick.

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Address.....

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

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## NOTICE!

HERE is a wonderful free book for you. Reveals startling truths on why you don't get rid of your stomach troubles and disorders arising therefrom, why medicines and other methods fail in 47 out of every 100 cases. Illustrated with X-Ray pictures showing results of wrong treatments, most probable cause of your sick spells and other troubles, and how best to overcome them at home. This great book,

**"THE INNER MYSTERIES OF THE STOMACH"**

given to the public free, was written by a physician authority, a graduate of University Medical College of New York, who for thirty years has studied the mysterious working of the stomach and cause of intestinal disorders and how to stop the conditions that lead to ulcers and other dreaded diseases. The free distribution of this much-wanted book should aid the Health and Insurance authorities to lessen the high death rate due to ignorance, neglect and wrong treatment.

Therefore, if you want to know the underlying cause of your stomach disorders and troubles arising therefrom, cut out and mail the coupon below. Please enclose ten cents in silver or stamps to help cover cost of postage and handling, etc. It will be mailed, securely wrapped, by return post without charge. Don't delay, get your copy NOW, before your stomach troubles get beyond your control.

*Cut this out*


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Herewith find my letter, name, address and ten cents. Please send book, "Inner Mysteries of the Stomach."
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Greatest Bargain Ever Offered
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Sells elsewhere at $12.00. Quick as a flash, safe, great penetrating power and true marksmanship. Blue steel or nickeled, 38, 32, or 22 caliber, all same price. Satisfaction or money back. SEND NO MONEY. Pay postman on arrival $6.45 plus postage. If you send money with order WE PAY ALL POSTAGE. *Federal Mail Order Corp.*, 414 B'way, Dept. AU, New York, N. Y.

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YOU can earn $1 to $2 an hour in your spare time writing show cards. No canvassing or soliciting. We instruct you by our new simple Directograph System, supply you with work and pay you cash each week. Write today for full particulars and free booklet.
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**Have SHAPELY FEET Unmarred by Bunions**
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**SENT ON TRIAL** To introduce we'll gladly arrange to send you a box of "Solvent" to try for your own bunion. Thousands are sending. Simply write, "I want to try *PEDODYNE*."
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# A Baby In Your Home

So many married couples yearn for children that thousands of copies of a new book by Dr. H. Will Elders are being distributed without cost to childless women. Any family interested in overcoming conditions of nature that hinder the gift of children should write for this free book today. It describes a simple home treatment based on the use of Steriltone, a wonderful scientific tonic that has had marvelous success all over the country in relieving constitutional weakness.

Every woman who wants to live a normal, happy home life with little ones around her should consider it her first duty to know what Steriltone is and why it should be so wonderful an aid to her. Read this little book which is sent without charge or obligation in a plain envelope. It unfolds facts that most women never have had explained to them. Send NO Money, NO Obligations. Simply name and address to Dr. H. Will Elders, 2035 Ballinger Bldg., St. Joseph, Mo.

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# Tobacco Habit BANISHED

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No craving for tobacco in any form after you begin taking Tobacco Redeemer. Don't try to quit the tobacco habit unaided. It's often a losing fight against heavy odds and may mean a serious shock to the nervous system. Let us help the tobacco habit to quit YOU. It will quit you, if you will just take Tobacco Redeemer according to directions. It is marvelously quick and thoroughly reliable.

## Not a Substitute

Tobacco Redeemer contains no habit-forming drugs of any kind. It is in no sense a substitute for tobacco. After finishing the treatment you have absolutely no desire to use tobacco again or to continue the use of the remedy. It makes not a particle of difference how long you have been using tobacco, how much you use or in what form you use it—whether you smoke cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chew plug or fine cut or use snuff. Tobacco Redeemer will positively remove all craving for tobacco in any form in a few days. This we absolutely guarantee in every case or money refunded.

Write today for our free booklet showing the deadly effect of tobacco upon the human system and positive proof that Tobacco Redeemer will quickly free you of the habit.

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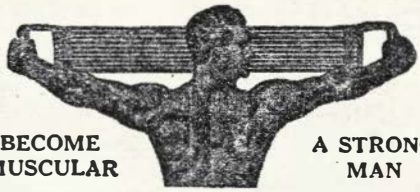
**Dept. 980 St. Louis, Mo.**



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Get this new guaranteed blue steel, side swing cylinder 6 shot revolver. Extra fine construction and finish. Accurate, hard hitting. .38 Special, and .32.20.

**SEND NO MONEY.** Order now and on arrival, pay postman our special low price $14.95 plus postage.

**Chicago Supply Co., 2459 Archer Ave., Chicago**

# FAT

## the ENEMY that is shortening Your Life

# BANISHED!

***By Neutroids—Dr. Graham's Famous Prescription***

Superfluous fat over-burdens the heart and weakens the lungs, kidneys, stomach and other organs. Stout people are easy victims of pneumonia, Trivial maladies, such as ptomaine poisoning or bronchial infections, often bring sudden death to stout people, while such a thing is rare when slender people are similarly affected. Realizing that obesity is a serious factor in shortening human life, Dr. R. Lincoln Graham, famous New York stomach specialist, devoted years to finding a natural method for reducing fat without injury to the patient in any way. After countless experiments in the laboratories of Europe and America, he perfected his prescription known as NEUTROIDS.

## FREE

**Personal Mail Consulting Service by Dr. Graham's Staff**

Any person taking Neutroids may feel free to call at the Sanitarium or write Dr. Graham confidentially.

**NO DANGER** GUARANTEED HARMLESS

**No Creams—No Baths—No Diet—No Exercise**

The fat in your body is caused by a simple chemical process. Yeast cells in the stomach combine with the starch and sugar of your food, causing fatty tissues instead of healthy lean muscles. Neutroids counteract the action of these yeast cells, check the formation of fat at its source and reduce fat already accumulated. Dr. Graham has prescribed Neutroids for thousands of people suffering from overweight who have visited his sanitarium. He personally guarantees that his prescription will give satisfactory results, that it contains no *thyroid* or habit forming drugs and can be taken with safety by anyone.

**WHAT USERS OF NEUTROIDS HAVE TO SAY**

**Had tried everything**

"I have tried everything on earth to reduce and nothing has done me any good but Neutroids." — Constance E. Harris, Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Lost 5 pounds in one week**

"In the first week's treatment of Neutroids I lost five pounds, and feel lighter and more active."—Mrs. Madeline Gunther, New York.

**Lost 16 pounds in 2 weeks**

"I lost sixteen pounds on the first two weeks' treatment and feel fine."—L. G. Miller, Thermopolis, Wyo.

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Street .....

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

# PIRATES OF BROADWAY

## By I. M. STUNG

*This is the crew, the rollicking crew,*
*That's always doing me and you—*
*Always busy, but never through,*
*And they do us, no matter what we do.*

### VII.
### THE HEAD WAITER

I AM ze lord zat rules the dining room.
Monsieur must grease my palm to get a table,
And zen, pardon, perhaps I am not able
To find him one if he shows any gloom.
Now since prohibition I have struck ze boom,
For to Rum Row I have ze private cable,
And I am friends wiz Clair and Flo and Mabel,
Who make ze bachelor ze one night groom.

Ze boulevardier he call me by my name.
I make him pay me for zat liberty.
Unless he pay he is no friend of me,
And if a friend I charge him just ze same.
I let him think he's one hell of a feller
Then sell him wine zat never saw a cellar.

### VIII.
### THE BARBER

I EAT sen-sen to keep the garlic down.
I put hair tonic on the bald man's dome,
Then I pretend to fluff it with a comb,
And throw the hottest line of talk in town.
I shave a Lizzie with a studied frown
Then pull the razor through a cloud of foam,
Massage and perfume him and send him home
All talcomed up and painted like a clown.

Let me get some poor sucker in the chair
And I'll do everything there is to do.
I'll milk him like a goat before I'm through.
It costs him money to get out of there.
And now with all the easy marks I've robbed,
Just pipe the dames that come in to be bobbed.

*And we're not yet through; "The Ticket Speculator" and "The Manicure Girl" will strut their stuff in the June Issue.*

# FRECKLES

## Now Is the Time to Get Rid of These Ugly Spots

There's no longer the slightest need of feeling ashamed of your freckles, as Othine—double strength—is guaranteed to remove these homely spots.

Simply get an ounce of Othine—double strength—from any drug or department store and apply a little of it night and morning and you should soon see that even the worst freckles have begun to disappear, while the lighter ones have vanished entirely. It is seldom that more than an ounce is needed to completely clear the skin and gain a beautiful complexion.

Be sure to ask for the double strength Othine as this is sold under guarantee of money back if it fails to remove your freckles.

We recommend Othine Complexion Soap for use with Othine, also as a shampoo—it's wonderful for bobbed hair.—25c a cake at all drug or department stores or by mail. Othine Laboratories, Inc., Buffalo, N. Y.

# TOBACCO HABIT

### *MAKE IT QUIT YOU*

Not only is tobacco filthy and disgusting to your loved ones, but it contains a Deadly Poison which weakens heart, stomach, lowers vitality and invites diseases that may shorten your life. STOP! Regain Vigor, but don't shock your system by trying to quit unaided.

### *EASY TO QUIT*

It makes no difference how long you have used tobacco, whether cigarettes, pipe, cigars, chewing or snuff, Nix-O-Tine (Wonderful Sanitarium treatment in new tablet form conquering thousands of worst cases) will free you from the craving quickly and for good. No more desire for tobacco. Harmless. Guaranteed. **Sent on Trial** Postpaid. Small sum if cured. Not a cent if it fails.

*Write today for full remedy on trial*

**PERKINS CHEMICAL CO. 55-H St. Hastings, Nebr.**

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**THE NATURAL METHOD BUREAU, Atlantic City, N.J.**

# Cost $1.50 Your Profit $1.44

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**WORLD MONOGRAM COMPANY**

**Dept. 154 NEWARK, NEW JERSEY**

# Clear Your Skin!

**YOUR SKIN CAN BE QUICKLY CLEARED OF Pimples, Blackheads, Acne Eruptions on the face or body, Barbers Itch, Eczema, Enlarged Pores and Oily or Shiny Skin.**

**FREE** WRITE TODAY for my FREE BOOKLET, "A CLEAR-TONE SKIN,"—telling how I cured myself after being afflicted for over fifteen years.

**E. S. GIVENS, 112 Chemical Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.**

# GET RID OF YOUR FAT

## FREE TRIAL TREATMENT

Sent on request. Ask for my "pay-when-reduced" offer. I have successfully reduced thousands of persons, often at the rate of a pound a day, without diet or exercise. Let me send you proof at my expense.

**DR. R. NEWMAN, Licensed Physician, State of New York, 286 Fifth Ave., N. Y., Desk M-1**

# Deaf Can Hear Says Science

## New Invention Aids Thousands

Here's good news for all who suffer from deafness. The Dictograph Products Corporation announces the perfection of a remarkable device which has enabled thousands of deaf persons to hear as well as ever. The makers of this wonderful device say it is too much to expect you to believe this so they are going to give you a chance to try it at home. They offer to send it by prepaid parcel post on a ten-day free trial. They do not send it C. O. D.—they require no deposit—there is no obligation.

They send it entirely at their own expense and risk. They are making this extraordinary offer well knowing that the magic of this little instrument will so amaze and delight the user that the chances of its being returned are very slight. Thousands have already accepted this offer and report most gratifying results. There's no longer any need that you should endure the mental and physical strain which comes from a constant effort to hear. Now you can mingle with your friends without that feeling of sensitiveness from which all deaf persons suffer. Now you can take your place in the social and business world to which your talents entitle you and from which your affliction has, in a measure, excluded you. Just send your name and address to The Dictograph Products Corporation, Suite 1303-A, Candler Building, New York, for descriptive literature and request blank.

# EVERY SOCIETY WOMAN KNOWS THIS SECRET OF LUSTROUS HAIR

Whether her hair is Blonde, Brown or Brunette, her hairdresser brings out all its richest natural radiance by using "a touch of henna in the shampoo." You can have this same secret to make your own hair lustrous, in

## HENNAFOAM SHAMPOO

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"Ed Wilson, there, is one of the most ambitious men in the plant. I notice that he never fools away his spare time. He studies his International Correspondence Schools Course every chance he gets.

"It's been the making of him, too. He hasn't been here nearly so long as Tom Downey, who was laid off yesterday, but he knows ten times as much about this business.

"I'm going to give him Tom's job at a raise in salary. He's the kind of man we want around here."

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HOW do you stand in your shop or office? Are you an Ed Wilson or a Tom Downey? Are you going up? Or down?

No matter where you live, the International Correspondence Schools will come to you. No matter what your handicaps or how small your means, we have a plan to meet your circumstances. No matter how limited your previous education, the simply-written, wonderfully-illustrated I. C. S. textbooks make it easy to learn.

This is all we ask: Without cost, without obligating yourself in any way, put it up to us to prove how we can help you. Just mark and mail this coupon.

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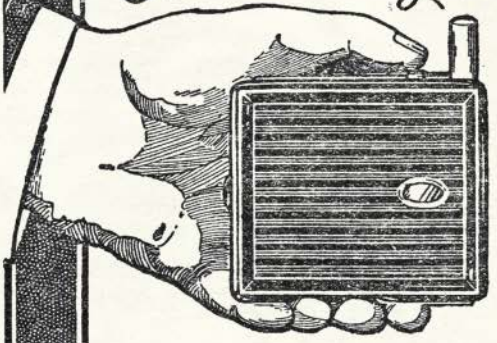

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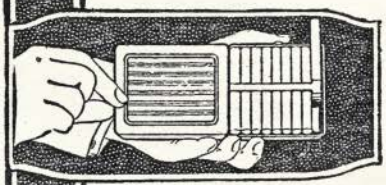

## *Just Press the Button Here's how it Works*

*Sometimes one stolen night of romance seems more important than the love of a life-time.*

# SHIPWRECK

## *A Novelette*

### *By* C. S. MONTANYE

USUALLY Patsy Verril arose anywhere from ten o'clock in the morning until one o'clock in the afternoon but on a certain mid-winter morning when the sunshine was as hard as brittle gold and the skies blue-washed and the streets spattered with the snow of the previous day, Patsy was astir well before ten. In the little dressing alcove attached to her bedroom, Patsy, nudely fresh and glowing from her bath like Venus sea-risen, went about the business of dressing.

She and her father occupied a four-room suite on the tenth floor of the Hotel Richelieu, on East Sixty-third Street, not far from the park. While her mother lived, they had always occupied the old home in Gramercy Park, but with her passing two winters ago, Martin Verril had sold the house and they had come to the Richelieu, gradually to grow accustomed to its constricted confines, living as most New Yorkers lived, a harried, hurried existence.

Her father had his Exchange Place office, his golf and his club in town; Patsy had the theater, the supper clubs, smart cafés, the homes of countless friends where there were week-end parties both in and out of the metropolis —the long vistas opened by balloon tires, cylinders and gasoline. Hers was, and had been since they had left Gramercy Park, a topsy-turvy world of pleasure where there was always something doing, always something to do.

The dressing-table before which she sat had triple mirrors and each mirror reflected her at a different angle. In one she saw her profile, gentle, sweet and girlish. In another she saw the rear of her proudly poised little head with the lustrous glitter of her gold-red hair—once expertly shingled but now neither short nor long and in consequence a maddening matter to dress and keep dressed. In the center mirror she glimpsed herself full face and dwelt upon her image.

She was certain that she looked a great deal more than her eighteen, immature years. She liked the decided oval of her pretty face, her warm, golden skin and her smooth, untroubled brow. Her grayish-green eyes were enigmatic and almost Oriental in their

inscrutable expression, her nose too short to be termed classical and with too much of a tilt to it to be anything other than cute. She beheld her mouth, red, full-lipped, passionate and supercilious, and below it the chin, round but firm with just the slightest suggestion of an impossible dimple.

For the rest she was slender—fashionably thin as Ted Meredith called it—with flat, narrow hips, breasts like those of a boy and long symmetrical legs which, in black clocked hosiery, had to be seen to be appreciated.

Her youth was very evident. It's endowment was a certain suave young elegance which, combined with the clothing she bought and charged at the various Fifth Avenue shops, gave her a charm and splendor that she had been told was quite close to perfection.

While Patsy did what she could with her maddening hair she puffed placidly on a cigarette scorching the end of her dressing-table. Her father had forbidden her to smoke before breakfast but he had left for his office minutes ago and there was no one to bother her. While she donned peach-colored lingerie, surveying herself in a door-mirror when each garment clung snugly to her rounded body, Patsy thought of a number of things. She thought of Ted Meredith principally, wondered if she really were on the verge of falling in love with him and of the date at the Westchester-Murray Hill for a round of winter golf, luncheon and then a Bridge. She thought of the allowance her father had cut down and wondered if the stock brokerage business was as bad as he had told her it was. Then she tried to imagine who would be going up to Westchester in Meredith's big, seven passenger touring car.

The hair finished at length, Patsy made ready to finish dressing. She decided upon wool stockings, English brogues, a smartly pleated skirt, a little tan flannel blouse, a gay sweater and a rakish trifle of a felt hat, unornamented. This ensemble completed with a short chipmunk coat, Patsy picked up gauntlet gloves, carelessly stored away her collection of cosmetics, made sure her cigarette case was filled and went into the living-room.

One of the hotel maids had come in and was making up her father's bed. Patsy watched her idly before turning to a morning paper that Martin Verril had left on the table, neatly folded back at the stock and market report page. Business she knew nothing about but she understood vaguely that he was worried, that some faction in Wall Street was hammering away at him and that he had been endeavoring to weather the storm. She shrugged presently, idly turning the paper back to the society columns for brief consideration and discarded it altogether when the foyer telephone tinkled and the hotel operator informed her that Mr. Theodore Meredith was waiting below.

He was lounging in the lobby when Patsy went down—a young man in the late twenties, highly colored, not unattractive and almost completely enveloped by the raccoon coat that concealed the sinewy figure Patsy had secretly admired on so many bathing beaches during the past summer. The

only son of a wealthy white goods merchant, Meredith was a gilded idler, a waster and a spendthrift. She often asked herself what there was about him that intrigued her, for more than once she had heard gossip about him, had heard the opinion that he was a cad in more ways than one.

Meredith came toward her as Patsy alighted from an elevator, a columned electric light glinting on his sleek hair, his hand cold to her touch, his expression quizzical.

"I haven't got the medal with me, Patsy," he began, "but I'll see to it that you'll surely get it by mail. Honestly, it's a peach. You'll be surprised. It's made entirely of hand-carved celluloid and the inscription reads, 'Presented to the only girl in the world who's dressed and ready when she has to go places!'"

"Don't be silly," Patsy said, drawing on her gloves. "Who," she added, "have we with us to-day?"

Meredith chuckled.

"I rounded up four of 'em. Phil Rinkey, Helene Wandell, Ira Bell and the one and only Mrs. Van Eldon Travers. Lord, what a corker she is! Come, come. Let's step on it!"

In the long, expensive motor that turned into the park at Fifth Avenue and shaped a fleet course north, Patsy meditatively considered the question of Van Eldon Travers' wife.

She had met Marcia Travers at a dance given at the Chateau D'Ardenne by the Twenty Club in November but she had hardly expected the woman to be one of their party. It was not so much that Marcia Travers had been a chorus girl before her marriage as it was her speedy existence since—and the fact that she traveled with an entirely different set. Patsy speculated as to why Meredith had invited her.

She stole a surreptitious little glance at the woman who sat in the back seat next to the fat and stupid Ira Bell. Marcia Travers was not a great many years her senior. She was a strikingly beautiful brunette with an alluring figure, dark mirrors of eyes that hid secrets, and a certain blasé hardness born of worldly wisdom and not at all in keeping with her languorous look. Patsy had often heard of her escapades, her adventures, and knew that Van Eldon Travers, a member of the Stock Exchange, had often been provoked by them and more than once had been reported as having broken with her.

Patsy resolutely turned from the question of Marcia Travers, trying to find some inspiration in Meredith's flippant chatter and the drawling replies of Phil Rinkey.

Rinkey was a tall, cadaverous individual with the face of a Rialto comedian and a pair of nimble, dancing legs. His companion for the day, the Wandell girl, was a vapid ash blonde with whom Patsy had nothing in common. She spoke now and then to Ira Bell who, lumpy, heavy and dull-witted, was trying vainly to grasp the hard, brilliant quips Marcia Travers voiced once they left the crawling length of overcrowded Gotham and crossed the threshhold of the suburbs.

Patsy focussed her attention on Meredith who lounged at the wheel.

She had come to like him for two distant and different reasons. Unlike most men, Meredith never tried to paw her or lure her into petting parties and if he knew any risqué jokes he never bored her with them. Then, too, she was vividly aware of his vitality, the challenge his masculinity held for her. Other men and youths who were chapters in the book of her heart had failed to thrill her and she had taken a wicked and almost morbid delight in tantalizing them, seeing how far she might go. Men like Ira Bell she had never been able to tolerate; their blundering, insane love making had disgusted her and often she had deliberately tempted them into growing beast-like so that she might have a revenge in frigid cruelty.

Never had she felt a desire to stir and provoke Meredith. She sat huddled in her coat wondering again if she was falling in love with him, if she were capable of falling in love with anyone. He had never acted with her as other men did at dances, parties and sprees. She asked herself if his interest was too firmly built on the foundation of friendship to lean toward the excitement of conquest. Even his kisses had been casual, lightly given things that had left them both unawakened and uninspired all through the drowsy days of the previous summer and into the fall.

Scarsdale flashed past with a sprint between the car and a motorcycle policeman who finally overtook them close to the border of White Plains and forced them to a panting stop.

"Who the hell do you think you are —hitting close to fifty-five on this boulevard? Pull over to the curb while I make you out a ticket."

Patsy widened her eyes. She knew Meredith had been arrested for speeding on countless occasions and felt a flash of admiration for his untroubled concern. He set fire to a cigarette and grinned.

"My dear fellow, speed is an inheritance and possibly you know the Darwinian theory. In our case, we trace directly back to Paul Revere. Here. Take this little tribute of my esteem and buy your wife a new chapeau."

Patsy glimpsed the yellow of a hundred-dollar bill as it changed hands. The arm of the law stuffed it away and spat reflectively.

"I'll leave you go this time but be a little careful. All the boys on this road ain't business men like me."

Thirty minutes later the exclusive Westchester-Murray Hill Country Club loomed up before them, a white, rambling Colonial structure hedged in with leafless trees, bedecked with snow drifts that lay rotting under the level rays of the sun.

For some unknown reason Patsy had a feeling that the day was not destined to be as diverting as she had expected. Winter golf with the red balls across a soggy course was a complete fiasco made doubly irritating when Ted Meredith clumped off with Marcia Travers and left her to the heavy antics of Ira Bell. The luncheon following was perfectly served but it bored her. At the bridge tables later on Patsy had difficulty in suppressing her yawns and more than once felt envy. The Travers woman had, since entering the club,

been the center of attention. Her stock of epigrams and cynicisms might have been learned by heart and her game, when the cards were cut, was flawless. Patsy was annoyed by the attention Meredith gave her, was annoyed when the other scientifically destroyed her hand when they were opponents.

She knew a quiver of anger that flared up like a fire among dry leaves as the scores were finally added and she discovered her own share of what was owed Marcia Travers amounted to nearly forty-five dollars.

The game over, they lounged about while a club servant kindled the sconces and another served drinks. The gaunt Phil Rinkey brought his glass over to the divan and tried to amuse her. Patsy excused herself at length and sought the ladies' room to repair the hair which again was escaping her net.

"What a damn nuisance!" she thought.

From the ladies' room there was a corridor back to the foyer. As Patsy went down it a few minutes later she saw that a man had just come in from the outside cold and was warming his hands before the logs burning in the rubble-stone fireplace.

He was a tall, well-made person with a pleasing breadth of shoulder, a lean face that was handsome in a bold, domineering way and eyes that Patsy saw were gray and shrewd. He was not as young as Meredith, but was possibly in the early thirties, kept hard and youthful by golf and exercise. Somehow, Patsy had an idea that she had met him somewhere and eyed him askance as he turned.

"Hello, what are *you* mad about?"

She looked at him defiantly.

"How do you know I'm mad?"

He laughed as he might laugh at the question of a child and she glimpsed admiration in the gaze that roamed slowly over her.

"It's very evident, my dear Miss Verril. There—does my knowing you increase your wrath? You haven't the slightest idea who I am, have you?"

The irritation Patsy had known all day rushed back to her. She tried to make her expression one of calm contempt and indifference but his face, with the firelight painting it, seemed to be laughing at her and curiosity overpowered all other emotions.

"Who are you?"

He laughed under his breath.

"Van Eldon Travers—your father has heard of me, I'm sure. You needn't mention meeting me, however." His smile grew mysterious and bland. "Don't you remember that night at the Chateau D'Ardenne? I tried my best to cut in and dance with you but failed utterly. You have no idea what a blow that was to my vanity—missing out with the prettiest flapper there."

Patsy made her eyes level with his. Travers had a reputation of his own for subtle flattery. He had been called the buccaneer of Wall Street and a boudoir pirate as well. He stalked women with the same bold aggressiveness that he staged a raid on the Exchange, and there was about him all the picturesqueness of a rakishly modern Captain Kidd.

Despite the wave of anger aroused by his sardonic tone, Patsy was fully

aware of his lawless appeal. She could easily vision him storming the citadel of a feminine heart, taking what spoils pleased his fancy when the fortress has capitulated. Somehow he made her feel as if she were eight instead of eighteen and his easy regard of her helped to increase her irritation.

"You might not know it," she said maliciously, "but your wife is in the other room."

She might have been addressing a blank brick wall for all the attention Travers gave to her statement.

"It's funny," he went on. "Since that night at the Chateau I've never been quite able to forget you, put you out of mind. Red-gold hair—eyes that seem to hide all the wisdom of your sex — exquisite beauty and perfect breeding. I've a feeling that sooner or later we are destined to become intimate, very intimate. Any day I might decide to run up the Jolly Roger and go cruising for you across forbidden seas. What I covet I usually attain—eventually."

Patsy tried to make her low laughter coldly ironic.

"Sail after me," she drawled, "and you'll find yourself shipwrecked." She consulted the platinum octagon ticking on her left wrist and gave him an ominous stare. "Now that you have mentioned last November and the Chateau D'Ardenne, you make me recall quite clearly the opinion I formed of you. I remember that I disliked your persistency then. I dislike it now. You are," she added, turning away for what she felt was a most impressive exit, "annoying as well as amusing."

The winter dusk was heavy over the hills of Westchester when Meredith turned the nose of his car back toward the huddle of Manhattan. It had gotten much colder but Patsy didn't mind it. Marcia Travers had decided to stay at the country club where there was an impromptu dance on and her mood was lighter because of the other's absence. Patsy buried her chin in the upflung collar of her coat and brooded pensively. It was not hard to recollect her first meeting with Van Eldon Travers. His eyes had followed her that night and at every turn she had seen him staring after her. Impulsively she leaned toward Meredith.

"Is Travers as terrible as he's supposed to be, Ted?"

Meredith moved his shoulders.

"I guess he's a pretty tough proposition—in the Street and with the ladies. He's a go-get-her if there ever was one. I understand his Traction crowd are sewing the market up in knots. Sooner or later they'll begin to sell short—ask your Dad what that means—and then there's going to be hell to pay. I don't like the man but I give him credit. He's a tough proposition and a gambler who wins because he takes chances. Know him?"

"Slightly," Patsy replied.

It appeared that Phil Rinkey and the Wandell girl had a date on West End Avenue for a Haiti rum-punch party. They alighted below Eighty-fourth Street and at Seventy-second Ira Bell climbed out, mumbling something about looking up a divorcée who lived in the neighborhood and needed sympathy.

Then Meredith joined the stream of

traffic flowing south to the pyrotechnic land of the Rialto and a few minutes later they were before the canopy that stretched from the entrance of the Hotel Richelieu out to the curb.

"Fiery setter!" Meredith exclaimed. "I'm chilled through to the bone. If I come up will you mix me a drink, Pat?"

"Two of 'em—both the same!" she assured him. "I'll shake up what father calls an Edison. First you feel full of electricity and then you invent excuses for another. You have no idea!"

She half expected Martin Verril to be camped in the living-room, engrossed with his evening newspaper, but the room was dark and deserted when they switched on the lights. They shed their outer apparel and Patsy took sundry bottles from the mahogany cellarette and mixed a couple of weird concoctions. She sat down on the arm of the divan Meredith occupied, giggling at the grimaces and gestures he made as he pretended he couldn't get the drink down.

Presently her mood grew serious. This youth, she was certain, was her ultimate fate. She wondered why he had never acted toward her like other men — particularly when they were alone together. Others snatched what they could from their opportunities—they were all alike—in actions, words and gestures.

"Remember last summer, Ted?"

He stirred and looked up at her.

He reached up and drew her down to him, but his hold was listless and in another space he was off reminiscing. Did she remember the time they swam off to the raft and were marooned there by the threat of the shark? The clock on the mantel ticked monotonously, but Patsy only half heard it. She was in his arms, close to him. Why didn't he kiss her? Why was he so enigmatic? His actions did not even suggest a course which, however reprehensible, would at least be understandable. Was it in her power to play with him as she had played with other fatuous youths? She tried to think, tried to decide whether or not it was worth trying.

True, it was not love-making that she wanted, but this affection—this half-simulated passion—left blackened ashes . . . white-hot memories . . . to torture and torment.

"What do you say we run over to Broadway? They are opening a new revue at Shannon's to-night with the best-looking chorus ever seen in a café revue. Shall we?"

Patsy shook her head.

"No, I'm tired. Don't stay here on my account. The minute you go I'll climb into bed. The old hay will feel pretty good."

Meredith toyed with a hammered silver cigarette case and regarded her with one of his indefinite half-smiles.

"No earthly reason why I should go over to the Alley to look at some wonderful chorus girls when there's a better-looking person than any of them right here. What will we do? Tell each other bedtime stories or something equally as thrilling? I have it. Get out your cross-word puzzle book and let's find out how totally ignorant we are."

He left shortly after Martin Verril came in, and outside in the foyer Patsy felt a surge of yearning when he stooped to snatch a fleeting kiss. She wanted to hold him, to clutch his arm and not let him go, and she felt baffled, enervated when he was finally in the public hall, stopping for a last word before the lift came up to fetch him. When he was gone she shut the front door and rested a shoulder against the panelled wall, her thoughts chaotic. Did she love him or was it infatuation? Just before she went back into the living-room a strange question, grotesque and fanciful, came to her.

She asked herself if women desired men with the same longing, the same mad impetuosity that men desired women?

II

Invariably, Patsy had breakfast sent up from the Richelieu grill and consumed it in bed. Generally it was the same thing—a luscious cut of a West Indian melon, toast, a cup of chocolate and nothing else. Then with a cigarette she could idle in bed, stretching out her pajamaed legs, yawning shamelessly before she sank back among the pillows to grow drowsy all over again and consider the day's events through a mystic haze.

Two mornings after the irritating day at the Westchester-Murray Hill she awoke at the ungodly hour of seven o'clock, a trifle astonished to find she was thinking of Van Eldon Travers, remembering the firelight on his lean, handsome face, his gray eyes glinting at her. She lay very still, watching the sun creep along the window sill and come in under the edge of the lowered shade. Meditatively she delved back and mentally repeated their conversation, vaguely angry again and without any good reason for it; except for the sardonic note in his voice, he had been courteous and affable. For a long time Patsy thought of Travers and, in thinking, banished for good the idea of further sleep.

At length she arose, ran the water in the adjoining bath for her matutinal tub, spilled the Egyptian bath crystals into it lavishly and rubbed her nude body vigorously with a camel's-hair brush. Once out of the enameled basin, she used the heavy Turkish towels she had heated over the radiator, then weighed herself and put on her lingerie and a foaming negligée.

Then, heelless slippers dangling from her bare feet, she pattered into the living-room and discovered her father shaving in his chamber.

Martin Verril was stout and florid, with a curiously distended skin, a face hallmarked with hints of weakness and worried eyes that peered out from a network of wrinkles. There was a certain shrewdness about him, however, that had grown with years and had become as much a part of him as the odor of Scotch whiskey and Havana cigars which Patsy never smelled without thinking of him.

Verril heard her step in the living-room and stared in, his razor held aloft.

"What are you doing up so early? Good Lord! Put some clothes on. You'll catch your death of cold!"

Patsy had always regarded his

wishes lightly. She seated herself on the end of the divan and swung her feet.

"Met a friend of yours the other day."

"Who's that?"

"Van Eldon Travers."

She saw the sudden twitch of his lip as he turned and put the razor on the sink.

"Travers—you know him?" There was a certain breathlessness to the question. When Patsy nodded he took a reef in his bathrobe and came into the room, the worried look disappearing from his eyes. They grew bright and expectant as he continued. "Look here, Pat. You can do me no end of a big favor—if you're clever. Travers is one of the insurgents who is just about ready to deal a finishing wallop—to me. If you could find out when the Traction gang are going to sell short I'd know a thing or two." His excitement grew. "That's all I want to know—when they're selling short. Try to find out, like a good girl. It means as much for you as it does for me. If Travers flattens me out I don't know what's going to become of us. We won't be able to stay here, at any rate. Use your discretion and be tactful. If you don't, of course, he'll know what I put you up to and possibly tell you something that will be worse than knowing nothing. You can pump him, Pat. They say he never denies a pretty woman anything."

Patsy stopped swinging her legs.

"Would you," she inquired in a small voice, "want me to get information for you in *that* way?"

Martin Verril swung around.

"Don't be silly. You know what I mean. I tell you desperate measures require desperate remedies. I'm fighting with my back to the wall now, and bankruptcy is the reward if I lose out. We'll be shipwrecked, Pat! For God's sake," he added fervently, "try to find out for me!"

The brittle sunshine lasted all through the week. Then there were two days of a cold, cheerless drizzle, and for the first time since she left Gramercy Park, Patsy found time hanging heavily on her hands. She went to a matinee of the new dancing musical comedy at the Globe, but it was not what she expected it would be; tea dances at her old haunts bored her, and she found Helene Wandell's birthday supper party a stupid affair, though the girl had a case of champagne to help the celebration along.

There were chances for shopping along Fifth Avenue, but Patsy, remembering her father's financial condition, resolutely turned from the temptation of the charge accounts. Someone gave a charity bridge that was ghastly, and she had to turn down a week-end at Westbury because she thought she had no clothes. She enjoyed the Pola Negri picture at the Capital where, alone in the vast balcony, she curled up in her seat and let the majestic voice of the great organ soothe and cure her restlessness. She began to have queer forebodings — premonitions born of nervousness that seemed to tell her an unpleasant dénouement of some kind lurked ahead down the aisle of the

weeks. The shadow of it lay heavy at her feet.

She wondered if it was financial disaster overtaking Martin Verril, and made up her mind to try to chance across Van Eldon Travers at the first opportunity to do her father's bidding. She wondered why she saw nothing of Ted Meredith and, at night, felt the nameless something that was a need within her heart—a voice was calling and calling for something she wanted but never could have.

The rain finally ended and the sunshine came back. Patsy, in a little afternoon frock from Lanvin's which was the best dress she had, sought the Twenty Club toward four the same afternoon. It was lodged in a private house half-way up the Sixties, an exclusive rendezvous, overrun by flappers and blasé youths who possessed allowances they had no business to have.

The main floor of the building had been remodeled and contained a triangular dance floor where there were dining compartments and small, round wicker tables and chairs. Behind glimmering screens a five-piece orchestra made spasmodic syncopation and very present was a tingling air of strained nerves, anticipation.

So far as she could see there was no sign of Meredith in the congregation consuming tea and cocktails. Emil, Patsy's favorite waiter, tipped the chair back for her at a table near the deeply-draped windows, and with a little sigh she sat down. All around her were girls of her own age, even younger—a bobbed-hair tribe with bangles and bracelets, grotesque mannerisms and strange slang. There were a few men present, foppish, chinless youths who wore extreme British clothing. They were cookie pushers and cocktail crabs, as Meredith called them. Across the room, Patsy saw Ira Bell, puffed up like a rubber ball, cavaliering a painfully thin girl with round shoulders and long, pointed fingers, whose somber black habiliments made her remember the divorcée who had needed sympathy.

She recognized and nodded to one or two other friends, but her mood was not for company and she gave them no encouragement. Emil brought her drink in a crystalline glass. She wedged a cigarette into a long jade holder, puffed at it lightly and watched the dancers. A tango ended with the thump of a Soudanese drum, the shake of a tambourine, the click of castanets, and a minute or two later the musician started the fox trot hit of the show at the Globe.

Patsy hummed the words under her breath:

*"When you're in love, really in love,*
*That's the one time the golden sunshine*
*Warms you through and through—"*

She began to brood upon Love. She told herself that her beauty, her youth, all the charms that had intrigued and made slaves of other men were like flowers that had bloomed only to wither and fade. She began to wonder if there was some other woman in Meredith's life, if he lived a secret romance of his own. She considered the eternal question of whether or not she loved him, and dismally pictured herself growing old and gray, never to decide definitely,

never knowing his affection, never receiving anything but his friendship and light, casual kisses.

"So we meet again, Miss Verril."

Patsy looked up with a start and discovered Van Eldon Travers at the table, one hand on the back of a wicker chair. While she stared without comment he seated himself easily and she saw his bold, sword-sharp gaze sliding across at her, drinking her in like one thirsty morning when she had awakened so early, remembering, too, that her first thoughts had been of him.

"I didn't think," she began, "that you spent your afternoons in places like this."

He gave an order to Emil and shrugged amiably.

"I don't, usually. However, the other day I made an arrangement with the captain of waiters here. I asked him to be sure to telephone me at the office when you came in alone."

Her stare of amaze was genuine.

"Do you wonder that I dislike you?" she cried softly.

Travers hammered down a cigarette and reached for the matches.

"Dislike—hate, even—is preferable to blank indifference. I would rather have a woman hate me than disregard me entirely. I make no move to conceal my purpose. I told you the other afternoon that you pleased my fancy. Since then I have been thinking about you more than ever. I'm not ashamed of it. Come, Miss Verril, if we can't be friends at least let us be friendly enemies."

Patsy poked at the maraschino cherry that lay in a little puddle of liquor in the bottom of her glass. She assured herself that she really couldn't tolerate the man opposite, yet the old appeal of him tiptoed across to her. He aroused and stirred her even if he did put her on her guard. He impressed his personality upon her and, knowing his reputation, the challenge of a duel held a certain fascination.

"I don't like your wife and I know she doesn't like me," Patsy went on. "I have no intention of giving her cause for any antagonism by having her learn of this sudden fancy for me that you speak of."

Travers exhaled a lazy thread of cigarette smoke, his face growing as hard and inflexible as brass.

"Marcia's antagonisms don't interest me at all. Let me tell you something that you possibly know already. For the past half-year she and I have been operating on a basis of mutual understanding. That is, she has her own coterie of friends and I have mine. She does as she pleases, I do likewise, and neither of us interferes with the other."

While Patsy thought the statement over, the orchestra played a number from the Winter Garden. Its persuasive rhythm made her feet nervous and swung the pendulum of her mood about in another direction. She endeavored to explain it by telling herself that logic and common sense compelled her to be discreet with Van Eldon Travers. He was the Nemesis who stalked Martin Verril. For his good, as well as her own salvation, it behooved her to use the tact her father had spoken of, to overcome her dislike and be diplomatic with him.

"Shall we dance?"

Patsy pushed back her glass and stood.

"If you wish."

He proved to be a strong leader and an excellent dancer. He held her closer than necessary, and she knew that the soft, feminine appeal of her was beginning to arouse a pulse within him. Faint color stained his lean, handsome face and there were changing expressions in the gaze he bent upon her.

Later, when the dance was over and they were back at their table, the faithful Emil brought a fresh collection of drinks. They sat silent, watching the progress a long-nosed youth was making with a woman old enough to be his mother at a table across from them. Finally, Travers swept her with a glance that missed nothing from her bobbed head to her symmetrical legs and ground out his cigarette.

"What I really came up here for this afternoon," he stated, "was to ask you to come up to the week-end party I'm giving at The Lodge. Before you refuse let me switch it around. I'm having a crowd up from Friday until Monday. I dare you to accept the invitation!"

Patsy narrowed her eyes. A week-end at the Travers' place on the Sound. Relief flooded her, for to accept the dare would automatically free her from any suggestion of weakness given if she accepted otherwise.

"You dare me? Very well, I accept it!"

He leaned to her, a muscle twitching in one cheek and she saw that her instant acceptance had surprised him.

"Splendid! I'll telephone you at the hotel later on in the week and supply more particulars. Now I have to run along. Business appointment downtown. Are you leaving, too?"

In the foyer, Travers sent the doorman back to the desk on some pretext. Then, with a swift look in either direction, he caught her. Before Patsy could resist, he had kissed her on the mouth, swinging away before she could voice throaty indignation, disappearing down the front steps and into the light-shot winter twilight.

Fifth Avenue, when Patsy reached it, was made clamorous with traffic and the marching tread of released workers. The show windows along the Avenue were as colorful as Bagdad bazaars, yellow with exotic night-flowers. The air was keen but as exhilarating as old wine. It blew against Patsy's face and cooled the fever in her cheeks, the hot flush that had come with Travers' kiss. When she reached the horseman on guard at the portals of the Plaza she laughed.

"Fool!" she told herself. "If he only knew how I hate him!"

Past the Savoy she began to consider the question of the evening. Phil Rinkey wanted to take her to the Westchester dog show at the Grand Central Palace. The Colonnade Club was giving a dance at the Hotel des Illustrateurs; and Bunny Graham, her own particular crush at school, wanted her to see the new apartment she and her most recent husband had taken on Park Avenue.

Patsy was still undecided when she reached the Richelieu. An elevator

rushed her up to the proper floor; she used her key. As she opened the door, lamplight and tobacco smoke rushed to greet her. Ted Meredith, on the divan, laid aside the evening newspaper he had been looking at and got up, grinning like a billiken as she blinked at him.

"Who let you in?"

He helped her off with her coat.

"Your father. I met him downtown and gave him a lift in the car. He came up to get some papers or something and told me to tell you he's having dinner with his lawyer downtown and won't be in until late."

Patsy went to the humidor and helped herself to a Paul Roger.

"That accounts for him. But what are *we* going to do?"

The question was natural enough, but Patsy felt the quick tick of her pulses, a stir of expectancy that made her thrill inwardly. She puffed carelessly on a cigarette, pivoting on her heels while she waited.

"Can't we have dinner somewhere and go to a show. Say yes and I'll phone for tickets directly. They say the new revue at the Versailles is a knockout. Yes? No?"

Patsy voiced her delight. Meredith used the telephone and then waited while she went in to don her dinner dress. In the boudoir alcove, Patsy stripped off her frock from Lanvin's and looked at herself, very pink and perfect in her all-revealing lingerie. She found herself wondering what effect it would have on Meredith should she walk in on him as she was. Then she visioned herself married to him and saw him in the bedroom—shaving or looking for a lost collar button or struggling into a stiff shirt or doing whatever men did when they prepared for a meal out.

With a rueful sigh, Patsy investigated her wardrobe in a whirlwind of nervousness. She found a dress that had recently been dry-cleaned to remove wine stains that were souvenirs of some gay party, appraised it critically and tossed it over the back of a chair. After that she sat down to toil over her hair, thinking of Van Eldon Travers, of herself, of her father and of Meredith and Marcia Travers.

"For the love of Gabriel's horn, make it snappy!" Meredith called in at the door.

They dined together at Vicar's and then went to the Versailles, where a stunning, undressed revue was on exhibition. It was a musical *mélange,* carefully calculated and prepared for the sensual side of its audiences. The semi-nude was rampant. It was a fleshly carnival with risqué dialogue, marvelous dancing, an abundance of hokum, the glitter and glamor of superb scenery and the interweaving, haunting melodies of a beautifully composed score. It was a shrine of beauty where Girl was supreme. Pasty was sure that nowhere had she seen so many delectably formed, sloe-eyed houris.

The programme melted from one scene into another, making each of them a feast of loveliness before which men let their imaginations riot — and then stepped from the world of illusion into the cold of the street the playhouse

bulked upon, perhaps to seek a scarlet, Decameron night of their own, waiting for the haggard dawn to peer through crimson curtains. . . .

Meredith had difficulty in finding a taxi, but managed to locate a Luxor in front of the Astor. He suggested the Chalet d'Or, Edgerton's or a new Russian inn on Forty-sixth Street called The Steppes, but Patsy was tired and had ideas of her own, crafty little notions which made her tingle.

"If it's all the same to you, can't we go back to the Richelieu? Ten to one father will be in bed—if he's home. I'm just dog tired."

Meredith inclined his sleek head, directing the taxi chauffeur through the front window.

"The Richelieu, Jehu, and don't spare the whip."

The man, an asphalt arab, grinned back over his shoulder.

"O. K., boss. And my name's Eddie. Let's go!"

The suite at the Richelieu was untenanted. Patsy turned on the steam heat and kindled one lamp only. She wondered if the appeal of the revue at the Versailles was strong upon Meredith. When he seated himself on the divan she cuddled beside him, all warm and snugly, very feminine and very youthful.

"What's the matter with you, Ted? You're not at all like other boys—men? Good night! I might be a stick of wood or a cake of ice, for all the attention I get. Am I wrong, all wrong? I guess I must be. I can see plainly that you don't care two cents' worth."

Meredith laughed at her complaint, picking up her hands. He turned them over and looked at the petal-pink palms, squeezing them gently.

"Where do you get that stuff, Pat? You know perfectly well what my feelings are. We've been good pals. If I haven't been over affectionate, give me credit. I think a lot of you, I respect you and—"

"I don't want to be respected—by you!" Patsy interrupted. "I want you to act natural and human with me. You know, if I wanted, I could probably vamp you—make you do what you don't want to do. But that wouldn't be fair to either of us, would it?"

Meredith shrugged.

"Just at present," he declared slowly, "it wouldn't take a lot of vamping to put me out of balance. Don't look at me like that, Pat. There's some hypnotic influence in your eyes that—that—"

He drew her to him. Patsy let her head droop to his shoulder. It might have been unseemly to have said what she had said, to have thrown herself at him, but she didn't care. The voice in her heart was calling and calling again, and a cryptic something gave her an inner trembling that made her breath catch in her throat, that made her eyes heavy-lidded and aroused a maternal emotion that went back to primordial days.

She touched him with her fingers—his hair, his forehad, his cheeks and his neck. She caressed him with her gaze, excitement growing within her, little quivers of anticipation running through her. Of a sudden she was no longer Patricia Verril, no longer a girl,

a novice in love. She was just a woman alone in a world of silence with her Man. Love was stirring within her like the tremulous wings of a young bird. She could feel it sweeping through her in a dark, mysterious tide.

"Hold me—close—close!" she implored brokenly. "Hurt me—be cruel to me if you can't be kind—but, oh, please, be kind!"

His arms grew taut about her and there was nothing light or casual in his kisses, kisses that Patsy drank in avidly in a little frenzy of yearning. She was confused and shaken, but she told herself that she could understand how women felt when they surrendered themselves to their lovers, when they awoke from dreaming to face actuality, when they lived!

"Patsy—you're—wonderful!"

A star looked in at the window and the wind pried at the casement. She wondered if this were love, the hallowed love of the poets, the love that created and filled the world with little children who had reaching hands. Or was it only a spurious imitation, something base, ignoble and wanton? Patsy didn't know, could not answer the question and—did not care.

"Kiss me again!" she breathed. "Kiss me—hard—until it hurts!"

## III

The lawns and terraces of The Lodge rolled down to what, in a happier season, was a sandy bathing beach. To the west lay the town and village of Green Mills. South were the chimney-pots and spires of another settlement thrown down in the valleys between the barricade of Connecticut hills, while fronting the estate of Van Eldon Travers was the Sound, sprinkled with small islands in the dim distance. Closer were inlets, coves and bays.

The house was of the stolid, impressive, English timbered type, with rambling wings and huge, low-ceiled chambers, where dull-rubbed wood glimmered. It was surrounded by gardens, embankments, tree-lined walks. The silvery circle of a lake shone frostily down in a hollow between two knolls and from the million windows of the lounge Patsy could see figures skating across the bright surface of it, could catch the flash of sweaters and hear the echoes of laughter.

It was the Sabbath, her third afternoon at The Lodge. With one knee denting the window seat, she decided she was not having a very thrilling time of it.

The crowd was all right, and the svelte Maria Travers was conspicuous by her absence, but Patsy, to save herself, couldn't muster up any genuine enthusiasm. She had imagined that when she came to Green Mills she would be forced to draw and match her steel against the dangerous sword of her host, but of Van Eldon Travers she had seen little or nothing. It was the last few days of the duck-hunting season and Travers, off the sedges beyond Maley's Light, had spent his days hunting from dawn until dusk, usually swaggering in when bridge was in progress to boast of his bag, to talk of shells and shotguns and other things that Patsy knew nothing of.

At the window seat she watched the overcast, dreary sky darken. All day she had amused herself by alternately thrilling and chilling some conceited youth with prominent teeth and a cackling laugh whose name was Donald Goode. She had been shamelessly malicious but unstirred by the expected dénouement. Goaded into action, Goode had taken her into his arms and tried to kiss her. She reflected that she had not even felt a tingle of pleasure when she boxed his ears soundly and sent him on his way.

Patsy grew pensively thoughtful.

Somewhere far south in the wilderness of giddy Gotham, Martin Verril was relying upon her to find out when Van Eldon Travers would mount and ride for the raid. She knew the fortunes of her father depended on her own cleverness and skill, and she decided she would make her first attempt to garner information when Travers returned. The trouble, Patsy was aware, was that she was too much in the spell of Ted Meredith. Since that night of emotional frenzy she seemed powerless to think of anything save the youth whose lips had clung to hers—to do anything save ask herself the old, old questions.

Did she truly love him? Was it infatuation, passion? When would she know and learn? In what way would understanding finally come?

Patsy was a little more animated when supper was served toward ten o'clock in the north wing Tudor dining-room. Outside, the night was heavy with the threat of snow, but within were candles burning the length of the board scorched holes in the winter gloom; oak logs crackled in the stone hearth. And like a trained automaton, Peters, the butler, stalked the wavering shadows.

Travers, at the head of the table, wore a dinner-jacket with his usual easy grace and distinction. He looked tired, enervated, but Patsy could feel the magnet of his eyes straying to her, his faintly disguised sensuality, his rapacious interest and admiration. She found herself wondering where Maria was, asked herself if already rumors had come true and if the Travers' matrimonial barge was on the rocks—if they were both shipwrecked.

At her right, Donald Goode bored her with his conversation and showed his teeth. He was an elegant individual, thinly delicate. Though she had chastised him hours past, he was still unable to get over the fact she had struck him.

"You know," he declared, "it was such a deucedly common thing to do. One might expect it from a shopgirl, but from you—"

Patsy trained her dreamy eyes upon him, absently.

"The next time," she told him, "it won't be your ears. I'll be wearing one of your eyes as a pendant. And that's not a threat, either — it's a promise!"

Presently supper was over and Travers' guests, like obedient sheep, trailed back into the fold of the lounge-room. Someone began rolling the Oriental rugs aside and switched on the electrical victrola. The second man went about with a silver salver loaded with decan-

ters and small glasses. All at once the pungent reek of alcohol began to blend with the scent of Turkish tobacco and the hilarity grew.

Patsy sat cross-legged on a Victorian stool and watched.

In a corner opposite, a youth whose profile reminded her of a benevolent codfish, was having a petting party of his own. A little blonde flapper, who was all eyes and lips, lay in his arms. A brace of cocktails had made her drowsily amorous, her silken skirts were in disarray. A bit of smooth, white skin was showing. In the darkened alcove adjoining, the red tips of two cigarettes close together were like evil eyes; and at intervals, when the music stopped, low laughter stole out . . . sighs.

Patsy lifted her gaze as Van Eldon Travers loomed up beside her, hands rammed deep in the pockets of his well-cut dinner-coat.

"Aren't you dancing?"

She made her lips sad, "ad-libbing" the Bible.

"Six days thou shalt dance and raise hell, but on the seventh—nix! Not so good. Is it snowing yet?"

"Suppose we go see."

There was a glass-enclosed sun porch at the end of the main floor corridor. When they reached it, Travers pulled the golden cord that drew back the draperies, letting her have a panoramic view of the tormented Sound. No snow fell, but the night was moonless, stark and cold. Off to the left Maley's Light, a round, yellow orange hung between sky and sea. Patsy watched it revolve and flash sullenly, feeling the nearness of the man beside her, his breath on her bare, powdered shoulder.

"Why," he asked at length, "don't you ask me?"

"Ask you—what?"

"What you came up here to find out—when I intend giving the word to start the offensive and begin selling United Traction short. My dear girl, I know as well as you do that Martin Verril asked you to pump me and relay the information back to him. It doesn't need any large amount of imagination to picture how he clings to that solitary hope. Go ahead—ask me."

Patsy, with a breath, gave him her eyes.

"All right, then. When do you expect to sell short—or whatever you call it?"

His smile was darkly triumphant.

"What would you give to know? Tell you what! I'll make a bargain with you. Come out to the sedges tomorrow at dawn and when we get back I'll not only give you all the information you desire, but I'll put a telephone at your disposal. I dare you to take me up on this."

Patsy regarded him narrowly.

"Do you mean it? You won't trick me—tell me one thing and do another? Will you play fair?"

"Whatever my reputation," he assured her stiffly, "there is no one who can say I never kept my word. Hurry up—decide."

"It's a go!"

She crept off to her room, when the festivities had not approached their peak, and began to undress, wondering what Travers had up his sleeve. Sure-

ly he was not going to divulge something he had planned for weeks and months simply because she went duck-hunting with him. He had some scheme, some strategem prepared to exact the full value of the bargain. What was it? He desired her as he desired other women who caught his fancy. Patsy was surprised that she felt no timorous foreboding, that the new challenge served only to give her a certain deep and complacent satisfaction.

"I can," she assured herself, "handle him—even if he gets excited."

Just before she turned on the electric bed-warmer and kicked off her mules, a knock sounded on the door and one of the second corridor maids came in with an arm full of clothing and a note from Travers that read:

**Here's an outfit Marcia bought but never wore. I have a feeling she won't need it in the future. You'd better wear it complete tomorrow. Going out to the sedges is slightly different from going to the Twenty Club.**

She seemed to have hardly snuggled among the pillows before a second man was rapping on the door, and the French traveling clock beside her showed her it was the dawning hour of six. Patsy dragged herself from bed, shivered a way into the connecting bath and came back to dress. There seemed substantial warmth to Marcia Travers' duck-shooting costume. She put on some sort of a heavy undergarment with little woollen pants that flexed snugly to her body, donned whip-cord breeches, rubber hip-boots that made her look like a diver, a leather-lined jacket and a helmet under which she pushed her short-long red-gold hair.

The Lodge was as silent as a mausoleum when Patsy sought the lower floor. Van Eldon Travers waited for her in the breakfast-room, where places for two were set. When they sat down together she saw his direct stare of open admiration.

"Swallow your coffee and don't delay. We want to get out to the blinds before the wind turns."

"I'm usually in the habit of taking my time," Patsy answered pertly.

Yet she ate more rapidly than was her custom. Finally they went out into the cheerless cold of the young morning, taking a walk that led down to the boathouses on the beach. A servant followed, staggering under the load of shotguns, steamer rugs and a luncheon kit which he stored away in the stern sheets of a high-sided Glouchester dory. Patsy took her indicated seat aft; Travers cast off and fitted heavy oars to the locks.

The sea was rough and the sun concealed behind a wall of shoddy gray mist that dwelt in the east. It was cold, but not as bitter as Patsy had imagined it would be, though spray from the oars, once he began to row, stung her cheeks like fine particles of ice.

She crouched in the stern, hoping she would not be seasick, speculating as to whether or not a duck freshly slain would make her ill. She toyed with the problem of Travers' unknown plans, trying to imagine what they were. Surely, he would make no attempt to approach her in this bleak and restless sea. Passion died before

the chilling blasts of frigid cold. This was no suitable setting for the sort of game to which he was accustomed. She tried to get her mind off the subject of the man by thinking of Meredith, remembering their meeting, how she had been warned against Ted, how she had been told he was a cad and a bounder. And then she wondered what would have happened that night at the Richelieu had not the jingle of her father's keys warned them both of his arrival. . . .

The dory gained and rounded Maley's Light. Patsy could see the swell of Travers' muscles. She admired him secretly. Buccaneer and knave of hearts though he was, he was something else, too—a Man. She tried to visualize Ira Bell or Donald Goode pulling the heavy dory through the choppy sea, and was glad when they were off the sedges.

These were a waste of marshlands, bi-sected by a twisting canal. As they passed into it Patsy saw the blinds, snug, box-like structures concealed by tall grasses where the hunters waited their prey.

The one Travers used was at the northerly end of the sedges, on one side of a little lagoon where a half dozen wooden decoys floated—painted ducks sent out for the purpose of attracting their live brethren to a false feeding ground. Travers moored the dory once they were in the blind, dragged in the paraphernalia the servant had stored away and lighted his pipe after a squint at the sky.

"Snow within an hour," he declared.

Patsy began to feel the cold as they waited. Squadrons of ducks that were faint specks against the horizon winged south far across the Sound; sea gulls wheeled and darted and the wooden decoys rolled and pitched; but neither mallard, teal, fancy-point nor green duck swooped down into the lagoon. A long time elapsed, and then Patsy felt a snowflake flutter against her cheek.

"So this," she called, "is duck shooting!"

Travers scowled.

"You saw what we brought in yesterday."

"Yes, I saw them all right but you didn't tell me where you bought them! It's snowing. When do we start back?"

"When I decide to," he replied shortly. "That may be in five minutes or five hours."

Patsy stretched her cold, cramped legs. The snow was falling steadily and all at once her vistas were white-flecked and uncertain. The downfall was so thick that she was unable to see the other side of the lagoon. She was aware that the wind was rising, tumbling now out of the northeast.

"Stay and have a good time!" she cried vehemently, "I'm going back—"

Travers caught her by the arm and pulled her roughly away from the dory's mooring line.

"See here, young lady, don't be telling me what you'll do. You'll stay here as long as it pleases me to remain. I'm the boss out here!"

Sheer rage rendered Patsy speechless for a long minute.

"You rotter!" she managed to fling at him at last.

Travers lost some of his grim look.

"I'm sorry if I was rough with you. I never could tolerate having a woman tell me what to do and you're no exception to the rule. Open the kit and get out the thermos and we'll have something hot to drink."

"Open it yourself!" she snapped.

Travers shrugged and unstrapped the wicker basket. The fragrance of hot coffee was aromatic and delicious but Patsy stubbornly refused to share it with him. She curled up under her steamer rug and watched the snow fall. An hour or two passed before the man beside her put the guns in the dory, shook the snow from his coat and looked at the watch strapped to his wrist.

"We'll start back now. Get in."

In silence Patsy picked her way to the stern of the boat. Still without speaking she watched Travers inch it back through the canal and out to the open sea. Though it was around the noon hour, the skies had darkened till it resembled twilight; it was impossible to see more than a few feet ahead. He laid a resolute course, but after a long period of rowing he shipped the dripping oars, tried to light his pipe in the wind, and looked at the slush that filled the bottom of the dory.

"I might as well tell you now that we're out of luck. If I keep on rowing we're likely to reach Europe by morning. The tide's on the turn and I have an idea that we're well south of the Light. There are several islands in the vicinity here and with any kind of good fortune we may make one of them. It's only fair that you know it."

It might have been her anger or it might have been a confidence in him she would not admit that made Patsy fearless. Secretly she pictured them at the mercy of the wind, tide and snow, and felt certain that she was never destined to see land again.

"Whatever you're going to do, do it and don't talk about it," she said crisply.

Travers consulted an expensive pocket compass and bent to the oars again. Another long interval elapsed and then, from some quarter close at hand Patsy heard a crashing sound. The man at the oars heard it too, and blinking away some snow that had stuck to his lashes lifted an alert head—

"There's one of the islands now! That noise is surf on the rocks. Pay attention. The tide is tough here when it's running out and we'll have a time landing. Sit perfectly quiet and do what I tell you to do and not what you think is best under the circumstances I'll do my best."

With this promise he dipped the oars cautiously, encountering a swift current that carried them along. Suddenly, through the snow on the port bow, Patsy caught the loom of gaunt trees, heard the crash of the surf in deeper volume and knew, for one instant, a stab of pure fear. She had little opportunity for more than another glance ahead. Caught in a mill race of swollen, gray-green water the dory lunged on toward a barrier of rocks beyond, Travers toiling at the oars like a galley slave.

One chaotic impression succeeded another. For a dizzy space it seemed as

if they were surely destined to escape to rocks and gain the sanctuary of the shore to the left of them without mishap; the Sea God decided differently.

They were almost clear of the rocks themselves when a trio of foam-crested combers rushed in to seize them, spin them about and hurl them into the jaws of the waiting trap.

*"Jump!"*

Travers' voice sounded like a thin, alarming cry in a nightmare. Patsy shut her eyes and gripped the seat with both hands. There came a sickening second of suspense, then a crash as the bow of the dory struck the first rock and the numbing chill of the sea as it embraced her. She remembered attempting to strike out and swim. The attempt was valiant but useless. Without forewarning darkness came and she seemed to be sinking down, down, down. . . .

IV

When Patsy opened her eyes again her thoughts were varied and chaotic. Principally she was aware that her head ached dully and that night smeared the windows of the shack that sheltered her. She knew it was a shack because, from the bunk in which she lay, warm and dry, she was able to see rough board walls, the open roof above that was cross-beamed and, between curtains which partitioned the room off from another and larger chamber, the spread of a stone fireplace, crude, cumbersome furniture and a plank floor unadorned by any covering.

Her next definite impression was that she no longer wore Marcia Travers' shooting costume.

With a little start of wonder and surprise that served thoroughly to arouse her, Patsy discovered that except for a man's woolen bathrobe about her, she was entirely unclothed. The shock of this disclosure made her sit bolt upright in the bunk, a feat that made her dodge, for directly overhead was another berth.

Sitting there among gray army blankets and trying to find sense in the confusion of a thousand questions and speculations, she caught the aroma of cooking food and heard advancing footsteps just beyond the curtains.

Van Eldon Travers came through them. He was without the cap and heavy jacket; she saw his flannel shirt open at the throat and was conscious of his virility, his worldly hardness. He looked rough, unkempt and it was difficult for her to associate him with the polished loiterer of The Lodge, the dilettante of the Twenty Club. Somehow he made Patsy think of the footlights, he seemed as unreal as the adventures of the day, the shelter they had found and the bathrobe that clothed her.

"Feeling all right? I looked in at seven o'clock and saw that you were sleeping, so I didn't wake you up. How's the head?"

Patsy let her lips part.

"At seven o'clock? What time is it now? Where are we? Whose place is this?"

Travers struck a match to light a ship lantern screwed to the opposite wall.

"Almost midnight. When the dory was stove in, one of the oars hit you as

you went overboard. Terrific current off the rocks. Had a very devil of a time getting you ashore. This is one of the islands you see with field glasses from the front porch of The Lodge. Curiously enough it's an island that I purchased when I first came up to Green Mills. I had this shanty built and always keep it ready for use in such an emergency as this. Anything else you'd like to know?"

Hot color tumbled into Patsy's cheeks.

"Yes. How dare you take advantage of my condition to un—to take off—"

"To undress you?" Travers cut in briskly. "Don't be a little fool. You were unconscious and soaking wet—just right for a dose of pneumonia. At such a time everything else is forgotten. I stripped your things off in a jiffy, got some rum into you and left you where you are. I have no apologies to make."

Patsy saw that he was different in more ways than appearance. He seemed more alert, was brusque and coldly indifferent not only to the humiliation and anger in her expression but to the droop and quiver of her red, red mouth.

"Your clothes," he went on, "are dry now. I'll bring them in. It's still snowing, so you had better make yourself comfortable and get over the idea that we're going to leave here in a hurry."

"Surely," Patsy said when he returned with the garments which he tossed on the bunk, "they'll miss us at The Lodge and send out a searching party—"

Travers shook his head.

"I'm sorry, but I'm forced to disillusion you. Even if we didn't return for a week there wouldn't be any searching parties. I might as well tell you now and have it over with. Back at The Lodge they think that we were going around the Inlet to the Rinkey's place—to spend the last days of the season shooting off there. That was only part of my plot. When we left the sedges I could have made shore easily—by the aid of my compass. But I had decided upon this island and here we are. I admit that I didn't plan the shipwreck. That came along and had to be taken. I hope I make myself perfectly clear."

Patsy nodded imperceptibly. His confession left her unattacked by amazement. She assured herself that she expected duplicity of the kind, had known the bargain she made the previous night would not begin and end out in the watery waste of the marshlands.

The eyes she turned on him blazed.

"So you lied? You deliberately tricked me—"

Travers interrupted with a careless gesture.

"Regarding the information you want for your father? Not exactly. I promised to tell you when we returned to The Lodge—weren't those my words? I'll keep the promise."

"When do you expect to return?"

His smile was faintly grim and amused.

"That depends more or less on *you*. Ages ago I told you that you represent all that I like the best, that I had decided to run up the Jolly Roger and cruise forbidden seas to capture you. When I have attained you, it'll be time

enough to talk about making preparations to be rescued. Just at present the snow looks as if it might hold for several days. As I said before, I advise you to make yourself comfortable and prepare to surrender."

Patsy's blood ran hot and turbulent within her.

"You—coward!" she cried sibilantly. "I'll die before I'll ever give in to you!"

He turned his back to her without troubling to reply and went into the other room. A match scratched and the tang of tobacco drifted in. Patsy sank back in the bunk, hot tears scalding her eyes. All that she could think of was that it was some impossible nightmare, some grotesque fancy, some scene from a photoplay.

She knew the duel was on; that their swords were striking sparks; that she would need every ounce of courage and cleverness if she was to keep her guard up and defend herself. Could she do it? There was a difference between being sure of herself in the sanctuary of her room at The Lodge and in the shack miles from the mainland. Travers was a freebooter, a love pirate as bold as any who had ever sailed the Spanish coasts. His masculine needs craved and coveted her. He would stop at nothing in his pursuit.

The hot anger Patsy felt because of the easy fashion in which she had been duped gradually vanished and for the first time in all her life she knew what it meant to fear a man, to be afraid, to have a heart like lead and strained nerves that fluttered.

The snow whispered on the roof of the shack. Patsy winked away the scorching tears bravely. She tried to assure herself that she was living in the Twentieth Century, that there were penalties for kidnapping which even Travers could not ignore.

She derived a small measure of comfort from the thought and tried to sleep.

At length she heard the man in the other room knock his pipe out on his heel. The kerosene lamp plunged into blackness. Travers came quietly in, and from the sounds he made she knew that he was piling blankets on the bunk above her. Patsy trembled, shrinking back in her berth; but he made no move to touch her. His shoes clumped softly on the floor and the overhead bunk creaked as he swung lightly up and into it.

Followed stirrings, the pat of a pillow padded down, a sigh — silence broken only by the crash of surf on the rocks, the eerie whine of the wind, the steady murmur of the snow. . . .

The world was white, it was still snowing and the windows were iced when Patsy awoke the next morning. Travers had pulled the curtains shut, but she was taking no chances. She pinned the blanket over the bunk and dressed behind it, washing in a bucket of tepid water with brown soap, longing for a toothbrush, using a black rubber comb to untangle the provoking gold-red hair.

Then she went into the shack's main room where Van Eldon Travers hung over an oil stove on which a coffee pot bubbled and a frying pan hissed.

"Have breakfast in a minute," he informed her tersely.

They ate in silence, the unreality of the situation stronger than ever upon Patsy.

Was she really Martin Verril's daughter, a bored, blasé girl of eighteen with the wisdom and sophistication of a woman of thirty-five which she liked to believe was hers? Was she the girl who danced at the Twenty Club, who played Pierette down the pleasure trails of mad Manhattan? Or was she an island waif, being punished for her past extravagance, her drinking and smoking, the unkindness to the men she had deliberately tantalized and been cruel to?

"When," she thought dully, "will he start something?"

The day dragged its weary length into the panther dusk. Travers kept himself occupied with a book, but Patsy was aware of the hungry look in the gaze he frequently turned upon her. She had refused to cook the mid-day meal and both had gone without it. Dinner he prepared for himself only, eating it while she crouched at the window, cursing the snow.

Patsy's heart crept back across the miles. Along Broadway the bright lights were burning. The dinner crowd of taxicabs and motors were thronging the constricted streets of Babylon. A dance orchestra was playing at the Chalet d'Or. In Vicar's the rose-lights were as soft and warm as the painted skins of its pretty women. Patsy winked away a tear.

"Some day," she cried throatily, "you're going to be punished for this!"

Travers took a cigar from a cedar box and lighted it from the lamp.

"The present occupies my attention now—not the future," he replied curtly.

He washed his own dishes and with a pack of cards sat down to play solitaire. The lamplight yellowed his profile. Patsy again was vividly aware of his strength, his dominant personality and the odd appeal of him that she had sensed once before. He was a barbarian, a brute, she loathed him but she could not deny that he was rakishly picturesque or disregard the dauntless force that made him different and set him apart from all other men that she had known, encountered.

Travers was a gambler playing for a prize which meant the sacrifice of her virtue, but she could not turn away from that subtle distinction of his which, like the day long silence, beat in on her.

"If you don't say something to me," Patsy cried harshly, "you'll have me going mad on your hands!"

He flipped the cards aside, threw his cigar into the fireplace and hooked his thumbs in his belt.

"I'll tell you something," he began slowly. "Something I have never told anyone else. When I met Marcia—my wife—I had faith, a belief in women. You can smile if you like, but that's the truth. I believed in Marcia, believed that in a world of wickedness she alone was pure, good, unsoiled. Every hope, every dream and ambition centered about her. Blame her if I have done things I had no business to do, if I am the boudoir pirate they claim me to be. She didn't play fair and she—"

"*She* didn't play fair." Patsy inter-

rupted bitterly, "and so you revenge yourself for her sins on me!"

Travers drew a step closer to her.

"Don't misunderstand me. When I saw you that November night I seemed to realize how ironic fate can be. They say that there is such a thing as love at first sight—with me it was fascination and interest. I desired you then as I had never desired any woman, any girl before. Figure out yourself what chance I had. The very fact that I had uncovered Martin Verril's unscrupulous deals and had him at my mercy was enough to make you hate me. So I could only revert to habit and go after you unlawfully. I'm not telling you this as any excuse. I want you to know exactly why, from that afternoon at the Club, I planned and plotted this island adventure."

"I hated you then," said Patsy. "Now I detest you, loathe you!"

Travers' face turned brass-like.

"Hate or not you're going to be mine—every bit of you! I can't have you in the right way, so I'll have you the wrong! You're like some damn fever that's gotten into my blood! You're all I've thought of for days past, dreamed of, longed for! You're the beginning and ending of everything now! I tell you—I tell you—"

Some emotion mastered him. He turned away, pushing open the door of the shack, standing in it, his breathing fast and irregular until, the storm over, he pulled the door shut and, silent again, spread out his cards and lowered his head. . . .

Patsy sensed a dénouement the following morning when pangs of hunger made her give in and eat breakfast with him. Outside the snow was falling intermittently and the skies had brightened in the east. With a little tingle she reminded herself that since they had been shipwrecked she had not thought once of Ted Meredith, had not remembered that night at the Richelieu, had not asked herself the old, old question of whether or not she loved him. Surprised, she brooded over this until the breakfast dishes were washed and, at the window, she searched the sky for signs of clearing.

"This can't go on much longer!"

Travers' low, unsteady voice beside her wheeled Patsy around. Something ice cold shot through her and her nerves fluttered anew. One glance at his face told her the battle was on at last. She sought to retreat but he caught her wrists and drew her roughly to him, bending her back, leaning over her.

"God! How beautiful you are! How sweet—so sweet!"

There were flames in his eyes and his lips were demanding. He held her close and tight, fragments of sentences and words, peculiar words that she had never heard before coming to her as if from a great distance. Realizing the futility of struggling against him and fascinated by the threat of Doom, Patsy shut her eyes, recoiling as he crushed her to him and buried her mouth in his.

"Sweet—so sweet!"

She seemed caught in a spell of lethargy that ended when she felt him becoming bolder. Then she struggled, calling upon all of her young strength

and courage. In that dizzy instant Patsy seemed to realize entirely how precious her virtue and purity were.

She cried aloud in mortification when Travers' hand touched her soft throat. He had rescued her and he had looked upon her unclothed, yet now her cheeks grew hot with shame as a sob gushed and broke across the threshhold of her quivering lips.

"Don't—oh, don't—"

Travers touched her, drew his fingers across her blue-veined skin. His fingers strayed through her hair, his hands trembled. His eyes. . .

"This," she thought despairingly, "is the end!"

Then as suddenly as he had seized her, he released her and she heard him stumbling away, mumbling, sucking in great breaths. Patsy unveiled her eyes and found the promise of the eastern skies had not been in vain. Golden sunshine poured in through every window and revealed Travers near the curtains, one hand pressed flat to his forehead. He turned as if feeling the magnet of her eyes and moved back to her.

"Forgive me—if you can!" he whispered brokenly. "You win—you win because, because I love you! Patsy! I say I love you! I love you!"

She lay on her bunk without moving, looking at him, dazed, shaken from the reaction of the miracle. Unstirring, she allowed him to walk over to her, to re-arrange her hair, repair some of the damage his attack had caused, while the palpitating silence that walled them in was broken at last by a hail from the white world outside.

*"Ahoy, the shanty!"*

Her next impression was of the bang of the door, of wind swaying the drawn curtains, the stamp of feet and the voice of Peters, the butler.

"Mr. Rinkey telephoned — figured you had lost your way in the storm, sir. We couldn't begin searching until the snow let up a little. This came for you last night, sir."

After a space filled with Travers' curt demands, the shack grew quiet again, the door opened and closed, the curtains stopped swaying. Patsy lowered her feet to the floor as Travers pushed a way between them, a telegram blank crushed in one hand.

"Get ready," he said colorlessly. "Peters and a couple of the servants are down on the beach with a motorboat to take us back." He smoothed out the telegram, laughing mirthlessly. "Here is something amusing—something that may interest you. Marcia has gone—has left me—for good."

Patsy lifted her eyes and made them level with his.

"Gone—where?"

He laughed again.

"She didn't bother to say. She simply wires that she has gone to find love—with her lover—with young Meredith, Theodore Meredith."

## V

It had been the first real day of spring that the city had known.

The evening newspapers had dutifully reported the appearance of a robin in Central Park; a straw hat had been observed in Harlem; and in the shop windows of various hardware stores electric fans were on display.

Yet, to Patsy, drifting down Madison Avenue in the taxi she had hailed in front of Bunny Graham's apartment, the witchery of the gentle night passed almost unnoticed. She felt listless, preoccupied and nervously restive. Bunny had just returned from a six weeks' flying trip to Paris and had told her of meeting Meredith and Marcia Travers in the city of the Seine. It appeared that they were going to marry and live in France once Travers divorced his wife. But to Patsy the news brought neither sadness, regrets, anguish nor any particular thrill of interest.

As she leaned back against the worn upholstery of the taxi something seemed to chide her for not having known she had never loved the youth she had been warned against. She reproached herself for having thrown herself at him, for having tried to arouse his interest when, all the time, he had loved another. She felt a guilty stir as she imagined what he had thought of her, what secret amusement her conquest had probably given him.

"What a fool I've been!" she assured herself.

Nearly in sight of the Richelieu, Patsy changed her mind about having dinner at the hotel with Martin Verril. Though the bland, starlit night had escaped her attention, some subtle suggestion of it had stealthily pervaded her, was responsible for her restlessness. She leaned forward and knocked on the glass window for the chauffeur's attention.

"Never mind taking me to the Richelieu. Drive over to Broadway. You can stop at the Chalet d'Or."

The cab cut through the park and came out at Columbus Circle, the threshhold of the famous boulevard of pleasure. The Rialto was a cavern of jeweled light, flaming hedges that hurled multi-colored illumination down upon its crawling tide of traffic. The roar of it was almost an ominous growl; the pavements blended a thousand footfalls into a thousand overtures; and south in the center distance, the Times Building loomed up, a slender wedge in a world of vibrant movement.

Though it was not customary to dine unescorted at the Chalet d'Or, the place was of a higher grade than most Longacre taverns. Patsy alighted before its incandescent, studded entry, paid and dismissed the chauffeur and went in. The meal consumed in solitary splendor in no way helped to lighten her mood or banish Patsy's dreary train of thought. Several men ogled her boldly, intrigued by the youthful beauty of her, but retreated, baffled by her level, unseeing stares. She idled over her demitasse, listening to the dinner music of the orchestra, feeling alone, isolated in a busy, bustling world that passed her by unnoticed.

She had not frequented her old haunts, had not been part of the younger set, and when she left the restaurant Patsy felt a desire to look in at the Twenty Club, to revisit a scene that had mirrored her happiness, a place where she had known the full enchantment of youth's golden flood-tide. She walked several blocks up Broadway, buffetted and elbowed by the crowd that sought the theater lobbys. At Fifty-first

Street she engaged an empty taxi that idled at the curb and, after another space, ascended the brown stone steps —worn by her own feet— of the private house where the exclusive dance and supper club was lodged.

Inside nothing had changed, and Patsy realized that she alone was different, was altered. Emil, the faithful, lost some of his reserve in greeting her and led her to the table in the corner near the window. Though it was an early hour in the Twenty Club, half the tables were occupied and everywhere she saw old friends—Ira Bell, stouter and more stupid looking than ever, with a willowy titian blonde who resembled a stage divinity; Phil Rinkey, tall, thin and cadaverous, opposite Helene Wandell; others—the flappers of yesterday and to-morrow; the chinless, slick-haired, absurdly dressed boys and young men who spent the sum of their early manhood with a lavish, reckless hand.

The orchestra began to play a fox, and for the first time in days Patsy knew a tingle of something that thrilled her pleasantly. It was the same melody they had played that winter afternoon when she had sat at that same table and unconsciously she repeated the words—

*"When you're in love, really in love,*
*That's the one time the golden sunshine*
*Warms you through and through—"*

Fancy painted errant pictures. She was back marooned on the island, snowbound. A match scratched and a tang of tobacco drifted into the bunk. . . . She was washing in a bucket of tepid water, wishing for the luxury of a toothbrush. . . . A coffee pot bubbled and a frying pan hissed on an oil stove. . . .

"I wonder if I couldn't sit down a minute."

Patsy's breath caught in her throat. She jerked her head up and saw, bending to her, the same man whose lean, handsome face was limned on her inner vision. Van Eldon Travers wore the dinner coat, was again the fashionable dilettante, yet he had changed. There was a difference even in the brass-like expression that shadowed his face.

"I've been coming in here nights," he went on, "hoping I'd encounter you. I'll only linger a minute or two—to say good-by."

"Good-by?"

He inclined his head.

"I'm leaving for the coast to-morrow. I only remained on to get the divorce business over with. Now that it's finished and there is only the matter of the final decree to be handed down there is nothing to detain me. I've been haunted in this damn town—haunted by the spectre of What Might Have Been. Out in Santa Monterey things will be different."

There was a long pause.

"Before you go," Patsy said, "I want to thank you for keeping your word. My father has told me how you spared him, kept him from going under. It was good of you."

Travers moved his well-tailored shoulders.

"I didn't do it for him—I did it for *you.* There was a sardonic twist to it—the first thing I've ever done for

any of your sex, knowing I might expect nothing in return. Well, *finis* to that also. I hope you will be happy."

Could she ever be happy again? Patsy shook her head dubiously. She had imagined that with Meredith gone from her life the voice in her heart would grow silent, but it was still calling and calling to her plaintively. She wondered what was the matter with her?

Were all the dismal years to come and go, leaving her to yearn for the same nameless, unknown something for which she reached out ever empty hands?

She danced twice with Travers and then accepted his invitation to give her a lift in his car as far as the Richelieu. His liveried chauffeur swung the tonneau door of the limousine open for them. When Patsy sank down on the yielding cushions the witchery of the night, for the first time, stole to her.

"Couldn't we," she asked, "go through the Park—just once?"

They turned into it, traversing dusky highways where the arc-lights were white moons trapped by the branches of the trees. In the shadows lovers sat together; a tiny lake sparkled like a mysterious mirror and made Patsy think of The Lodge.

"Patsy!" His hand moved to hers. "Once I told you that I loved you. I won't bore you with it again but I want you to know this. To the last day of my life I'll regret the—our island adventure . . . everything that made you hate me. That is what hurts so—loving you as I never believed I could love a woman, realizing how hopeless, how futile it is! Sometime try and think a little more kindly of me. Desire blinded me but when love came—"

He broke off abruptly and Patsy saw they had left the Park and were in sight of the Richelieu. Of a sudden her pulses began to beat and the voice in her heart sang a strange, glad song. She felt thrills sweep over her, washing her like waves, stirring her sluggish blood and filling her with a thousand tremors.

The car began to stop before the canopy that stretched from the curb to the hotel's entryway but she paid no heed to it as Travers, for the last time, leaned to her.

"Good-by, Patsy—"

It was then that she knew, that something awakening within her, a joyous, swelling something, b r o u g h t knowledge and made her eyes shine like excited stars. She caught his arm, held it, pressed it to her breast.

"Wait! You can't go! You can't go without—without me—"

His exclamation of wonder was sharp, tense.

"Patsy! Patsy, you darling! You don't mean—"

She laughed a little, her hands and arms stealing to his broad shoulders, linking loosely about them.

"I mean that I've just found out that I love you, too! I mean that I guess I started loving you up there on the island—without knowing it! I mean that I want you, dearest—always and always! Can't—couldn't we pull the curtains down—so you can hold me—kiss me as you kissed me ages and ages and ages ago?"

*Roddie couldn't get on with his own wife, but he always could with—*

# OTHER MEN'S WIVES

## *By* PETER CHANCE

IT WOULD be hard to find a time when there had not been at least three women in the life of Roddie Van Nast.

From the day when he put on his first pair of long trousers to the day, some eight years later, when he managed to squeak through his state bar examinations there had always been, first, a girl with whom he was in love, second, a girl with whom he was falling out of love and, third, a girl with whom he was just about to fall in love. Roddie's turn-over, so to speak, being rapid, his young life had been just one pretty thing after another.

It was no wonder, therefore, when he finally settled down to the practice of law, that most of his clients should be young society matrons whom he had known in their débutante days before they decided to marry some one else.

For no woman to whom Roddie had made love ever cherished any but the kindest feelings toward him afterward. Partly that was because, no matter how impossible she judged him to be as a potential husband, there was really something very sweet and touching about him as a suitor. And partly, perhaps, it was because she remained always a little grateful to him for having once given her the privilege of rejecting the heir to the Van Nast millions.

So, from being a ladies' man, Roddie became a ladies' lawyer.

Persons who were inclined to gossip insisted he was reaping a delicate revenge on the girls who had once turned him down, since sooner or later they all came to him for their divorces.

"Roddie Van Nast?" they would say. "Why, my dear, haven't you heard? That blue-eyed cherub has become a perfect home-wrecker!"

On the other hand—and this was certainly peculiar—no one ever seemed able to cite a specific divorce which Roddie had obtained.

But whether he actually succeded in securing divorce decrees for his clients, there could be no doubt of their devotion to him nor of the fact that they all recommended him highly as a specialist in settling domestic difficulties.

All of which may explain why Beatrice Rainsford came to see him one day after she had been married for about three years.

"Why, Bee!" he exclaimed delightedly as she was ushered into his office. "Do you know, for a second I couldn't think who Mrs. Thomas Rainsford was? But if you'd only announced yourself as Bee Dahlgren—!"

Her face had lighted up at sight of him. She surveyed him with dark, bright eyes, while a glad smile, which was at the same time just a little wistful, played over her lips.

"Roddie," she declared, "you're just the same spoiled, criminally good-looking kid you always were. Oh, but it *is* good to see you after—"

"After all these years?" he suggested amiably. "Bee, you don't look a day older. And you're lovelier than ever. You're—by Jove, I think I'll have to kiss you!"

Instead, she laughingly held out her hand. It was one of those feminine gestures which have every appearance of being generous and impulsively cordial, but which in reality serve to keep the man at arm's length.

"Roddie, it's sweet of you to say so. You've no idea how much a compliment means to me these days. But this isn't just a social call. I—I've come to you on business."

"Nevertheless," he announced optimistically, "I intend to kiss you. If you believe in business before pleasure, we'll get the business over first. Perhaps that would be a good idea. It will give me such a pleasant feeling of anticipation as I look at you. But I warn you right now, Bee, that before you set foot from this office you are going to be kissed!"

A little chuckle which he remembered of old bubbled up in her throat and broke into delicious laughter on her lips.

"Roddie," she protested, "you're incorrigible!"

She sat down in the chair he indicated. As he returned to his desk she crossed one well-rounded knee over the other and drew her skirt down to her shapely, silk-sheathed ankles. She had a spunky, alluring, little face, with candid violet eyes and red, full lips that somehow did not seem so candid.

"What I've really come for," she began, "is—well, I want you to get me a divorce."

Immediately the look of beaming good nature faded from Roddie's face.

"What's the matter," he asked sympathetically, "haven't you and Tom been hitting it off well together?"

She shook her head negatively. Her round, violet eyes shone moistly.

"Has he been unfaithful to you."

She looked at him as if she thought his question was in rather bad taste.

"Really, Roddie," she protested, "I've never asked him!"

"But look here, Bee," he pointed out conciliatingly, "unless you have some grounds for divorce—"

"Oh, very well," she assented. "Since you insist, I know that he has been unfaithful. Yes—repeatedly."

She plucked at an invisible speck of dust upon her skirt.

"The first time it happened," she said in an expressionless voice, "of course I

went through perfect Hell. Since then"—she shrugged her shoulders and gave a helpless outward gesture with both white-gloved hands—"well, I've sort of come to expect it."

She looked quickly at him.

"Of course," she added hastily, "I don't mean that Tom *tells* me about it. He's much too considerate for that. But you probably know how men reveal those things."

"How do they?" inquired Roddie with immediate interest.

Beatrice smiled ruefully.

"Well," she confided, "whenever Tom starts one of his affairs he gives certain little signs of it that are almost infallible.

"For instance, instead of scrutinizing last night's collar in the morning to see if it will bear a second wearing, he becomes suddenly very neat in his appearance. He begins to wear some suit or necktie that he never liked before—because *she* has admired it. Instead of being irritable if I don't have what he likes for dinner, he is magnificently forgiving. He explains all his engagements—oh, *so* convincingly! In his voice, the way he looks at me, in his very caresses I can sense an unnatural solicitude, a sort of furtive excitement."

As she spoke she was toying nervously with a dainty linen handkerchief in her lap.

"That lasts anywhere from a week to two months," she went on. "Then some morning I find him examining his collar again to see if it will stand another wearing. About that time I receive a present of flowers, a pair of earrings or even a fur coat. It depends on how guilty he feels. Then I know that his affair is over, that he has settled accounts with his conscience and come back to me once more."

"You never let on that you know about his affairs?" asked Roddie.

"He always suspects that I know. He calls it"—she dimpled suddenly—"he calls it my 'woman's intuition'!"

"But you never actually accuse him?"

"Not any more. At least not while his affair is going on. That would only make him furious. After it is all over, though, I sometimes tell him what I think of the other woman."

"What does he say then?"

She smiled slyly.

"By that time he is usually ready to agree with me. He feels very much ashamed of himself and thinks it is very sweet of me to take him back."

Roddie laughed.

"But you always do take him back? Are you in love with him then, Bee?"

She looked squarely at him.

"Darned if I know whether I'm in love with him or not, Roddie," she declared. "I suppose it all depends on what you call love. Certainly I'm *not* in love with him in the romantic way I was once. Yet in another sense, despite all his weaknesses, I—well, yes, I guess I *am* in love with him. . . . At least I'm awfully darned fond of the old thing. You see, I understand him so well. He's so human—even in the hopeful, romantic way he starts each fresh love affair. And when it's all over and he comes back to me he's so genuinely sheepish and repentant."

"But are you sure you want to divorce him?"

"Yes, Roddie." Her words came slowly and with an intonation of finality. "I think—I—do. It's not so much his flirtations with other women," she explained. "Of course I'm not indifferent to them. But on the other hand, I know him too well to take them very tragically. In the main it's—oh, Roddie, it's the humiliation and injustice of the whole thing! . . . Do you know what I mean?"

She leaned forward, her face earnest, her eyes appealing.

"When you first knew me I had been out just one year. My nights were a succession of parties, men, flapper escapades. I felt as vividly alive as if I were going through life on a surf board. The great romance seemed always to be waiting just around the corner. I never came on it, of course. But so long as I had the feeling that I might, it was all right. And now—"

She shrugged her shoulders and made that helpless gesture.

"Well, I don't go around any more corners," she said wearily. "I'm married to Tom Rainsford who gurgles—he insists it isn't snoring—in his sleep and tries to make his collars last two days. I'm kept safely on a shelf for him to take me down and play with when he wants.

"Even to him I'm as much of a mother as a sweetheart. I'm 'good old Bee,' who sees to it that he has fruit for breakfast and at bed time and who can always be depended on to forgive him when he's been a naughty boy. And I'm sick of it, Roddie!"

Her eyes flashed and her little, white-gloved fist came down emphatically upon his desk.

"I won't give in like that. I won't pass up everything that I want out of life!"

"But your life with Tom," suggested Roddie, "that really gives you a good deal of what you want, doesn't it? Companionship, security—all that?"

"Oh, yes," she assented. "I suppose I'm not really so romantic as I pretend. Probably what I should really like would be to be married to Tom about six days of the week and unmarried the seventh. But because that day off is more important to me than all the other six put together I want you to get me a divorce."

Roddie smiled understandingly.

"Bee, darling, your logic is flawless," he told her. "But I regret to inform you that married women have no constitutional nor statutory right to romance. There is no court in New York which would recognize your modest desire for one night off as sufficient ground for—"

"Oh, Roddie, don't be silly!" she interrupted. "I know as well as you do that such things are .arranged. Of course I haven't any actual evidence of Tom's infidelities. But if I insist, I know he will do the generous thing.

"What I want to know is whether an uncontested divorce is really such a beastly thing to go through as everybody says. Tell me exactly what it would be like. Should I have to go to court?"

"You would," said Roddie.

He leaned back in his chair and half

closed his eyes as if he were trying to conjure up the scene.

"You would find it a dingy, dusty room about as cheerful as a suburban railway station. You would sit there anywhere from fifteen minutes to two hours, getting more and more nervous as you waited for your case to be called and thinking how different it all was from getting married. Then a man with a voice like a train announcer would bawl out, 'Rainsford against Rainsford.'

"You would go through a little gate and a man would tell you to put your right hand on the Bible and hold up your left hand. Another man would murmur something unintelligible at you and you would hear yourself saying, 'I do.' Then you would sit down in a chair facing the courtroom and realize that everyone had waked up and was staring at you. That would be because you are much more beautiful than most women who come there and they would all be eager to know the dirt in your case."

Beatrice shuddered.

"Go on," she said.

"Well, I should ask you your name, the date and place of your marriage. I should ask if there was any issue to the marriage. By the way, have you—?"

"No."

"Then I should ask, 'Was the act of adultery alleged in the complaint committed with your consent, connivance, privity or procurement—' "

"And I say, 'No'?"

"Witnesses always interrupt at that point," remarked Roddie. "It makes the court stenographer *so* angry. The trick is to hold your answer till I have added, '—or have five years elapsed since the discovery by you of the said act of adultery or have you cohabited with the defendant since the discovery by you of that act or in any way condoned or forgiven the same?' "

"It all sounds terribly sordid," complained Beatrice. "What then?"

"I ask if you want alimony and you smile at the judge and say, 'Yes, please.' Then, if you have a couple of friends who like you well enough to perjure themselves for you, we put them on the stand instead of hiring detectives.

"They testify, probably, that on a certain night when you had gone to stay with your invalid mother they called unexpectedly at your apartment and discovered Tom in his B. V. D.'s."

"But he doesn't wear—"

"There is no case on record," interrupted Roddie pleasantly, "in which the errant husband in an uncontested divorce has been described as wearing any other make of underwear. It is one of the conventions of the New York courts. Then I inquire if there were anyone else present; and an expectant hush falls on the courtroom.

"The witnesses, being under oath, admit that there was a woman in the room, that she was *en déshabille,* with her hair down, and, since you are a brunette, they make it quite clear that she was a pronounced blonde. Two more witnesses testify to serving the summons on Tom: and, exactly fifteen minutes from the time you took the stand, the next case is called. Three

months later you get your final decree."

Beatrice sighed and slumped down a little in her chair.

"It all sounds perfectly terrible and degrading, Roddie," she declared. "I don't know how I can ever go through with it."

She looked at him as if she expected him to assure her how easy it would all be. When he merely smiled sympathetically back at her she added forlornly:

"It seems as if marriage and divorce were both pretty unsatisfactory. I wonder how under the sun people do manage that part of their lives!" A gleam of curiosity came into her eyes. "Did you ever marry, yourself?"

"Two or three times," admitted Roddie affably. "But it never took."

She gazed thoughtfully out of the window. A wistful expression crossed like a shadow over her face.

"It does seem a little ironical," she said, "that I should be obliged to go through all the humiliation and nastiness of a divorce when the very thing I want is not to be humiliated any more, but to have my vanity restored —when I'm already so tired of nastiness that what I want most is just romance and beauty. . . . But I guess romance doesn't come very often; and when it does we're usually afraid."

Her words trailed off despondently.

"The way you were," suggested Roddie quietly, "that night at Palm Beach."

She turned swiftly to him.

"*Do* you remember that, Roddie?" she begged. Her eyes grew bright again and she gave a little tremulous laugh. "Why, I supposed you'd forgotten years ago!"

"I shall never forget it," he assured her. "I remember everything you had on. I mean, I remember your dress as if it had been last night."

"It was my first Lanvin evening frock," she said with a reminiscent smile. "I remember how I fought mother to have it low enough at the neck."

"It was just low enough to show the little mole that you have here." Roddie touched the blue cornflower in his lapel with one finger. "It seemed to be layers and layers of soft, white fluffiness that—" He made an eager gesture with both hands to indicate the bell shape of the skirt. "Your slim, little, silk-covered legs just disappeared into the fluffiness at the bottom and then you came out of the dress again at the top."

A wave of color had swept up Beatrice's throat and was mantling her cheeks.

"Really, Roddie," she laughingly protested, "that's *too* inane! Doesn't a woman disappear into any dress at the bottom and come out again at the top?"

"Yes, I—suppose so," he stammered amiably. "But I mean that's sort of the feeling that particular dress gave me. I was conscious of you inside it —all of you."

*"Roddie!"*

"Well, I was!" he informed her serenely. "There's no harm in admitting it now, almost five years later, is there? . . . You wore you hair bob-

bed then and it curved up at the sides in two little crescent-shaped horns that seemed to hug your cheeks. I remember how pale and sweet your face looked in the moonlight and how bright and shiny your eyes were. When I tried to kiss you the first time, you turned your head suddenly, so that my kiss slid along your nose and landed on one eyebrow. But when you really kissed me it seemed the most miraculous thing that had ever happened. While it lasted the moon and the stars and the waves just stood still. Remember, Bee?"

"Do I remember? Oh, Roddie, you've no idea how near I came to accepting you at that moment!"

Her lips quivered in a little smile. She swallowed. Tears gathered in her eyes and trembled beneath her long, dark lashes.

"D—don't think I'm upset," she stammered. "Not just because I'm crying. Only nerves."

She dabbed at her eyes with one corner of her handkerchief and laughed self-consciously.

"I know you would have made the worst husband in the world," she added. "But all the same, it's sweet of you to remember that night. And you're a dear to tell me so when I'm—when nobody else—I mean, when I'm so upset and everything!"

Roddie rose and, walking around to her chair, caressed her neck and temples with his hands.

"Little Bee!" he murmured soothingly. "You beautiful, wonderful, little person. You were meant to have a lot more happiness out of life."

She pressed her soft, flushed cheek impulsively against his palm and then drew away.

"But before you decide on this divorce," he added, "you'd better think it over some more. I have an appointment now. But if you'd like to have tea with me some day, we could talk it over."

"Oh, Roddie, I would like to!"

"Shall we say Thursday of this week at my apartment? It's rather dangerous to discuss such things in restaurants."

"All right."

He gave her his address and fixed an hour. She rose, picked up her vanity case, tucked back a little tendril of chestnut hair that had come down over her cheek and held out her hand.

"Good-by, Roddie. And thanks so much!"

"You've forgotten something," he remarked.

She looked about her.

"My handkerchief, you mean?" She indicated her wrist. "I have it here."

"No. Not that."

She looked innocently at him. Then—

"Oh, your retainer! Forgive me, Roddie. That was terribly stupid of me."

She opened her bag and whipped out a check-book.

But at the look of good-natured reproach in his face she blushed and put it back.

"No, Roddie. Don't!" she protested suddenly as he drew her toward him. "Please! Now don't be silly!"

He beamed upon her.

"I warned you what my retainer would be," he informed her affably, "and that I intended to collect it before you left the office."

"But, Roddie!" She gave a little, soft, throaty giggle. "Your secretary may come in at any—"

"If you keep struggling this way," he replied, "your hat will be all over on one side and she will certainly suspect!"

"Then quickly—"

But Roddie, in his amiable and conciliating way, was not quick. Just as a connoisseur insists on inhaling the bouquet of a wine before he tastes it, so Roddie believed in that anticipatory moment of delay, when lips are within a few inches of each other, which only serves to enhance the pleasure of contact when it comes.

Beatrice's lips were parted, waiting, receptive, when his own met hers. She rose a little on her tiptoes and he felt the pressure of her hand upon his shoulder. At her first movement of withdrawal he released her.

It was perfect — a single kiss just long enough to attain the maximum of effect and yet just brief enough to leave them both unsatisfied.

She turned quickly. With eyes shining and cheeks flushed she left the office.

Now there is something about a solitary kiss in circumstances like that which makes it twice as dangerous as two kisses and ten times as dangerous as ten. There is a principle of economics, called the law of diminishing returns, which explains all about— But why go into the economics of it?

The point is that when Beatrice rang the bell of Roddie's apartment on Gramercy Square three days later she was thinking of that kiss.

A reminiscent smile twitched at her lips. But it was ironed out as the door swung open and she entered.

"So this is where you live!" she exclaimed, looking curiously about the big, comfortably-furnished room.

"Yes," said Roddie.

From this beatific smile it was impossible to suspect that every woman who came there expressed that same tell-tale interest in how he lived.

"Let me take your things," he offered. "Yes — your hat, too. You know I've never seen your hair since you let it grow long."

She complied, taking pains not to spoil her coiffure, and turned for his inspection.

"Um!" he said appreciatively. "You've just had it shampooed and waved, haven't you?"

"Roddie," she rebuked him, "a man has no business to recognize things like that. All you're supposed to think is that it looks nice. *Do* you think so?"

"Yes. But I think it would look still nicer," he suggested hopefully, "if it were mussed up a little and not quite so—so corrugated. Now, if you'd only let me—"

"No!" she protested, drawing back. "For a dignified young lawyer you take entirely too many liberties with your clients."

"But, good Lord, Bee—are you still my client?" he asked. "I was hoping that you would have decided to give up that divorce."

"Oh, you were, were you?" She tossed her head. "Well, I haven't decided to do anything of the kind!"

She sat down primly on the long divan.

"Do you know, though, Roddie," she admitted, "since I saw you I have felt sort of differently about it?"

"How so?"

"Well, I hadn't told Tom I was going to consult you. And he never asked me what I had done that day. All during dinner he was much too busy explaining his own movements.

"But for once, instead of being annoyed at his fibs, I felt magnificently forgiving. Just knowing that I could get a divorce from him if I wanted gave me a little feeling of superiority. And I think seeing you again and knowing that I was going to have tea with you to-day had sort of bucked up my morale. You know, Roddie, you *are* an old dear!"

She smiled affectionately at him.

"Bee, darling, when you make velvet eyes at me like that, you've got to take the consequences!"

He slipped a hand around her shoulders.

"No, Roddie. Don't!" she protested, resisting stiffly. "I haven't the slightest sentimental interest in you, and you know it. All I meant was—"

"I quite understand," he assured her. "But if you make velvet eyes—"

"D-o-o-n't!" she pleaded. She was turning her head from side to side to dodge his lips. "Oh, *why* do you want to kiss me?"

"Because you're one of the loveliest and most adorable little women who ever lived," he told her in a voice that had suddenly become husky with tenderness. "Because ever since that night five years ago I've been thinking of you at odd, lonely moments—thinking of you and wishing you were here. Because at last you are here and I still want—"

"But, Roddie—"

"Just once!" he begged.

With face still averted she seemed to be considering.

"If I do," she bargained, "will you let me go then?"

"Yes."

"You promise?" There was a faint note of incredulity in her voice. "Only one kiss and—and nothing else?"

"Only one kiss," he assured her solemnly. "Then you may go if you want."

Very slowly she turned her head. With a little challenging light in her eyes she held up her face.

He bent down and his lips met hers. After a few seconds he drew back and looked at her reproachfully.

"Well," she demanded triumphantly, "why don't you keep your promise and let me go?"

"But you didn't kiss me," he expostulated. "You didn't do a darn thing!"

"Well. I like that," she retorted indignantly. "You certainly kissed me, didn't you?"

"Yes. But you didn't do anything about it. So it doesn't count. We forgot to stipulate whether the kiss was to be given or received."

"You mean you want to *be* kissed?"

"Of course."

"Well, I can do that, too."

She surprised him by a brisk, crisp, little kiss of dismissal and then leaned back with a mocking laugh.

"There you are, Roddie! *Now* why don't you let me go?"

"We're just where we were before we started," he informed her jovially.

"What!"

"Sure, Bee," he explained optimistically, "it's a perfectly simple little problem in osculation. I gave you a kiss we decided not to count. So you gave it back. But we still have to fulfil the original agreement."

"It seems to me you're getting a great many kisses I didn't bargain for," she objected doubtfully. "But if you're quite sure that what you really meant in the first place was that we should simultaneously exchange—"

"Now you've got the right idea, Bee." He beamed reassuringly upon her.

"Oh, Roddie—you old fraud!"

She reached up impulsively and put her arms about his neck.

For just an instant her soft, flushed face was held up to his—eyes shining, lips parted so that he could feel her warm, sweet breath against his cheeks.

Then he bent down and caught her to him in a swift, ardent embrace.

Her long-fringed eyelids fluttered shut. Her lips, placid at first, stirred responsively beneath his own. Slowly her hands crept up around his neck until their little fingers were burrowing in his hair. . . .

After a while her eyes half opened. They were filled with rapture.

*"O-h-h!"* She released him and her arms dropped.

A discreet knock came at the door.

"Just a minute!" cried Roddie sharply, for Beatrice's hair had been somewhat disarranged by their embrace.

He tiptoed to the door and opened it just wide enough to admit the tea-wagon his man had prepared. As he wheeled it over to the divan, Beatrice looked at him with a new, contented smile. Suddenly she rose and threw her arms about him.

"Oh, Roddie," she exclaimed. "You dear!"

They sat down then and, gaily, like two children who are having a secret spread, they attacked the tea things.

It was not till the last crumpet had been divided between them that Beatrice chanced to glance at her wrist watch.

"Good heavens, Roddie!" she exclaimed, springing apprehensively to her feet. "It's already after six. And I've a new cook who won't have the slightest idea how Tom likes his—"

She must have caught the expression on Roddie's face, for she broke off suddenly. She stood there, looking quizzily back at him.

"I suppose," she challenged, "you think it's funny that I should feel so solicitous about Tom's dinner when what I really came here for was to see about divorcing him?"

She looked down. As if she were trying to puzzle out that question herself she began thoughtfully to trace a pattern on the floor with the toe of one small slipper.

"Somehow," she confessed slowly, "I feel awfully fond of Tom just now —and awfully understanding. And I

—yes, I think I should like him to have a very good dinner to-night with all the things he particularly enjoys!"

Her violet eyes met Roddie's supplicatingly, as if she could not quite explain how she felt and yet wanted him to understand.

He stepped up to her.

"Do you still want that divorce, Bee?" he inquired.

For a moment she toyed nervously with the top button of his waistcoat.

"Do you know, Roddie," she announced meekly at last, "if you don't mind, I—I think I'd like to—forget about that old divorce. . . . But if you could lend me a comb—"

With a laugh he opened the door of his bedroom for her. At sight of the women's photographs with which its walls were covered she stopped short.

"Why, there's Madge Wainright," she exclaimed, "who sent me to you. . . . And Shirley Mordaunt, who married that awful Mygatt man. And Betty Van Planck, whose husband—"

She broke off and turned to him inquiringly.

He was beaming. His lips parted in that angelic smile for which women forgave him much—too much.

"My clients," he informed her unblushingly.

She caught her breath. Round-eyed, she looked from him to the photographs.

"Roddie Van Nast," she accused, "I don't believe there's an unmarried woman on those walls. Why, you old home-wrecker!"

He took her chin between his thumb and forefinger and tilted her face up toward his.

"Bee, darling," he said reprovingly, "when a man devotes his life to making marriage tolerable for other men's neglected wives, do you think it's really fair to call him a home-wrecker?"

He waited till her lips quirked and the dimples appeared in her flushed cheeks. Then—

"You're a sensible little girl to give up that divorce," he told her. "You know you're really much too fond of Tom. So if you ever get to feeling that way again, I hope that, before you do anything rash, you'll come and talk it over with me—at tea."

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WOMEN marry because they are tired or anxious: men marry because they are curious or bored.

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A KISS may be a compliment, a delusion, an impertinence, a pastime or a duty.

*It's convenient to have an affair with a man who knows how to handle the details— but one of the details he knows is how to get out of it!*

# WOMAN OF THE WORLD

## *By* AVERY HOLT

AT SIX o'clock that evening in May Pat Connor swallowed the last of his cup of coffee, wiped his gray moustache and grunted. He took out his pipe and began to stuff it with tobacco from a blue package.

From the other side of the round oak table his daughter Irene spoke up listlessly:

"Better hurry up, Pop, you'll be late!"

"Don't you be tellin' me my business," protested her father. Nevertheless he got up, slowly. He had only been working at his newest job, night-driver of a newspaper-truck in Jersey, a week, and was still anxious to please. But he was not yet through with his daughter.

"Now listen, Irene," he ordered. "I want you to stay home to-night and don't you leave the house."

"Aw, Pop—!" protested Irene.

"Don't argue with me an' do what I say. The landlord's comin' for the rent to-night." He took a thin wad of greasy bills from his pocket and tossed it on the table. "You stay here till he comes and give him the rent."

"Aw, Pop, I can't stay home. I—I gotta go out. Gee, what do you want of a girl, anyhow?" she cried in exasperation. She had no specific date, but she just couldn't stay home.

"I ain't got no time for arguin'," said her father crossly. He took up his cap. "Give him the rent money and don't you forget the receipt."

"Aw, Pop!"

The door slammed on her protest. Irene muttered rebelliously.

"Gee, this puts me in a nice mess. I bet that goof Eddie Shean will show up. And me after tellin' him I wouldn't be home. Now he'll catch me in and we'll have a lovely rotten time together. Oh, gee!"

She took the rent-money from the table and poked the bills into the pocket of her dress. She left the dining-room and walked disconsolately into the parlor. She seated herself in the old-

fashioned three-sided bay-window and stared out into the slow spring twilight.

The air was warm and damp. Player-pianos plunked, and radios jabbed their hoarse harmonies into the air. To her ears came the familiar roar of the Columbus Avenue "L" half a block to the east. In the twilight-smudged street young men in shirt-sleeves were playing baseball. Their loud cheerful voices came up to her.

But Irene knew no peace. She was irritated at the mischance that kept her at home after she had told Eddie Shean she would probably be out. But she knew Eddie. He would call around in spite of her hints that she didn't want him to.

Oh, she couldn't stand Eddie Shean. What a kid he was—only twenty-one and looked and acted even younger. And he didn't know how to treat a girl at all. Didn't have any experience with girls. Gee, when he wanted to kiss you he started begging as if he was asking a favor. Irene imitated the love-lorn, inexperienced boy:

"Irene!" she mimicked. "I'm so crazy about you. Would you mind—er—would you be mad if—if I kissed you?"

Irene sighed in exasperation. Why couldn't he go ahead and kiss her like a real man instead of bothering her with asking and begging? And that wasn't all she had against him, the poor fish. When he took her out, he was so awkward that she was ashamed to be seen with him. He didn't know how to act in nice places. That time he took her to that swell restaurant on Broadway he was as nervous and excited as a kid. When the waiter served the oysters that dumbbell Eddie had to eat them with his big meat-fork! Wow—it was just terrible! The couple at the next table began to laugh. Irene wished the earth would open up and swallow her. And after that Eddie left such a small tip for the waiter that he gave Eddie a terrible look. And then the poor simp put his hands nervously in his pockets and dragged out another quarter. Oh, God, she could have killed Eddie at that minute in cold blood. The big boob! The simp!

Irene sighed at the memory of that humiliation. Oh, why did she have to run around with kids like Eddie? Why couldn't she meet some good-looking fella who knew how to act in swell places? A fella who knew how to give a girl a good time, too. A fella who could make love to you without begging your pardon and talking about how much he respected you. Here she was nearly twenty-one and all the fellas she knew were boys of the neighborhood. Just kids like Eddie. No class to them. No experience.

The sound of the door-bell interrupted her meditations. Irene arose. A little spark of hope flickered within her. Maybe this was the landlord. Then she could give him the rent and she would be free for the rest of the night, get away from there before Eddie came. Oh, that would be great!

But the spark died when she opened the door and saw Eddie himself standing there. He was smiling foolishly at her and his fingers clutched nervously at his brown felt hat.

"Hello, Irene! Gee, I certainly got the luck finding you home to-night!"

"Hello!" she said in a bored, haughty tone. "Well, come in," she invited reluctantly.

He followed her eagerly.

"You said you mightn't be home—but I said to myself, 'I'll take a chance anyhow.' And I did. Ain't I the lucky guy?"

Irene stifled a little yawn.

"Um—yeh!" she remarked indifferently.

They went into the parlor. Irene resumed her seat in the bay-window and kept one eye on the street and one indifferent one on her caller. Eddie seated himself on the leather couch and gazed adoringly at Irene. He loved her because she was so pretty. He loved her black bobbed hair, straight and smooth as silk with the thick bang over her forehead; her clear blue eyes with the saucy glint in them; her full, red lips that showed dazzling little teeth when she talked or smiled. He loved her—and he was afraid of her. She was so impatient and sarcastic with him. If only she were a little bit kind to him he'd be the happiest man in the world.

"Say, Irene!" commenced Eddie. "Why didn't you show up at the dance last night? I waited and waited for you till eleven o'clock. Why didn't you come? You'da had a wonderful time."

"With who?" snapped Irene. "That bunch of kids in your club?" she sneered.

"What's the matter with them?" asked Eddie. "Ain't they a nice bunch of fellas?"

"Ha, ha—you say the funniest things. You oughta go on the stage. You'd make a wonderful boob comedian!"

Eddie flushed. He felt frightfully young and unsophisticated and totally unable to answer her. And yet—he loved her all the more for her cruelty to him. She was different from all the other girls. So beautiful—and so much pep.

"Listen," he said conciliatingly, "how about next Sunday? How'dja like to go on a boat-trip up the Hudson? Just you and me—without the crowd?"

"That's my idear of a cheerful funeral!" retorted Irene.

Eddie laughed at the joke just to show that he was a good sport and could laugh even when the joke was on himself. Then:

"Say, Irene, did'ja know Luna Park's opening next week? Like to go?"

"Oh, I'm graduated from that stuff," flared back Irene. "Coney Island—what do you take me for?"

"Then how about—?"

"No!" she cried, jumping up. "I don't wanna go anywheres with you. Leave me alone, can't you. I'm tired of going out with a kid like you. Leave me alone!"

Eddie got up, too, and stared at Irene with the look of a devoted dog who has just been struck by his master.

"Aw, don't get mad, Irene, please don't," he coaxed.

"Shut up!" she cried in irritation. "Who asked you to come around to-

night anyhow? I didn't. What are you bothering me for? Why don't you leave me alone? I'm too nice to you. That's the trouble. Well, I ain't gonna waste any more time on kids like you. I'm through with you. I ain't goin' around any more with a simp like you. When I go out again, it's gonna be with a real man, a fella with class!"

Abused and damned as he was, Eddie could not leave her. Humbly he asked:

"What's wrong with me, Irene? What's the trouble with me? What do you want me to do? I'll do anything you say, you know I will. I'm crazy about you."

"Just leave me alone, that's all I want of you!" cried Irene.

"Oh, please—!" he begged, and then the ring of the door-bell cut him short.

"Thank goodness, there's the landlord!" she cried in relief. She walked past Eddie into the hall and opened the door. A tall, broad-shouldered young man, flashily dressed in a light tan belted coat and a low black derby stood there.

"Connor's apartment?" he inquired in a business-like tone while his eyes looked at Irene with pleasure.

"This is it," answered Irene, and she smiled at this classy-looking fella.

"Well, I'm Terry Magee, the landlord's son," explained the young man. "Come about the rent."

"Pa ain't home," said Irene, "but he left the money with me."

Terry Magee looked straight into Irene's eyes. For no reason at all she blushed.

"Well, what could be sweeter?" said Terry brightly.

Irene laughed and took the money out of her pocket.

"Will you—er—make out a receipt please?" she asked.

"Now what do you want a receipt for, Miss Connor?" he cajoled, smiling into her eyes again.

"Well—you know—you gotta get a receipt when you give money," she said, feeling very foolish.

"Is zat so?" he laughed, and Irene giggled with nervous pleasure. "Well," he went on, "I wouldn't do it for everybody, but seein' as it's you, and seein' that you've got the prettiest blue eyes I ever seen—you get your receipt!" he ended up grandly.

"Say—don't get fresh!" said Irene weakly. "Come on with that receipt."

"You're in a terrible hurry to get rid of me, ain't you?" he rallied, and took a receipt-book out of an inner pocket. "What's the matter with me—don't I suit?"

Irene felt that this had gone far enough. It was time she showed her spirit.

"Say, you think a lot of yourself, don't you?" she said with a haughty toss of her head.

"Yep, and you're gonna think a lot of me too, very soon," said Mr. Magee as he made out the receipt. Then, without taking his eyes off the receipt-book, he asked, "What show do you wanna see to-morrow night, blue-eyes?"

"Of all the nerve!" gasped Irene in real surprise.

"All right. We'll see 'The Love-Birds'! Meet you in front of Harry's candy-store to-morrow night—six

o'clock. That'll give us time to put the feed-bag on. Here you are." He waved the receipt and took the money from her hand. Without counting it he thrust it into his pocket with a grand gesture. "There's one more thing. To-morrow I want you to look as pretty as you do right now. Promise. Word of honor. Cross your heart and die."

He raised his hat. "Thank you, Miss Connor. Don't forget—to-morrow night, six o'clock." And he breezed away.

Irene looked after him dazed and open-mouthed. She felt as if a powerful wind had suddenly seized her and lifted her to dizzy heights, into a new world. This fella was the real thing. Some class! And gee, what a fast worker! She breathed rapturously. Knew how to treat a girl all right. Had lots of experience. She was still breathless when she turned and went back to the parlor. She started in surprise.

"Good gracious, are you still here?" she cried. She had entirely forgotten Eddie's very existence.

He regarded her with a sort of frightened mournfulness.

"Irene, I heard you talkin' to that man out there. You ain't goin' out with him to-morrow? Don't do it, Irene. He's a stranger. Can't tell what kind of a fella he is. Don't take no chances, Irene."

"Say, what business is it of yours who I go out with?" drawled Irene.

"Yeh—you wouldn't go out with me, and you know I'm a good respectable guy. And here you wanna go out with a guy you never seen before."

Irene disregarded his hurt, sad tones.

"I'll trouble you to go now," she said briskly. "I'm gonna get dressed to go out."

"Oh, Irene!" he begged.

"Don't bother me, you pest!"

"All right," he said unsteadily. "Good night!"

She heaved a sigh of relief.

II

The next day Irene spent her lunch-hour shopping in preparation for her date with Terry Magee that night. She bought a pair of extravagantly sheer chiffon stockings, a fluffy little hat of black maline trimmed with a great red rose, and a choker of large golden pearls. At closing-time she rushed home from the office and commenced to get ready in a glow of excitement. She managed to dish up something for her father's supper. His complaints and grumbiings hardly reached her through the romantic mist in which she was breathing.

Though she was already late for her appointment she lingered for a last look in the glass. Ah, she was beautiful, she knew. But would he think so too?

She found Terry waiting for her. She noticed with satisfaction that he also had prepared for this date. It meant something to him too. He looked as if he had just come from a long session at the barber's. His dark eyes kindled with approval of her. He took her familiarly by the arm.

"All set for a big night?" he asked, giving her arm a friendly pressure.

Irene laughed up at him.

"Any little girl who steps out with me has gotta expect speed. Speed's my middle name," he warned.

"I ain't a dead one myself," retorted Irene.

Terry laughed approvingly, and she realized she was making an impression on him.

They taxied to one of the big Broadway hotels to dine. All the tables were taken, but Terry spoke to the head-waiter quietly, masterfully, and a new table was placed for them. No awkwardness about him. Gee, she was proud to be with him. He was not like that boob, Eddie. He was real class.

After dinner, they went to "The Love-Birds." Orchestra seats. About them men and women in evening-dress. And, as soon as the lights went out Terry moved as near to her as the seats allowed. His heavy shoulder and arm pressed close to her side. That surprised her, but—there was a thrill in it too. And after that he reached over and took her hand, holding it with a firm, masterful pressure. His hand was burning hot. She felt uncomfortable, yet she could not pull her hand away. He was too strong. He laughed at her in the semi-darkness of the theater.

"Don't try to get away from Terry Magee!" he said proudly. "It can't be done!"

After theater, supper at a queer Russian place called the Club Katerina. Huge Russian decorations on the walls; Cossacks on plunging horses; peasant-girls in vivid folk-costume. Queer music from balalaikas. But for dancing an American jazz-band. Terry had no trouble in getting liquor. But Irene didn't drink more than twice. She knew she had enough when there was a golden glow about everything. Oh, she was happy!

They danced. The air rocked with the rich music. Her feet moved languorously yet lightly. Terry held her close and she felt his burning breath on her cheek. Now and then he touched her cheek with his own. Then she suddenly felt a tug at her head. Terry was forcing her head back by pulling her hair. Then, while she was helpless, he leaned over and kissed her lips.

"You got your nerve!" cried Irene, struggling.

"Sure, I can't get along without it!" he replied coolly.

She tried to look stern and severe, but was melted by his laugh. She had to laugh, too.

They taxied home again. Broadway signs were still jabbering their conflicting colors into the clear night air. Quiet and gloom of sleeping streets.

Without the slightest warning Terry lifted her off her seat and placed her upon his knee. She protested only a little. He removed her hat and put it carefully on the opposite seat.

"Nice lid," he remarked. "Don't let's spoil it." And then he kissed her, firmly, deeply.

He was so strong and overpowering that she felt a sense of fright. And yet it was a pleasant sensation too. She liked to be treated like this masterfully. No asking and begging for kisses.

He continued to hold her and kiss her all the way home. She was very

sorry when the taxi stopped before the door. It was so terribly romantic and exciting with Terry in the dark cab.

"How about the day after to-morrow?" murmured Terry, his lips upon hers for a long final kiss.

She nodded.

"All right," he said. "Meet me in the lobby of the Durant, six-thirty. Good night, sweetheart, and don't forget to dream about me."

"Good night!"

The cab drove off. With a deep sigh Irene turned to go into the house. She felt tumultuously happy. Life was at last giving her what she had always wanted: excitement, a man of the world.

A shape detached itself from the darkness of the vestibule. She started in fright.

"Don't be afraid," said a voice. "It's only me—Eddie."

"Oh—!"

"Irene, I've been waitin' for you."

"How dare you frighten me like this?"

"I'm sorry. I've been waiting for you such a long time. I hadda see you to-night, Irene. I was worried about you. I couldn't go to sleep without seein' you were all right."

"Of all the crazy things!"

"No—it ain't crazy, Irene."

"Well, you've seen me—good night!" she snapped.

He put out a detaining hand.

"Listen to me, Irene. You don't know what you're doing — going out with Terry Magee. I've got to warn you about him."

"Oh, mind your own business!"

"D'ya know the kind of guy he is? You gotta be careful with his kind. I found out about him. He's no good. Goes around with a lot of wild women. You know the kind. He ain't got the right to go with a nice girl like you."

"That's enough from you — lemme go!"

"You gotta listen to me, Irene. He ain't fit company for you. He'll make a bad girl outa you. He's done it to other girls. Remember that girl the cop saved from jumping in the river from the Eighty-sixth Street dock last summer. Well, that was Magee's girl. She was gonna have a baby and he wouldn't marry her. That's the kind of guy he is. And you like to go around with him?"

"You make me sick," said Irene coolly. "I kin take care of myself, and I don't want the likes of you to tell me what to do. And lemme tell you somethin' else. He's not a kid like you. He's a real man—jealous!"

"Y' mean you'd rather go around with a bum like him than a respectable fella like me?" faltered Eddie.

"Yes—I—would!"

"Irene!" he cried.

"Get away from the door and let me in."

He shrank away, broken, stunned.

"Irene!"

His heart-broken cry floated up the dark stairway after her.

## III

Two weeks later. Deep, calm May night enveloped the earth. There was a melting softness in the air, a breath

from the lushness of coming summer. The sky was purple velvet hazed by a brilliant rising moon.

Irene sat next to Terry on the front seat of his father's touring-car. They had decided not to go to a show this night because the weather was so fine. Terry rushed the car down Fifth Avenue alongside the Park. Irene felt very happy. Since she had been going around with Terry, she had discovered how wonderful life could be for a girl. There was not the faintest shadow on her happiness, not even Eddie's warning. He had continued to annoy her by waiting for her near her house, pleading with her to give up Terry, warning her against him. As if she couldn't take care of herself! Well, next time that simp bothered her, she'd get rid of him for good.

Terry turned the car east through Fifty-ninth Street across the Queensboro Bridge. Soon the car was gliding through the flat, quiet countryside. He slowed up, slid the car into a dark little side-path.

"Put your arms around me!" he ordered with a smile.

"I will not!" Irene retorted. "If you wanna kiss me, it's up to you."

"Put—your—arms—around—me!" he ordered more firmly.

Irene liked him to order her like this. She put her arms about him docilely.

"Atta sweet baby!" said Terry, and with a swift movement, he pulled her to him. He kissed her until she was dizzy and cried out, "Don't!"

"Well, I suppose I gotta give you time to get over that one," said Terry, starting the car again. Irene clung to him affectionately, longing for the moment when he would kiss her again. Languidly she regarded the racing countryside, the dark trees and houses silhouetted against the moonlit sky. She sighed happily. The car rushed on.

"Where are you taking me, Terry?"' she asked.

"Long Beach," he replied. "Like the place?"

"That's a great idea!" she cried. "I haven't been to the beach since last summer and I'm just crazy about the water!"

"Bet I can make it in forty minutes," declared Terry. "Want to bet?"

"I know you can do it if you say so."

"Just watch me."

He let the car out. Excitement mounted within her. Oh, the ecstasy of speed! Ah, this was life! Getting everything there was quickly, without waiting. The road was a black mystery swiftly pierced by strong headlights. The moon extravagantly rained down its silver light on roof-tops, trees, and lush meadows. The rushing wind flung at her the scent of lilac and dogwood.

It seemed to her only a few minutes before she caught the tangy odor of salt water. The land suddenly became flatter, the sky wider. Then she heard the faint roar of surf in the wind.

Terry glanced at the little clock on the mahogany dashboard.

"Thirty-eight minutes!" he announced proudly.

They dashed over a white bridge and then into the town of Long Beach. Terry parked the car near the boardwalk.

The sea was calm, like an endless lake. The moonlight gave the illusion of thousands of tiny silver fish gleaming and dancing and flashing in the water. Terry and Irene sat on the warm sand and leaned against one of the pillars of the boardwalk. He put out his arms to her silently. With a soft sigh she relaxed into them. He kissed her. Soft dizziness crept over her. Oh, this was happiness!

The moon sank. The sea and sky were black. Terry kissed her again and again. The soft dizziness became a burning mist. Terry held her very close and whispered:

"Sweetheart, don't go home to-night!"

This was just what she had been longing for all evening, and yet now that he had put it in words, she felt resentful and alarmed.

"No, Terry, don't talk like that."

"You know you love me. You know you don't want to go home to-night. There's a nice hotel here."

Yes, she didn't want to leave him to-night. And yet—alarm shook her.

"No, no, Terry, I must go home."

He didn't insist any further and that made her feel more ashamed than if he had. It made her feel that she was inferior, that she wasn't quite up to his level, and that he quietly despised her for it.

"Well, let's go home—it's late!" he said brusquely. He got up and she followed, feeling as if she were a child who had done something wrong and was being reproved for it. He did not say a word all the way back to the car. After they had started back, she spoke:

"Terry, I'm sorry."

"All right," he said crisply.

"Oh, Terry, give me a little time—to think it over. I do love you—and maybe—maybe some other time—"

"Atta game little kid!" applauded Terry. He patted her on the shoulder. Brushing away his disappointment of the evening, he looked forward to the future. "Tell you what. We'll make a week-end of it. Atlantic City. Drive down in the car Friday night. How about it?"

She swallowed.

"All right, Terry," she agreed, fearful of offending him again.

## IV

The days until Friday were dizzy with her alternating moods. A thousand times Irene decided against the Atlantic City trip with Terry; a thousand times she convinced herself that she ought to go. If she wanted to hold the friendship and interest of a man of the world, she had to act like a woman of the world. And taking a week-end trip with a man, especially a man you cared about was acting like a woman of the world. Lots of girls took trips like that. And, if she acted as if she belonged in Terry's class, maybe he would even marry her—later on. Certainly she had no chance of marrying him if she refused to act like one of his kind, if she was old-fashioned and silly like a green kid.

For she knew better than to mention marriage to Terry. She knew it would only make him angry with her, make him drop her altogether because she wasn't playing according to his rules.

Friday. In the morning she definitely decided not to go, but as the day wore on, her resolution crumbled, and when Terry telephoned to confirm the appointment, she hadn't the courage to resist him. She promised to meet him at seven that evening at a street-corner near her home.

After she had decided to go, she was filled with a fearful joy. She was going to do a very daring, worldly thing. She was acting just like a woman of the world. She was above the prejudices and inhibitions of other girls, who were afraid of taking what they wanted out of life. She told her father she was going to spend the week-end with a girl-friend from the office. After he left for his work, she feverishly began to pack. Whatever the consequences, she was ready to take them. She felt her heart pounding with drugged excitement.

She snapped her suitcase closed and put it in the hall. Then she took her hat from its box. Just as she was lifting it to her head, the door-bell rang.

"Damn," she said to herself. "I won't answer it."

The bell rang again as she was putting on her hat. She ignored it. Another ring, a faint, discouraged one. Silence.

After waiting a minute, Irene took her suitcase and opened the door. She gave a start. Eddie blocked her way. He advanced, forcing her back into the room. He shut the door behind them.

"Say, what's the grand idear?" cried Irene. "Who gave you the right to come in like this?"

Eddie looked at her with such determination, with such a wildness that she was startled. There was something new and strange about him to-night. He looked older, queer.

"Say, what's the matter with you? Been drinking?"

"No."

"Well, what do you want? Make it snappy. I'm in a hurry."

"Where are you goin', Irene?" he demanded desperately. His eyes fell upon her suitcase.

"None of your business!"

"You—you goin' with him—Magee?"

"None of your business!"

"You're goin' with him! I can tell. I know!" he raved.

"Get out of here. I'm in a hurry!"

"You're goin' with that bum! And you won't have nothin' to do with me, a respectable fella who loves you—it's all wrong!"

"Oh, shut up! You—!"

He stood there dumbly while the whip of her voice lashed him unmercifully. Then suddenly he sneered and that sneer was a terrible thing. His eyes narrowed.

"Well, he ain't gonna get you!" cried Eddie insanely. "I won't let you go to him. He's no better than I am. I'm just as good as he is—maybe better. I won't let you go. You're goin' to stay right here!"

She gave him a look of scorn, then, without a word, picked up her suitcase and started for the door. Eddie pushed her away and planted himself against the door. She tried to push him aside.

Then his arms shot out and he clutched her wildly.

"Let me go, you're crazy!" she panted, struggling in his grasp. He held her with a convulsive grip.

"I won't let you go. You can't go to him. You belong to me. I love you!" She struggled. She tried to scream. His hand closed upon her mouth. She choked. With savage force his arms folded her close.

"Stop! Don't," she gasped.

He crushed her cry with his lips upon hers. With desperate, passionate kisses he robbed her of her strength. But she managed at last to pull herself away from him. She staggered back against the wall.

"Eddie, stop—what—what's happened to you?"

"I was a kid, wasn't I? Wouldn't have anything to do with me 'cause I was bashful and quiet and I respected you? Well, I'm different now!" he raved. "I ain't a kid no more. I ain't afraid of you or nobody. You ain't goin' to that bum. I won't let you!"

"Eddie—don't!" she screamed.

Again he forced her to him. He wrenched her head back and his lips found hers.

"You won't go to him. You'll stay here with me. You're gonna be mine. I ain't afraid of you no more!"

"Eddie—go 'way—I'll—go 'way!"

"Never, never let you go—ain't a kid no more!"

She felt she would faint. She struggled to retain consciousness so that she would not be altogether at his mercy. But her strength slipped away.

Then his hands went to her throat.

"You won't go to him. If I can't have you, nobody else will. He'll never get you now. Oh, I love you, I love you!"

The world slid away from her into roaring blackness as his hands tightened about her throat.

A neighbor, alarmed by the noise in Connor's apartment, called a policeman. As Eddie fled down the horrible stairs, the officer was going up. Eddie wilted in his grasp. He began to babble:

"I ain't done nothin' wrong. I just done it to save her from goin' wrong with a bum. I ain't done nothin' wrong. Y'know, I'm only a kid—only twenty-one. I couldn't do nothing wrong. I love her." He laughed wildly. "Yeh, I'm only a kid, but I saved her—I done it! She's safe now—safe from that bum. He can't get her now. I ain't done nothin' wrong!"

He slumped down upon the dark stairs and began to weep.

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WOMAN spends her time sentimentalizing over old memories, while man rushes off collecting material for new ones.

*Cyril knew he had made love to somebody's wife, but the question was: whose wife?*

# "PLEASE LOVE ME!"

## By NANCY LOWE

PEACE brooded over the immaculate suburb of Clairview. The clean little streets lay quietly under the star-studded April sky. Stucco cottages and imposing stone mansions alike lay wrapped in a modest quietude. The street lamps stared solemnly at each other as became street lamps of such a dignified community. The little new green shoots on the trees were afraid to tremble in the breeze. Though very young, they already knew their polite place. All was peace, and in the living-room of his charming eight-room and three-bath bungalow, George Ellicott was having an ear-shattering debate with his wife.

"But, Phyllis, you can't leave me alone again to-night!" he cried in anguish. He was an unobtrusive young man with an unobtrusive nose and very mild brown eyes. How he had ever managed to make a success in the real estate business nobody knew. Neither did he. However, this has nothing to do with the story. "Why—you've been out every night this week!" he cried.

"I know it," said Phyllis calmly. She was a tall, aggressive-looking redhead. Why she had ever married George nobody knew. Neither did she. But, then, one had to marry someone. "Haven't you any resources within yourself? Surely you didn't marry me to entertain you?"

"No, but—but I do think you might make an appointment with your own husband once in a while!" cried George in more anguish.

"How dreadfully old-fashioned!" sniffed Phyllis. Phyllis had picked up a lot of information about life in Greenwich Village. As a result, her clothes fitted her better than her morals, which were a trifle askew. Possibly it was the fascination of this that had attracted George to her. Nobody knew. Neither did George.

Now he desperately banged his fist on the table.

"Phyllis, you must stay home with me to-night instead of keeping your appointment in New York! I'll be terribly lonely all alone here to-night!"

"Must?" sneered Phyllis. That word always made her see redder than her hair.

"It's your duty, your duty!" cried George.

His wife looked impatient. Then:

"Really, I'd like to help you spend the evening, dear boy," she lied smoothly, "but—my duty to myself comes first, you know. I have a delightful appointment to-night, and I'm not going to deprive myself of it."

"Phyllis!" groaned George.

"George!" she mocked and left the room.

Ten minutes later he heard the front door slam. George desperately paced the living-room. So this was married life the second year. To hell with it! You gave a woman your name and liberty and in return she wouldn't even give you her companionship when you begged for it. He didn't mind that Phyllis found it necessary to run around nights in order to express her temperament. Oh, George wasn't narrow-minded! Yet it was irritating to have her run off when his whole soul cried aloud for a domestic evening.

George stopped pacing. To assuage his terrific loneliness, he turned on his radio. It promptly blared forth the melancholy strains of "All Alone." It soothed him to hear the radio mourning as his heart was mourning. He put the same record on the phonograph. Then he seated himself at the player-piano and indulged his grief by pumping out the same tune. The three instruments played in different keys. But George didn't mind. He loved music. The discords resulting from the three different keys only made the music more poignant to him. There were tears in his eyes as the radio barked, the phonograph ground and the player-piano pumped.

The music came to an end. George jumped up restlessly. He couldn't stand being alone to-night with this lonely music. He couldn't. But how could he while away the long hours of this spring evening all alone?

Across his desperate meditations came the whistle of the seven-two for New York. Ah, he had it! A night in New York! New York, sweet city of refuge and delight!

The lonely husband seized his hat and coat and leaped out of the front door like a startled deer.

While George was speeding to New York on the happily caught seven-two, in that great town something was happening that was fated to be of terrific consequence to him. Though, of course, he had not the slightest premonition of it. Let us fly to the great city before him. Let us alight on a narrow but picturesque street east of Central Park in the Sixties. Let us stand before a charming house lately remodeled from the early American style to the Italian antique. Let us go up one flight, two flights, three flights of studios. Let us stop at the door bearing a neat little card: Angela Lee. And now let us enter without knocking and see what we shall see.

What do we see? A beautiful young girl, of course. Angela has pale gold hair, and it is curled in short ringlets all over her head. Her eyes are richly blue. Her mouth and nose are delicately small, and her chin has a trusting, childlike dimple in it. She appeals to our sympathy at once, for, when we first glimpse her, she is weeping bitter little tears.

For Angela was unhappy. She had come to New York the previous winter to study the piano. She had studied the piano enthusiastically all winter. But with the first signs of spring she discovered she wanted something else. What was it? Ah, she did not know. That was just the trouble.

But whatever it was that had suddenly overcome her this beautiful spring night, she was dissatisfied, discontented, disappointed, discouraged, distracted. She was also very, very lonely.

Even the longest of good cries must have its end. Angela stopped weeping because she was through. She didn't know what to do, but she knew she had to get away from this place of hers this night. She got up and began to dress in the desperate haste of a person who doesn't know what she is going to do next.

A few short minutes later she ran out of the pretty Italian antique building. She didn't know where she was going, but she was on her way. She didn't know what she wanted, but she was going to get it.

## II

George Ellicott got off the train at Pennsylvania Station. He walked disconsolately towards the bright jabber of lights that was Times Square. But the lights did not warn him. Why do people feel lonely in the midst of plenty of other people? We do not know. Neither did George. But there he was, lonely, hell's bells, how lonely!

Then he smiled happily. Cyril Wade! Good old Cyril! Always had a jolly crowd at his studio. Laughter and song. Booze and foregtfulness. A great place for a man whose wife refused to stay at home with him. Good old Cyril!

George promptly directed his steps eastward until he reached a narrow but picturesque street east of Central Park. He entered a charming house lately remodeled from early American style to antique Italian. Just as he entered, a girl brushed by him on her way out. George did not look at her. Poor fellow, he did not recognize her as the heroine of our story. But stand by, readers, we promise he'll know better before long.

He went up three flights and knocked at the door of Cyril Wade's studio. No answer. He tried the door and found it open. He entered. Nobody home.

George roamed about the studio aimlessly. He still felt lonely. He tried to read. He felt more lonely than ever. He turned on Cyril's radio hopefully. It promptly barked forth the melancholy strains of "All Alone!"

He snapped off the radio and ran away. Out of the studio. Into the misty April streets. He wandered west, he wandered north. He did not know what to do with himself. Then he passed up Forty-fourth Street. He stopped before Symphony Hall. His eager eyes drank in a large poster:

PIANO RECITAL
BY
MISHA MC COOEY
FAMOUS YOUNG IRISH-RUSSIAN
COMPOSER-PIANIST

George's eyes lighted up. If there was anything he liked, it was recitals on the piano. If there was anything he liked better, it was recitals by foreign composer-pianists. He did not feel lonely any more. He stepped into the lobby and bought a ticket. He passed into the hall, was ushered into a seat and handed a program. He felt happily excited.

Time passed. A few more people drifted into the orchestra. Evidently Misha was not so well known in America. George felt sorry for him. He prepared to applaud wildly when McCooey made his appearance.

At last a door opened on the stage and the famous young Irish-Russian appeared. He was a tall young man of forty-five. He wore evening clothes and his head was bald. He looked over the audience with startled disgust. His lips moved. George could not tell whether he was counting the house or praying for more audience. George applauded wildly. Misha bowed in his direction with dignity. Then he madly whirled the piano stool about, seated himself and stared at the keyboard.

Just before he struck the first note a girl came down the aisle.

Just as he struck his first note, Angela Lee seated herself next to George Ellicott.

And just at this moment, Phyllis was sitting at an intimate little table in the Palm Grove Room of the Hotel Splendid. Opposite her was a handsome young man with deep-set, smouldering black eyes.

The young man leaned forward in his seat and his eyes smouldered more than usual. He had just made a request of Phyllis and he was very anxious about her answer. His eyes burned upon her face.

Phyllis flushed. She kept her eyes upon the table. She wanted to say yes to the proposal of the dark young man, but didn't have the courage.

The young man's eyes never left off smouldering.

"Phyllis, darling—won't you answer me?" he begged in a smouldering voice.

"Please, don't insist. Give me a little time!" she begged in turn.

"I can't bear this eternal waiting and hoping any more. Phyllis, I want you," said the yong man with thrilling frankness. "I must have your answer to-night, Phyllis, some time to-night."

Phyllis' laugh was restrained.

"Very well," she said. "I'll give you your answer some time to-night. I promise. Now, for Heaven's sake, let's stop being serious. Let's go somewhere and dance."

"Would you like to come to my studio? I'll get a crowd together—"

"No, thanks—not your studio," said Phyllis quickly. "I wouldn't enjoy myself in a crowd there and—I don't want to be alone with you there, either —*mon ami.* It's too dangerous—to-night!"

His eyes blazed. But he merely said, "Let's go to the Club Carolina."

Phyllis nodded consent.

## III

At Symphony Hall, the world's worst pianist was playing the world's

worst music—his own. And Misha McCooey played it with such a sneering consciousness of its value that it sounded even worse than it really was. After five minutes of polite and hopeful attention, George Ellicott looked around with a haunted look.

His desperate eyes met the eyes of the girl sitting next to him. She, too, had a stricken look. A smile of sympathy unconsciously blossomed out on George's face. A beautiful smile of thanks irradiated Angela's face. George was thrilled.

He bent his head over his program. Sternly he tried to listen to McCooey's rendition of his "Sonata Heroique." But out of the corner of his mild eye he obsetrved his neighbor. He liked what he saw. Then he remembered his duty to Phyllis and tore away his half-gaze from the beautiful sranger. But a minute later he found himself furtively glancing at her again. After all he was lonely, and he meant nothing by it.

Misha pounded, banged, languished at the piano. George sighed. The music was growing worse by the minute. Angela sighed. Then her eyes strayed again to the stranger next to her. She felt better. George felt better, too. He began to see that Misha McCooey had his uses after all in this providentially ordered world. The worse he played, the more imperative it was for George to gaze for relief at his charming neighbor.

The sonata came to an end with a shock for Angela and George. It found them gazing deeply into each other's eyes with intense sympathy and understanding. Angela blushed. Then she rose and fled down the aisle. George jumped up and fled after her.

He found her in the lobby innocently looking over the announcements of future concerts in the wall-rack. An announcement fluttered from her fingers. George rushed over and picked it up.

"Thank you," she said.

"Wasn't that recital awful!" commenced George boldly.

"I—I almost fainted," she replied frankly. She did not feel so lonely any more. Neither did he. Yet they stood looking at each other with nothing to say.

Again Misha McCooey served the day. Inside he started tearing at the entrails of the piano. He was playing an encore. The sound of the horrible butchery came to the ears of the silent music-haters in the lobby. With one accord George and Angela fled to the street together. George became loquacious as they started towards Fifth Avenue.

"Did you happen to hear Wulfsohn play here last week?" he inquired.

"I did," said Angela. "He's divine. He's my teacher."

"Oh, do you play?" asked George.

"I do," said Angela.

The ice was broken. They conversed freely as they walked up Fifth Avenue. Angela felt happy. She liked the way George looked at her, as though he hadn't the courage to tell her how nice he found her. George felt light-hearted. What a beautiful voice she had. Was that a dimple in her chin? It was!

A rash resolve came into his mind. Before the night was over he would kiss that dimple!

At the Caroline Club ten darkies sat on a platform and played crazy music. On the dance-floor three dozen sane American citizens, male and female, wriggled in dance.

In the midst of them were Phyllis and her companion, the dark young man with the smouldering eyes. He held her close to his beating heart. He spoke in her ear:

"Darling—your answer? Make it yes. Make it yes!"

She smiled and in her smile was both promise and denial. She did not know what she was going to say so she decided to look enigmatic.

IV

George and Angela reached Central Park. They turned back. They talked music, but they thought about—love. This was quick work, but what do you expect in a bustling city where time is much too valuable to be wasted?

"Oh, yes," said George. "That new Russian pianist is a great Chopin interpreter—though just a little too sentimental." And he gazed at Angela with longing eyes. Oh, that adorable dimple! Would he ever have the courage to kiss it?

"Russians are apt to be sentimental," said Angela inanely. To herself she said, "I wish he'd stop talking nonsense about music. Why cares about music to-night? Oh, why doesn't he remember he's a man and not a music-lover?"

"Don't you think we ought to forgive them for being sentimental?" asked George softly. What sweet, childlike lips she had! What would she say if he suddenly caught her to him and kissed them with all the fervor of his soul. How much longer would he be able to refrain from doing that?"

"I do forgive them," said Angela boldly. "To-night—to-night I could forgive any one," she murmured.

George stopped short.

"What did you say?" he asked hopefully.

"Nothing," said Angela.

"I—thought so!" he replied. Then suddenly courage flowed to him. "Aren't you a little tired of walking? I'm sure you are. Besides, I'd love to hear you play. I have a friend who has a studio that has a piano in it. A beautiful instrument! Such action, such tone! Er—let's go!"

Her little hand fluttered trustfully to his arm.

"Yes, let's," said Angela. She laughed in a way that caused his heart to melt. Great Beethoven, but she was lovely.

As they marched forward under the streaming lights of Fifth Avenue, George felt he was being led to Paradise.

At the Caroline Club Phyllis had achieved the marvellous clarity of brain that always came to her with a fifth drink. She knew at last what she wanted to do with her life.

The dark young man with the smouldering eyes instinctively seized this psychological moment. His fingers burned upon her arm.

T. T.

"Phyllis!" he cried. "You must say yes, now, instantly and forever. You must say yes!"

Phyllis' gray eyes smouldered back into his.

"Yes," she said, "I'll go with you. Anywhere and forever. I am yours."

His eyes blazed with the mad fires of love.

"Come with me, now!" he whispered hoarsely.

Phyllis had another drink. Since it did not change her decision she felt she had decided correctly.

"Forever and ever!" she cried.

## V

George led Angela to the house lately remodeled from early American to antique Italian. Up one flight, two, three, they marched. Angela laughed gently to herself. Two hours before she had fled the house in loneliness and despair. What a triumphal return!

George led her to the door of Cyril Wade's studio. He tried the door with a confident smile. The smile faded. The door was locked. He rang the bell, he fought with the knob. He heard faint movings about in the room behind the door. His heart sank. It was clear that Cyril was entertaining select company. He didn't want any more company. He must be entertaining a little romance of his own. George turned to Angela helplessly.

"I'm afraid we can't get in!" he said in dejection. "I guess we'll have to go back to Fifth Avenue."

Angela blushed divinely.

"No, we won't," she said. "I happen to live right next door to your friend, Mr. Wade. Right here." She indicated the door of her studio. "Won't you come in?" she asked softly.

George followed her as gingerly as though there were naked swords underfoot. He still thought he was dreaming. He was sure he was dreaming.

"Won't you sit down?" invited Angela.

He sat down. She sat down. They looked at each other. Both blushed happily. Then George seized control of the situation.

"Nice little place you have," he remarked. "And what a beautiful piano!"

"Would you care to hear something?" asked Angela politely.

"I should love it!" said George ardently.

Angela seated herself at the studio-grand. She played. George felt he was undergoing a transition into the heavens. Oh, what divine music! Oh, what a divine dimple! Oh, what divine lips! He rose as in a trance. He found himself at her side. Her hands faltered upon the keys. Her heart stopped and so did the music.

Silence. Then George leaned over and kissed those sweet, childlike lips.

"Oh, you mustn't," said Angela.

"I know," said George, and he kissed her again.

"This is dreadful, we don't know each other," said Angela.

"I know it," said George, and he kissed her again.

She urged him away. She closed her eyes in shame.

"Oh, what will you think of me?" she asked.

"Oh, if I could only tell you!" he said and kissed her again. With a little sigh she relaxed against him. He was caught up in a whirling silence. And then, at the height of this strangely-found happiness came the icy stab of conscience. What was he doing? He was the husband of a red-headed lady with whom he lived in a suburban town. He had no right to do this. He must stop this madness.

He did stop it. Angela gazed at him in hurt surprise. Then she seated herself again. George sat down too. They looked at each other and blushed unhappily. They were back where they had started. Silence.

Angela felt she would go mad if she did not say something.

"Let's go out on the balcony and see the—er—view," she invited.

That didn't sound dangerous. He went with her to the little iron balcony that lay between Angela's studio and Cyril Wade's. Before them stretched a panorama of back-yards. Of windows of houses. Of clothes-poles. But to George it was the most beautiful view he had ever seen. The back-yards were mystic gardens. The windows were enchanted golden eyes. The clothes-poles were trees of fairyland.

"Interesting, isn't it?" breathed Angela.

"Fascinating!" declared George, taking her hand.

For a full minute he thrilled with the touch of her soft little hand. Then he dropped it. For again his conscience had shocked him with the reminder that he was married to a red-headed lady in a respectable suburban town. And yet, he knew that this girl he had met to-night was really his soul-mate, the woman whom destiny had appointed to be his.

But—still he was Phyllis' husband! He stared at the view before him. And now he saw no enchanted gardens, no fairy trees. Only gaunt clothes-poles and dirty back-yards. He sighed. And then he started.

From the window of Cyril Wade's studio floated a feminine voice. It was high-pitched and strangely familiar to George.

"Oh, Cyril, I'm so afraid. My husband—!"

The deep voice of Cyril answered, pleading:

"How can you think of your husband—now!"

George seized at the nearest support. It was Angela's hand. He clutched it convulsively. Could that be Phyllis? It was her voice—undoubtedly. Phyllis, his wife! Great Heavens!

Again the feminine voice came from Cyril Wade's open window. High-pitched, familiar, more familiar than ever.

"You know I love you, or I would never have come here to-night," she protested.

"Then let's forget everything but our love!" urged Cyril.

Apparently they did, for a deep rich silence followed.

George stared in horror. So this was why Phyllis had insisted on going to New York to-night! Without

scruples she had gone to the studio of his friend. While he, her husband, was afraid to hold the hand of the girl his heart had discovered to-night. Phyllis, his wife, was — was forgetting everything but love, love for another man! What a fool he was!

And then wild relief surged through him. Now he realized that since Phyllis and Cyril loved each other he was a free man. Phyllis had voluntarily cut the bonds between them. He was free—to do anything he wished!

Cyril's voice boomed incautiously from the window.

"Now you must promise never to go back to your husband," he demanded. "You must stay here!"

And then Phyllis' voice: "I'll stay with you forever!"

Again silence obligingly descended upon them.

George commenced to laugh so wildly that Angela looked up in astonishment.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

"Let's go inside. I want to tell you something," he said.

They went. He took both her hands.

"I've made a discovery," said George hoarsely. "I love you—I love you—I love you! You beautiful, beautiful child, I love you! And you must love me. Please love me!"

"Oh, I don't know," said Angela. Her face burned. "I'm so bewildered, so excited, so muddled. I don't know what to think. I don't know what to do. But somehow—somehow I'm terribly, terribly happy!"

"You angel!" cried George.

And then he took her gently into his arms and his lips touched her golden head, her soft cheeks, the dimple of her chin—her sweet lips.

## VI

Of course when morning came they decided to breakfast together. What else could they do? While Angela was making the coffee George rushed out for flowers for the breakfast-table.

He was humming a tuneless little tune as he closed the door behind him. A fraction of a second later he stopped humming. For Cyril Wade was coming out of his studio and was staring at George in great amazement. Then he grinned and stuck out his hand to George friendlywise.

"Well, well, what are you doing here?" he asked jovially.

George was bewildered. How should he act? As an injured husband it was his duty to be stern and tragic towards the man who had stolen away his wife's love. But as a man who had been freed at just the right moment of a wife who stood in the way of his new-found happiness, he could feel only the deepest gratitude towards Cyril.

"What am I doing here?" repeated George. "Er—er—nothing," he added inanely.

"Oh, was that you scratching at my door last night?" asked Cyril with a brazen laugh.

That laugh changed George from a happy lover to an outraged husband.

"Now look here, Cyril," he cried angrily, "you needn't laugh at me like that. I don't like it. I know all about you and Phyllis—everything! I was on the balcony of the next studio last

night and overheard you and Phyllis. Of course, I respect your overwhelming love for her. That is why I didn't interrupt. But I'm not going to stand in your way. You may take whatever steps you think necessary. I will not fight you. She's yours!"

"What are you talking about, you idiot?" demanded Cyril, amazement flashing in his blue eyes.

"About you and Phyllis last night. I know all!" cried George majestically.

Cyril staggered in shock.

"Phyllis!" he cried. "Why, I haven't seen Phyllis for a month!"

George sneered.

"But I tell you I haven't seen her!" cried Cyril.

"Do you mean to deny that you were having a romantic scene with a woman in your studio last night?" asked George loftily.

"I don't deny it," said Cyril coolly. "And I don't deny that she is somebody's wife—but not yours, my dear boy."

"Do you mean to tell me I don't know my own wife's voice when I hear it?" asked George scornfully.

Cyril looked thoughtfully.

"Yes, now that you mention it, this lady's voice is high-pitched, something like Phyllis', but the resemblance ends there," he said.

George laid a friendly hand upon Cyril's arm.

"Look here," he said conciliatingly. "Don't trouble to lie about it. I know you and Phyllis love each other and I want you to be happy together. I won't stand in your way. So—why deny it?"

"You damned imbecile!" cried Cyril. "Why do you insist on presenting me with your wife? I don't want your wife. I'm in love with somebody else's wife!"

There was such earnestness in his tone that George was shaken.

"But—that voice!" he cried. "If that wasn't Phyllis' voice—I was sure it was her voice—that is, almost sure—" he faltered.

"Well," said Cyril, "I'd gladly take you in and introduce you to the lady to show you how wrong you are in thinking she is Phyllis. But it would be embarrassing to her, so we won't consider it. But why don't you call up your home and find out for yourself where your wife was last night?"

"But — I'm sure it was Phyllis' voice I heard talking to you last night. Good Heavens, it's got to be Phyllis!" he yelled in agony.

The yell brought immediate results. Simultaneously the doors of both Cyril's and Angela's studios flew open. Angela's head appeared inquiringly. And from Cyril's door a brunette stared out. George stared at her. The brunette was most certainly not Phyllis.

The next moment the two ladies spied each other. The doors were immediately banged shut.

"Well, do you believe me now?" asked Cyril.

"Good Heavens!" groaned George, his heart sinking. "I was certain it was Phyllis with you. And because I thought she was leaving me for good, I went ahead and—and— And now it seems I had no right to act like a free man. I had no right to promise

Angela that I would marry her—soon. What can I do?"

"Nothing I can suggest," said Cyril, and he nonchalantly walked down the stairs.

George looked in agony toward Angela's door. In anguish he walked away from it. He could no longer enter. He was not a free man as he had fondly imagined. Too clearly he saw now that his own secret desire to be free to make love to Angela had made him mistake the voice of Cyril's brunette for Phyllis' voice.

But how could he go back and tell Angela of his dreadful mistake? He couldn't. Swiftly George descended the steps and ran out of the building. His life was ruined. So was Angela's. His happiness was shattered. He had basely deceived the most lovely and innocent girl on earth.

But he clung to a last futile hope. It simply must have been Phyllis' voice he had heard despite the evidence to the contrary. He must call up his home and find out where she had been.

He called up. The maid's voice answered:

"Yes, Mr. Ellicott. Mrs. Ellicott came home last night."

George groaned. Good-by forever, sweet Angela!

The maid's voice went on:

"Mrs. Ellicott came home last night and packed her things. Then she went off with a young man in a car. She left a note for you, Mr. Ellicott."

"Read it!" gasped George.

The maid read in a polite monotone:

"Sorry you aren't home to give us your blessing. I'm going off with Mervin Pitt. I can't resist his smouldering eyes any longer. Will divorce you in Paris. Phyllis."

"Hurray!" cried George, flinging down the receiver. He rushed back to the studio.

He found Angela in tears.

"Darling, what's the matter?" he cried.

"You—you were away fifteen minutes!" she wailed. "And you said you'd only be gone ten minutes. I—I missed you terribly. And—where are the flowers. And why were you arguing with that man outside?"

George threw his arms around her with the abandon of a truly free man. She didn't want to let him out of her sight for even fifteen minutes! That was real love!

"There's only one answer to all your questions," he cried. "Last night I only thought I had the right to love you. I really didn't have the right, but I kissed you, anyhow, only kissed you, though we sat up all night and talked of the miracle of love! Now—now I have the right to love you. Please, please love me, Angela!"

How could she resist him?

SOME women marry for love—others to have a rest from it.

*Cocktails, kisses and pajamas reigned supreme—until Mamma opened the door!*

# THE ENFANT TERRIBLE

## *A Two-Part Story*

### *By* ARTHUR T. MUNYAN

PART ONE

JACQUELINE MINTURN catfooted from one rug to another until she reached the door of the solarium. Nobody had said anything to her about not going out there this evening.

Jacqueline had not made a sound, and there wasn't a trace of sound coming from the shadowy recess of the porch swing. But it appeared that the solarium was not, like the rest of the house, deserted and lonely. Kathleen, Jacqueline's older sister, must have brought Carter Hollis out here, because here they were, after all, and arranged in a joyous embrace.

"The well-known gimme signs," Jacqueline mused. "Though I'm sure I can't imagine what she wants now."

She continued to survey the pair in the swing with mixed emotions. Kathleen's eyes were closed, naturally enough no doubt, and Carter's back was turned, so that neither of the two was aware of an audience. Jacqueline sighed. It seemed unfair. Just because Kathleen was twenty and she was seventeen, there was Kathleen and here was she.

All conceit aside, thought Jacqueline, an artful Nature when it made Kathleen had experimented with perfection—and had achieved it three years later in none other than herself. Kathleen had fair-colored hair; her own was palest gold. Kathleen's eyes were blue, but not so long—and mysterious—as her own. And in the matter of legs, which was an important matter surely, Kathleen's had not, Jacqueline reflected, either the symmetry or the proportion of hers. Legs, thought Jacqueline, either have a certain vivacity or they haven't; her own were some that had it and Kathleen's were some that hadn't. All prejudice aside.

It seemed unfair, thought Jacqueline, as she continued to study the rapt, wrapt couple before her, that a mere matter of three years should offset all other data. And yet here was she, and *there* was Kathleen. And until Kathleen married Carter or someone it was all arranged by a family conspiracy that *she* was to remain seventeen.

Still those two enraptured idiots didn't know she was standing here watching them. Jacqueline smiled. A human existence could hardly be more dull and drab than hers, and yet there came an amusing moment or two, now and then. . . .

"Whoop-ee!" she announced herself.

The pair in the swing flew apart in consternation. They had the air of such abject guilt, in fact, that Jacqueline found herself wondering. Then she giggled; they looked so silly, blinking there!

"It's the pest!" Kathleen deigned to speak only to Carter, but she shot a venomous glance toward Jaqueline.

Carter brought it off rather well; he grinned. By contrast, Kathleen's devastating dignity went rather flat. "Go away," Kathleen ordered. "We're talking, and we don't wish to be disturbed."

That was too delicious to pass. Jacqueline assumed her most guileless expression. "Why, Kathleen Lilly Minturn, you were not, either! I didn't hear a sound that sounded like anyone talking. I naturally supposed, of course, nobody was out here. I wouldn't have interrupted for the world!"

"Impudence," Kathleen explained to Carter. "I'll call upstairs and ask Mother to chain her up. Mercy! It's long past her bedtime anyhow!"

"Mother's at a concert," Jacqueline told her. "Nobody knows it any bet-better than you do," meaningfully.

Kathleen altered her tone to the cloyingly sweet intonation she might use toward a child. "Really, dear, you ought to be in bed. If Mother finds you up, you know. . . Will you run along now, and I'll come up in a few minutes and hear you say your prayers?"

"Prayers!" loftily. "I've only got one, and you can hear it from where you're sitting. I hope you marry an Armenian next week."

"Why an Armenian?" Carter put in. Kathleen would not have asked the question, and was not pleased with Carter either.

"So they can go live in Armenia, stoopid."

Carter sent an aside to Kathleen. "Our little Jacque has a mean tongue, hasn't she?"

Little Jacque caught him up. "What do you know about tongues, my dear fellow? I could tell you more about tongues in five minutes than—than my worldly sister told you in the last half hour! Mine's the color of rose madder, and a rose madder tongue, my little man, is the deadliest type of beauty known to connoisseurs."

"Fancy that, though!" But his derisive grin had interest and admiration in it.

"Jacqueline!"

"Yes, dar-ling."

"If you don't run away this instant you're going to be very sorry." Kathleen had stood for the limit.

"Well, I've been trying to break away for the last five minutes, and you keep calling me back, f'r heaven's sake. It's no thrill to me to stand here, bored to tears, trying to keep up both ends of a conversation. I only came out here by mistake anyhow."

"You'll find it was the worst mistake you've made in a long time if you don't hurry up and cover it!"

"Gosh! I'm going!" — Jacqueline.

Jacque made a deep footlight curtsy. "Good evening, mays ongfongs! And if you ever crave some serious conversation with someone, Carter, drop around when my talented sister is out having her piccolo lesson, and we'll talk about the Descent of Man."

Without troubling him for a reply, Jacque made a blithe exit. Once out of their sight she began to lose some of her jauntiness, and by the time she reached the library she was sweetly pensive.

She must be crazy! That skirmish with Kathleen had been fun while it lasted, but it was pointless, and foolhardy. For one thing, Jacque knew perfectly well that it was to her interest to let Kathleen have every chance with Carter. The sooner Kathleen was engaged, the sooner she herself would be footfree. That little-girl fiction about her would disappear quickly enough, once Kathleen was fixed.

She snickered softly, patting Jerry, the almost-human Irish terrier. If she could get Carter to herself just once, for twenty minutes, it would take him a year after that experience to make up his mind to marry Kathleen. But what of it? Or all the more reason, even, to leave Carter alone. She wanted him to marry Kathleen, didn't she?

"Don't I?" she demanded truculently of Jerry.

Jerry saw no reason in the world why Carter wasn't good enough for Kathleen, and no better. Then he sat up, crossed his forepaws on Jacque's wrist, and looked meritorious.

"Certainly Carter Hollis is quite a mediocre person," she told Jerry.

But this harrying of Kathleen was beginning to look like a mistake. In the Minturn family, the end in life was Success, and the unpardonable sin was the failure of any member of the family to stand behind the current project. At the moment, Kathleen's matrimonial success had official right of way. In regard to this venture Jacque's mere existence was viewed as a more or less criminal piece of discord. And an active intrusion on Kathleen's affairs was treachery certain to be taken to the highest court.

Mrs. Minturn came in from her concert a little after eleven, looking very beautiful and wonderful, thought Jacque, in her shimmering evening wrap. She was like an assured and statuesque Kathleen.

"How does it happen you're still up, darling?" she smiled at Jacque, laying programs and reticule on the table.

That was what Jacque wondered. It would have been more discreet to have disappeared earlier. "Just going to bed now," Jacque promised and rose. Too late.

"Wait a minute," said Kathleen ominously from the door. Carter, it appeared, had timed his departure.

Jacque sank back into her chair. "I know," airily. "Carter sprang it tonight, and you're breaking the news to us while it's hot." She watched her mother's interrogative look flicker to Kathleen, who did not condescend a reply. Jacque suspected herself of saying the wrong thing.

"Mother," Kathleen wailed, "something has got to be done about this child. Men simply won't come to a

house where there's such a pest about."

"Lemme ask some and see how many come!" Jacque suggested.

"Sh!" Mrs. Minturn, already aware of all but the details, gave Kathleen the floor. "Well, dear?"

"To-night," Kathleen charged, "she's been bothering Carter and me. She was just as impudent as she could be. And she came snooping out on the porch just at the *very instant* Carter kissed me."

"Ow-oooo-o-o—o!" The clarion note came from Jerry. There was a secret understanding between Jacque and the terrier; at a certain invisible prompting from her, Jerry could always be made to emit that shocked howl.

"And I don't blame him!" Jacque assured her mother. "Jerry has a sense of humor up to a certain point, but that 'very instant' thing got him in the pit of the tummy. *Naturally,* I interrupted; Carter had been smothering her for forty-five minutes without rising for air. . . ."

Mrs. Minturn looked worried. Offenses seemed to be rampant in so many quarters that it was hard to know where to dispense justice.

"Hush, Jacqueline!" sternly. "Kathleen, he *kissed* you!" Mrs. Minturn preferred to close her eyes to that form of looseness; it annoyed her to have the flagrant reality flaunted in her face now. Successful people always consider it tactless to disclose methods.

"Oh, mother!" impatiently. "Don't pretend girls don't kiss their fiancés!" Then, as the last word met question in her mother's look: "Well, he would be my fiancé by now if this child weren't everlastingly under foot, insulting my guests."

The chasm was bridged, and the case was getting down to points. Mrs. Minturn fixed her younger daughter with an august stare. She was about to exert her talent for summary justice.

"So you insulted Carter, Jacqueline!"

Mother, nobody could do that! Here's what happened: I didn't hear a sound, so I walked right out on the porch, looking for a book—"

"A book!" Kathleen sniffed. "That doesn't even *sound* plausible."

"—a book of cigarette papers. And—"

"Cigarette papers!" from Mrs. Minturn, aghast. "You know I've forbidden you to smoke cigarettes, Jacqueline!"

"Um-hm," agreed Jacque. "Well, 'slong as I roll 'em myself, mother, you needn't worry about me. Anyhow, I was looking for the papers, and what should I find but old Carter—necking—"

"Don't be vulgar!" put in Kathleen.

"And it seemed to me," Jacque hazarded, "that I happened along just in the nick. I certainly saved Kathleen from strangulation if not worse and—"

*"Jacqueline!* That will do!"

"What happened," Kathleen summed up, "is that she intruded in the most ill-bred way, as she always does, and was ve-ry insolent, that I was mortified at having such a sister, and she tried to date Carter in a perfectly

scandalous way right in front of me."

"The trouble with you," Jacque advised glibly, "is that you blame everyone else in creation when you can't take old Carter over the hurdles, my gosh! If I wanted him you could sit in the same swing with us and sing Christmas carols and it wouldn't worry me any, and he wouldn't even hear you. That's telling you off!"

"All right!" Mrs. Minturn broke in curtly. "Jacqueline, there'll be a special nine-o'clock curfew for you from to-morrow on. In a fortnight we'll see if you've improved. Your allowance stops in the meantime. And you're to apologize to Kathleen in the morning." She sighed and turned toward the door.

"Why not just shoot me, mother?" abjectly. "What are the crimes supposed to be to match all those sentences?"

"Cigarettes. Using vulgar language. And—" Mrs. Minturn paused for the graceful phrase. It was never suggested that Jacque was a rival of Kathleen's; no, merely she was too young to mingle in any way with Kathleen's set. "And contumacious conduct," Mrs. Minturn finished.

"I don't even know what the words mean," Jacque said ruefully. "But in a frame-up like this, I don't suppose I'm even allowed to know. Oh, shucks! Anyhow," more brightly, "I've got a high and wide date for Saturday night and—"

Her mother turned at the door. "Break it," she ordered calmly. "That is, unless the boy—it's a date with a boy, I presume?—unless he'll agree to leave before the party is over and get you home by nine."

Jacque slumped to a horizontal position and studied her mother's face. The impassive features gave her no clue as to how anyone could say anything so idiotic. Nine o'clock! "Mother, I'm sure I don't know what the etiquette is for leaving a party before anyone has got there! Twelve to one, now. . . ."

"I agree with you. You'd better break the engagement. Write a little note. . . ."

"I think," Kathleen offered, "that you'd better write it, mother. I know you're busy, but there's no telling what she'd write. She'd probably make us all ridiculous, if she could."

"I couldn't make *you* look ridiculous!" Jacque flared. "Your own monkey stuff and that chase-me line of yours is all you need."

"Yes, I'll write it," Mrs. Minturn replied. "Is that understood, Jacqueline?"

"I'm not saying another word!" solemnly. "Every time I open my mouth I get another kick in the teeth. I'm through! Only I do think, mother, that you at least could let me break that date my own way. I've got my own ways of doing things. If I just told Jimmy the next day that I slept up the date it would be perfectly smack with everybody."

"So it's Jimmy Packard. I'll write him a note, Jacqueline, if you'll kindly allow me to use *my* judgment in this. . . . It isn't necessary for you to be untruthful."

"Well, mother, if I'm going to step

into Kathleen's tracks after she's raffled off I've got to begin lying some time, haven't I?"

"That will *do!*" said Mrs. Minturn with finality, and sailed out of the room to announce that verdict had been passed.

Kathleen smiled that peculiar, maddening, virtuous smile of hers, lingering in the room for a moment to enjoy the full value of her triumph.

"Well," Jacque took her up, as soon as her mother was safely out of range. "you've gotta admit that I hooked you with a mean left a few times in the last round." With that she ran out the famous rose madder tongue an inch and a half and lifted her eyebrows.

"You'll improve," suavely, "with mother's assistance and a few helpful hints from me."

"Yeah? Well, anyhow, I'm carrying all the punishment the law allows me, so—"

"Oh, no, you're not. In fact, I'm thinking of suggesting Camp Narcissus for you. It's a splendid place; the discipline is so good there. They have wand exercises, and basketry, and tatting there, and a self-improvement hour every day before breakfast. Imogene Pratt goes there every summer."

"She'd better not be there on the unlucky day I arrive!"

"Oh, you'd be great friends at the end of the summer."

"All right!" Jacque rose by way of cutting short Kathleen's enjoyable gloats. "They'd better put in a padded cell at Camp Narcissus if they want to keep me there." After all, a cool and dignified silence was the surest weapon against Kathleen. So she merely said: "And let me tell you something! When I get my vendetta on the way you'll hope to die. I may be young and unspoiled, but I've got ingenuity in its most diabolical form, and the things I'll do to you will be things you won't tell mother or anybody else about. Curl up your hair around that one, Mehitable, and get lots of rest to-night, because to-morrow's going to be a hard day."

"Nightie-night," said Kathleen, but a little thoughtfully.

In spite of insults and slurs, it appeared, Carter Hollis was not staying noticeably away from the Minturn house. He was back again, in fact, the very next evening.

Jacque sat alone in her own room reading a magazine with its name in red letters on a white cover which bore the picture of a girl. It was the magazine her mother had not bought for her that very afternoon. At Jacque's feet snoozed Jerry.

Downstairs, Kathleen was accompanying herself at the piano as she sang to give Carter an inkling of how wonderful it would be to have a wife talented as well as beautiful. It was half after eight.

Jacque rose and wandered into Kathleen's bedroom where she pensively studied a photograph of Carter on the dressing-table. He had a smooth, noble brow, gray eyes, crisp dark hair, and lips of a clean-cut firmness that roused Jacque to imaginative thought. Her attention flickered after a time, however, to Kathleen's perfume atomizer.

Unscrewing the top of this, Jacque emptied its contents of *Muguet de Coty* —which expressed ethereally the shy sweetness of Kathleen's own nature— into a small vial. Robbery, however, was not her intention. From another vial she conscientiously refilled the atomizer.

The perfume which she had substituted was something very nice that she had picked up at the ten-cent store that afternoon. It had more decided charm and permanence than Muguet. Just how it compared in price, Jacque was uncertain, but if anyone wanted to be snobbish about it, it would be safe to say that Fleurissima cost at least a dollar-twenty a pound. It was exceptionally potent stuff.

At the moment, Jacque did not care to try it herself, but she sprayed a dash of it over Jerry and agreed with him that as between Fleurissima and *naturel parfum de chin* which Jerry's shaggy coat usually bore there was no comparison. As Jacque sauntered out of her sister's room again, the strains of Indian love lyrics reached her ears.

Kathleen was singing about "Pale Hands I Loved." This charming lyric would have seemed, to judge from its context, to be the plaint of a young lover over a maiden, particularly the maiden's hands. Kathleen, to sing it, had to take the dual and poignant rôle of being both the pale lover and the pale hands. It was very moving.

Jacque started slowly down the stairs, summoning Jerry to come along for companionship. The words of the song reached her in Kathleen's sweet mezzo:

*"Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar,*
*Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell?*
*Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway, far*
*Before you agonize them in farewell?*
*Before you ago—"*

Kathleen's sweet voice gracefully soared to a middling high D as Jerry and Jacqueline entered the music-room. Jerry stopped in his tracks.

A wild light came into his brown eyes. He lowered his longish head nearly to the floor, while his mouth hung open, dripping a little.

"Ow-wow!" he vocalized. "Ow-oooo-o-o-ooo!" He took it chromatically, but he made the grade.

"O-o-o-o-o-o . . ." right on the high D. His nose pointed straight toward the zenith, and his eyes rolled sidelong to show agonized glints of white.

The music stopped abruptly. Jacque sent a deprecatory glance toward Kathleen and Carter who sat side by side on the piano bench. Kathleen's face betrayed suppressed rage. Carter's grin disappeared, supplanted by an expression of polite regret. Jacque sank to her knees beside the dog, one arm about him.

"Ow-wow-wow-wow," mourned Jerry in a tremulous minor. The point was that once he had been set off it required some fifteen minutes of intermittent howls to readjust the delicate balance of his hearing. He sent a pitiful gaze toward Kathleen and gradually lowered his head.

Jacque looked up and caught Carter's eye. "Of course, I love hearing my talented sister sing," she explained, "but Jerry loathes it. It kinda tortures him, you know?"

Carter gulped and became tactful. "I think he loves it," he assured Kathleen. "He just isn't able to show that he loves it in the most fortunate way, that's all."

Kathleen rewarded him with a withering glance.

"Sorry, darling," Jacque murmured. Her manner was a nice blend of sisterly sympathy toward Kathleen and sweet, understanding pity toward Jerry. "I'll shoot him out right away."

With the virtuous air of one doing the right and proper thing, she hurried through the music-room with Jerry at her heels and deftly ejected him from the house via the front door. She listened there for an instant until she heard his quavering wail.

For the next fifteen minutes Jerry would proclaim to passers-by and neighbors that Kathleen's singing, so far as he for one was concerned, was a "kinda torture." Nobody but Kathleen knew that any better than did Jacqueline.

Jacque was pleased with Jerry as an ally; he could not have behaved better if he had been rehearsed. Neither could she; she was pleased with herself. And she had a water-tight vindication! She had passed through the music-room as the only lane to the front door. Jerry was always at her heel; could she help that? And he always howled with pain when Kathleen sang; could she or anyone else prevent him from that?

Smiling enigmatically, she returned to the music-room and was not surprised to find Carter Hollis alone there. Kathleen had, Jacque concluded, gone upstairs to repair a complexion partially wrecked by wrath.

Jacque had no real plan for this situation, but the five or ten minutes leeway ought to be good for something. If Kathleen used the spray charged with Fleurissima the interval before she came back might be even longer.

Jacque stood in the center of the floor and looked Carter up and down with the air of one wondering just what he might be good for. Then she let her face show him that she had reached a conclusion.

"How about lending me ten dollars on a ninety-nine-year lease?" she inquired.

Carter made no visible plunge into his pockets. "What's the matter? The Minturn family in straits?" he asked.

"Aren't we, though! Just barely keeping up a front. They had to snap off my allowance yesterday to keep my talented sister in singing lessons!"

"I'm shocked to hear it!" he assured her.

"Well, what I'd like to know is was the shock big enough to jar you loose from ten dollars? Or shall I weep and tell you all the sordid details about how my beautiful sister has had to come down to ten-cent store perfume?"

"You'd better spare me that. Just tell me if this is the truth that your allowance is off."

"Honest-to-God, Carter! Spent my last dime this afternoon on—on a little present for Kathleen."

Carter drew out a card case. "Parts of it sound pretty original," he commented. "But if you want the ten, who am I to refuse anyone with a rose

madder tongue?" He held out a crisp bill, gold on one side and gray-green on the other.

"Thanks," loftily. "That'll help a lot. That is, if I don't have to pay off the servants with it." With a shy gesture she slipped the bill into the top of her stocking and noted that Carter did not regard her wholly as an infant.

The evening was turning out rather well, considering. In the few moments remaining there must be some other little thing she could do to tint the drabness of living.

"By the way," she informed him, "this is a secret. And you needn't think that this trifling favor gives you any privileges with me. You'll have your reward in heaven, I dawsay."

"I didn't raise the question that I recall."

"Why, even at auction at a charity ball once a kiss from me went for eleven dollars and a quarter. A kiss with a heavy back-spin on it, so you see . . ."

Carter produced a dollar and a quarter. "Well, if you want to let another one go at the same bid, I'll put up the extra margin. Never mind the backspin; let it sail."

Jacque took three very long and very nonchalant strides to stop motionless before Carter, her lips about four inches below, and tilted toward, his. Carter laughed and caught her up. Her toes dangled four inches above the floor, and she closed her eyes on a soaring sensation. In the dark she managed to get the curve of her arm about his neck and hold on more securely.

She had supposed that kissing old Carter would be just like kissing anyone else. In that she was just as far wrong as she very well could have been. The touch of his lips almost scared her. It went so far beyond rousing alarming and unexpected emotions that it roused some she didn't know she had. Her toes, reaching wildly for the floor, tingled. She tried to open her eyes and couldn't. The room went round like a ferris wheel.

She thought she heard a noise in the next room, behind Carter's back. By an effort she opened her right eye a little and looked over his shoulder. Through the haze made by her lashes she saw Kathleen, with consternation written on her features. Jacque closed her eye again.

Suddenly she was standing on the floor again. Turning her head very slowly, with the feeling that too sudden a glimpse of Kathleen's face would be too great a shock, she was amazed to see only emptiness. Kathleen had faded!

"Psst!" she addressed Carter. At the same time she stabbed the air in the direction of the door with her right thumb and winked at him with her left eye. "Cheese it!"

In the same time her mind figured the thing out. Kathleen would pretend not to have seen, rather than accept the humiliation of admitting that she had seen. Probably she was unaware that Jacque had seen her. It was working out too beautifully!

Carter was taking no particular notice of her warning. He was looking

at her with distinct signs of interest in his face. He was—she tried hard to think of the word to express it— "intrigued."

"Did you ever kiss a man before?" he demanded.

Jacque scanned his expression. "If you don't know the answer to that one," she announced at last, "it wouldn't be any use my trying to tell you."

"There's an awful difference," he pointed out, "between what I hear about you and the things I get first hand. Don't blame me for being puzzled by you."

"My dear fellow, I aim to puzzle 'em."

"How old are you, anyhow?"

"Oh, dear me! What a *gauche* question! Really, Carter, one doesn't ask it in our sphere, does one? Ask my ingenious sister and get one answer; ask the last man I kissed and get another. Variety is the spice of life."

"You don't talk like the mere child you're supposed to be. So you won't tell me your answer?"

"I'm as old," she computed aloud, "as Cleopatra was at my age. Listen! I hear my sister's dainty slippers on the stair."

Still he ignored her cautioning sign. "Shall you be at the dance Saturday evening?"

"Me? No, I hardly think so. Dancing has begun to pall of late years. I find the pleasure—a little callow. I doubt very much if I shall look in at the dance at all this Saturday.

"Well . . ." She changed the subject most casually. "I'm sure my sister will be down any moment," raising her voice. "She likes to leave me with her men callers for a few minutes now and then, you know. She puts so much faith in my judgment of men. Yes. Oh, hello, darling!"

Kathleen entered the room with a self-conscious air of serenity.

"Will you excuse me, dear?" Jacque asked her sweetly. "I rather think I'll retire early to-night. Good night, Carter."

Whistling at the back door for Jerry, she brought him back from the pursuit of a fence-climbing feline and went upstairs to her own room and thoughts.

"Old darling! You deserve a cat or two!" Her fingers stroked the tangle of hair above Jerry's eyes.

The terrier rolled his glance toward her without moving his head away from the caressing hand. His mouth opened with a glint of teeth and a palpitation of the long tongue so much like a laugh that it must have been one.

Jacque reviewed events in her mind. Considering the narrow scope of her evening, she had done rather well, she had to admit. First, she had paid off Kathleen for that note to Jimmy Packard; Kathleen, in future, would be slower to counsel such steps. Then, she had mitigated the curse, for the time at least, of being without an allowance. That eleven and a quarter helped! Last of all, she had requited herself for the loss of the dance on Saturday, and she could not feel cheated at the break she had got. Compared with a dance with Jimmy Packard, this evening's entertainment ranked high.

All in all, she felt that Kathleen must be having some doubts as to the value

of having an enemy. There was one thing, however, that Jacque was not quite able to understand.

She had piqued Carter's interest in herself. She had robbed Kathleen of some of the glamor, certainly, she had for the man. But weren't those rather fool things to have done? She'd never get Kathleen married off to Carter by such tactics! What was she thinking of!

Jacqueline drove downtown the next morning to do some shopping. There was nothing in particular which she wanted, but there was money that had to be spent. It occurred to her presently that while she did have a stock of Muguet, she needed cosmetics.

In a department store she bought some rouge of an absolutely new shade. The girl who sold it claimed that it was complexion-colored. It looked as if it might do.

The girl behind the counter and a colleague were discussing a mutual friend.

"She ain't got no permanent wave," said the girl.

"No? I thought she did."

"No. It's only natchrul," contemptuously.

"Gee, I thought that wave stood her sixty berries sure."

"No. It's just natchrul. Never had nothing done to it."

It was a critical world, and one in which a girl had to struggle endlessly to maintain any mystery and charm. Jacque studied a large variety of lipsticks with great care, inspecting them for shade and aroma, estimating their probable flavor, and reading the colorful descriptive matter on the label of each. *Pomade Melisande* had a delicate coral color and an interesting fragrance.

"Will it rub off?" Jacque wished to know.

The girl inspected it to see whether it was a brand which rubbed off. "It will," she replied, "and then again it won't, if you get me."

"I don't know that I do. . . ."

"Well, it's waterproof and alcohol-proof, see? It don't run or blur. It—it only comes off when you maybe, now, want it to. You see, it's flavored with a special extract that's kind of a habit-formin' drug."

"Ah," Jacque nodded. "And if a man should somehow happen to kiss me through this stuff he'd just naturally travel in a circle forever after, hm?"

"That's it exactly."

"Well," Jacque sighed. "Drugging 'em is kinda unnecessary in my case, but I'll take it anyhow. You haven't got any with a reverse English on it, have you?"

"How's that?"

"I mean something they'd never come back to." It was such a pretty thought as a present for Kathleen. "Something with a little garlic put in taste side out."

"No," said the girl. "I don't remember as we've had no call for that kind."

"I suppose not," Jacque sighed, thanking the girl.

She had spent a dollar and a quarter for rouge and *Pomade Melisande*. Easy come, easy go. It now occurred to her that it would be just as well to hold the

golden ten for some major operation. It was the only fund that she could count on positively for a fortnight to come.

Returning home she found Kathleen lunching alone. Her mother, it seemed, was at a committee luncheon.

"You're late again," Kathleen informed her.

"Um-hm? Well, as long as you got under the wire, you needn't worry about me. What's the program?"

"Lamb chops."

"Good! Where's Jerry? I'm gonna give him a bone to polish out of my chop."

"You'd better polish it yourself. He's not here."

"He will be as soon as he knows I've got back." Jacque pursed her lips and whistled. "Oh, Jer-ree!"

Kathleen frowned delicately. "Do stop that vulgar whistling! He's not here, I've told you."

"Where is he, then?"

"I sent him to the kennels this morning," quietly.

"The kennels! That place where he almost died when he was there before?"

"That's the place. He didn't almost die, though. He was simply clowning. And you needn't act put out about it. He's my dog and I can send him there if I like."

Jacque was going hot and cold by turns, her mind playing with the idea of Jerry's exile without fully grasping it. Technically, Jerry did belong to Kathleen; he had been a birthday present four or five years before. In an inhuman and legal sense, the right to send him away to a dog's home was hers. But in all equity Jerry belonged to Jacqueline.

"What's the idea of this?" Jacque demanded, still too puzzled to be entirely angry.

"It was merely a question," airily, "of whether I went on with my singing or Jerry stayed here."

"And *you*," bitterly, "settled the question, I suppose."

"I don't know what you mean by taking that tone. I presume you're trying to be sarcastic."

"I mean," bluntly, "that if the question, as you call it, had been left to an honest judge, he'd have sent you to the pound and left Jerry alone. Even a judge of music," scathingly. "Jerry's got a darned sight more regard for a key than you have."

"And now," Kathleen retorted, "you're just trying to be unpleasant. Last night when he howled you thought it was all very funny. Naturally, you can't appreciate the outcome in the way I do."

"Does mother know this?" grimly.

"Of course. She left special word for you, by the way, that she didn't want to hear of any tantrums from you about it."

Another frame-up, Jacque realized, and suddenly hated her sister fervently, thinking of Jerry. It was a nasty place to which they had sent him, he would be tied up all day, or put in a box with slats over it, and he would grieve all day and nobody would pay any attention, and he would probably have a flea before he'd been there any time.

This was a detestable thing, she

thought. There was a war of a sort between Kathleen and herself, but this was somehow outside the rules of decent conflict. This was a head hold, a card off the bottom of the deck, a dirty bit of holding in the line. Jacque pushed her chair slowly back, gulping the single taste of food she had taken. She was too angry, hurt, scornful, to make even the most mordant comment.

"Don't be silly!" said Kathleen. "Finish your luncheon!"

"Thanks. I guess I won't."

She rose with haunted eyes, aware of no plan, aware only of a stone wall that hemmed her in. She could not, in any case, have put her disgust into exact words. The feud between herself and Kathleen she recognized for the cruel and subtle thing that it was, unmitigated by the fact that they were sisters, ordained by the primal circumstance that they were women. She had not felt that the earlier penalty, stringent as it had been, was unfair or cowardly. But this . . ."

Jacqueline walked slowly around the table toward the door of the dining-room. Near Kathleen she halted for a moment to survey the other thoughtfully.

"You certainly turned out to be a poisonous animal," she remarked.

Stung by that, Kathleen swung partly about in her chair. "Look here, Jacque. You know perfectly—"

"That's flat! I'm not arguing with you. I'm just saying that you're a murderous cat, and I'll take my own way of proving it to you later."

"That's pretty poisonous talk, I should say."

"Maybe it is. Perhaps I'm wrong. Do I hear any promises from you to bring Jerry back?"

"Certainly not!"

"All right. My few well chosen words still hit you. And when my inning comes, you'll know what a dog feels like in his lowest moments. Cheerio, my cat-faced sister. *Carpe diem*, as we say in Latin II."

Omitting luncheon, Jacque hopped into her roadster and drove at once to the address of the Rosewood Kennels on a back street downtown. The place was in a dingy building which had once been a house and later a store.

Opening the animal store door she found herself in an unsavory room occupied largely by cages confining birds, some wired boxes containing cats, and some puppies tumbling about on the floor. A couple of moribund monkeys on chains crawled about and pawed each other with sloth-like movements. There was a desk covered with dust and dirty papers, and a passageway leading to other compartments.

A man who wore a vest but no coat came out of the rear of the shop and gave her a sullen look of inquiry. He did not impress her favorably as a host for a dog like Jerry. The man had, she decided, the brain of a dog, but none of the kindly canine qualities.

She told him tenderly who she was, and asked to see Jerry. The man nodded and motioned her to follow him down a passage to a room filled with tiers of boxes. Before one of these he stopped and indicated a woebegone spaniel.

"Is that him?"

Jacque said emphatically that it was not. "Don't you know an Irish terrier from a water spaniel?"

A high whine like a muted clarinet made her turn suddenly. In a packing case turned on one side with chicken wire screen caging in the front was Jerry, a neglected atom in a menagerie above, below, and on all sides of him. A little dog yapped somewhere, and a half-crazy police dog burst into howls.

She could only see Jerry's luminous brown eyes, a small high-light on his moist nozzle, and, dimly, a shadow of dejection that was Jerry himself. He pawed futilely, half-heartedly, at the wire prison.

Jacque turned abruptly to the man. "We've decided to keep him at home. I'll take him along now."

The man shook his head slowly. "The lady that brought him said nobody could get him out without a written order."

She had expected that. "I'll give you ten dollars for him. I'm not stealing him. It's all right. You can see he's my dog, can't you?"

The man shook his head. "I got my orders. She said nobody without a written order. Y'see how it is. What would I say to her if she says to me why didn't I get no written order?"

"Pretend you didn't understand, of course! Pretend to be dumb. Golly, that wouldn't be hard."

The man seemed to have no wits at all for duplicity. Ten dollars was evidently not enough to tempt him. He stood to make more than that on Jerry's board.

"I'll give you ten dollars, and whatever this genuine pewter wrist watch will soak for," she beguiled him.

There was no use arguing with the man; all he could do was shake his head and say: "I can't give him to you without you haven't got no written order." He was hypnotized by "written order"; he was as much a fool about a pompous word as a banker. There was no arguing with him; logic rolled off his back; he was charged with a superstitious fear, it seemed, about Jerry.

Jacque went out and sped around the block three times like an angry hornet. The centrifugal force of the third swing sent her off on a tangent for Carter Hollis' office. She went up to the twelfth floor and found herself in a square room furnised with a rug, some mahogany doors, a refractory-table and some comfortable chairs. At an empty desk sat a recent inmate of a college; Jacque knew men more grown up than he was, and addressed him from that altitude.

"Tell your boss I want to see him, please."

The young man looked at her with interest. "Anybody in the place is *my* boss," he told her. "Will anybody do? Did you want to see somebody about me?"

"You? No! What would I want to know about you?" but she rewarded his impudence with a fairly friendly grin.

"Well, my name, f'rinstance. Address and telephone number, etcetera, etcetera. Color, white. Height, six feet with or without stockings. Clubs, Century and D. A. R. Occupation,

financier. I'm awful' interesting, pretty lady!"

"I'm sailing for the Mediterranean to-morrow. T'bad, isn't it? And I want to see Carter Hollis. How are chances?"

"Perfect," said the young man. "I couldn't let him miss you! Think I want to catch hell around here? Would a minute and a quarter be too long to wait? While I get Charlie Dawes out of the way, y'know. Hava chair, princess."

He went through one of the mahogany doors and reappeared almost instantly.

"He says for you to leave your telephone number with me and then come right in."

In a comfortable office that had rugs and decent chairs she found Carter. He was dictating a letter to a cool, chaste creature in a tunic blouse, and talking on the telephone at the same time, meanwhile scanning a column of figures on the desk before him. He ceased all three endeavors at once as she came in, dismissed the stenographer and jumped up.

"Hello, darling!" pulling up a chair for her.

"Carter, what are you doing now?"

"Oh, general brokerage. Big Things, and what not."

"Carter, Jerry's in a private dog pound, and the man won't give him back to me. Not without a written order. He's just miserable. He's in a crate."

"Quaint sort of chap, hm?"

"Jerry's in a crate!"

"Oh, oh, I see."

"Carter, please come and help me get him away from that man. He's mean, but I don't think he could stand up to you very long."

"Beloved, I can't bust a dog fancier in the eye and run off with one of his dogs—"

"Yes, you could, Carter, honestly! I bet he'd never land on you once before you put him to sleep. And I'll get Jerry while you keep him busy."

"What's all the hurry?" Carter wanted to know. "Are they going to put him in the gas chamber this afternoon, or something?"

Jacque felt herself go pale at the thought. "I don't know," she faltered. "Please, Carter! I'll do anything for you!"

Carter coolly took his hat from a hook. "After all," he said, "it's not the merits of the case. I don't understand that yet. But if this means a lot to you, why, count on me."

They hurried down to the street, where Jacque had parked the roadster. The engine had scarcely turned over before she was on the cut-out and gas.

"Hey!" said Carter in her ear. "Throttle down, and let's hear the news."

She told him, fairly consecutively. "You see," she illuminated the story at the very last, "I sorta put Jerry up to howling last night. Kathleen comes back at us, Jerry and me, I mean, by this move."

"Hm," said Carter, and frowned a little. He, perhaps, did not find it wholly sporting, either.

He was inclined to regard the move with less favor after he reached the

dog-shop. "Filthy den, isn't it?" he remarked. "Might be all right for a dog born in captivity, as it were, but pretty gloomy for an outdoor dog like Jerry."

"Yes. Jerry's sensitive."

The proprietor came out, saw Jacque and looked uncomfortable. "Got a written order?"

Carter shoved out one of his cards at the man. "Now look here!" he said. "You just take my word for it, this is all right. I'll be responsible, if anything comes up. This lady's sister, you see, put the dog here out of cuss—because she's not fond of dogs."

"I don't know nothing about that. I got my orders," sullenly.

Carter appeared to reflect. "Are you the fellow who is trying to sell Major Brandon the two Russian wolf hounds?"

"Yes," said the man. "What's the matter with 'em?"

"Oh, nothing; so far as I know. But if I want to tell Major Brandon that I don't care for the looks of you and your kennels, there's everything the matter with them, so far as selling them is concerned."

"Ha," Jacque spoke up. "You got into him with that one, all right. Look!" she added, addressing the man. "I'll kick in with that ten dollars, too!"

"No!" Carter held up his hand. "No bribery, no coercion in this, Jacque. We merely make the fair request, leaving it to his sense of honesty."

"All right, take him!" growled the other and slouched away. They heard him slip the padlock on Jerry's cell an instant later. Jacque whistled, and Jerry came with a rush, a crazy dog, mad with sudden joy.

They both signed a grimy ledger, emerged into the fresh air, and stowed Jerry on the running-board of the roadster in a strap-metal guard. Jacque's fingers dangled over the door, fondling Jerry's floppy ears.

"Carter, if you ever get in a jam. . ."

"So this is my reward!"

"Well, I don't see that there's anything I can do for somebody like you, unless you are in a jam. If we weren't on a busy street, I'd like to kiss you, but—"

"But?"

"But I can't see that that's any special reward. Seems to me a fifty-fifty sort of thing that leaves us just where we were."

Carter laughed out loud. "That's regaling innocence. Darling, don't you know that a girl doesn't enjoy being kissed? She merely puts up with it with—sweet resignation, doing the man a great favor out of—charity. Ask your sister."

"That may go for her. I'm different!"

Again he laughed. "But I've got to have a reward," he insisted. "Now, what I suggest is this: You change your mind and come along to that dance on Saturday. My reward will be a dance with you. You can hardly refuse that, can you?"

She was suddenly miserable, wondering how she was to refuse and tell him why. What got in her way the most was that she did not want to tell him how matters stood between Kathleen and herself. It seemed cheap and

whining to tell him. She had had to give away enough already in the matter of Jerry.

"I can't go to that dance, Carter," blankly. "Mother won't let me."

"She lets you go to the Saturday ones, even if you're not out yet."

"Not this one. 'Cause I did something. . ."

"You poor baby. What did you do so awful?"

"I'm not a baby! I'm—I'm in my eighteenth year!" Even under stress she would not forget that more favorable wording of it. "When Kathleen was my age she was out, and splitting four dates a day, and running around with Mrs. Viveash!"

"Well, what did you do?"

"I can't tell you," wretchedly.

"Oh! All right, then," he said in a loftier tone. "I shouldn't care to intrude, of course."

"I will tell you!" fiercely. "There's a nine-o'clock blue law for me because I crashed in on you and Kathleen the other night. I was impolite and—and contumacious."

"Good Lord! What rot! And your allowance was shut off, too?"

She nodded. "And I had to apologize to Kathleen. That wasn't so bad, though, 'cause I could work in a dig every other word. And mother wrote Jimmy Packard a note to tell him I'd been bad and couldn't go Saturday night with him. And they may send me to a Sunday school camp in a coupla weeks. And then Kathleen tried to get away with this thing with Jerry."

"Damnable," said Carter. "What's it all about?"

"They don't realize," sweetly, "that I'm growing up."

"Rats! They realized it easily enough when Kathleen grew up, didn't they?"

"Well. . ."

"I see," he announced. "You're fascinating, much as I hate to let you suspect it. They think you're in Kathleen's way. So instead of honestly—oh, damn! Then whenever you do break out, they jump you."

"Do you suppose that's the way it really is, Carter?"

He grinned. "You young devil. I'll bet you get past them now and then."

"I was thinking, Carter. . ."

"Something impolite and contumacious?"

"I was wondering if there's going to be a good stag line Saturday. Guess so, hm? You know the way Kathleen gives the stag line the eye? Never mind; you ought not to admit you do. Well, I was thinking that if you want to let the stags have her for an hour or so, you can slip out and drive down to my house and—have your dance with me there. Mother will be at the club playing bridge, and the chauffeur and the cook and the parlor maid will all be out. If you want to. . ."

"It's a firm date!"

"But Kathleen, Carter?"

"She can't do anything to you. She won't know."

"I meant—you'll want to be with Kathleen. You won't want to leave her. . . ."

"You talk as if you thought I were married to Kathleen!"

"You talk as if you were!"

"It's a date. You and me," he settled the question.

"Whenever you can break away," she agreed. "Carter! What am I going to do with Jerry, now I've got him?" In dismay. "If I take him home, they'll just ship him off again. Not to mention putting me under guard!"

Carter thought. "Let's take him to my house. Mother and father are away, but the cook stayed on. She'll feed him and all that."

"Can I come and see him sometimes?"

"Come just as often as you can!"

"Kathleen mustn't know, ever. It would be terrible."

"Prison camp for you?"

"No. Oh, probably. I was thinking of you and Kathleen. She'd be hurt, and she'd have to be furious at you. Then where would you be?"

"As to that," Carter said thoughtfully, "Kathleen and I have our differences. I'm not married to Kathleen, as I said."

She seemed to have touched a spring of revolt in him against some remembered attitude of Kathleen's. "Well, one never knows, Carter," she provoked him.

"Does one not?" mockingly. "There are visible trends, sometimes, as we say in Big Business. Between ourselves, youngster, the trend where Kathleen and I are concerned appears to set in the other direction."

"Really? How so?" Carter was forgetting that she had seen trends for herself.

"Oh, I don't know. Things happen. One thing follows another, you might say." He was very informative.

She wondered for a long time afterward what he had meant by that. Probably nothing. No doubt he merely evaded her that way when she became a little too inquisitive. And yet she wondered.

By Saturday evening a vague tension had appeared in the Minturn family. Very little had been seen of Carter Hollis; that was one disturbing thing, to Kathleen and her mother. His regular attendance had come to be an accepted thing since the disappearance, in a grand dénouement a month back of his predecessor.

"Mother," remarked Kathleen, "has sent for a catalogue of Camp Narcissus. She's rather—interested."

"Yeah?" asked Jacque, yawning.

"I must say I never knew you to stand disciplining so calmly!"

"You are saying it."

"It looks suspicious. You've taken to disappearing every afternoon, too. I wonder what you're up to."

It would be just as well to put Kathleen off that scent once and for all. "Been having tea, generally, with Carter," nonchalantly. She had been having tea with Jerry, as a matter of fact, and Carter had taken to dropping in too. She had come so near to telling the truth that there was no danger of Kathleen's believing that.

"Oh, really!"

"Yes. Oh, yes. I've got quite a *penchant* for Carter, temporarily." She managed an expression of remote ennui. "He amuses me."

"And you, I daresay, amuse him."

"Oh, yes. My sophistication's rather a kick, you know, after the commonplaces he hears—elsewhere."

Kathleen moved away with the firmly planted suspicion that Jacque was plotting to slip out to the movies, or even a roadhouse, with Jimmy Packard that evening. Nothing else quite accounted for such serenity.

It was no great surprise to Jacque that her mother brought up the subject of her going to bed at eight thirty, repeated the theme at ten-minute intervals, and at nine became insistent. Jacque agreeably kissed her mother and went off to her own room to talk to herself.

Presently she heard Carter come in the coupé and depart with Kathleen. Then she heard the Minturn limousine being brought around to the side door for her mother. Jacque undressed resignedly, put on the snakiest pajamas her sister possessed, concealed them behind a negligée and ensconced herself in a chair under a reading-lamp with "The Americanization of Edward Bok."

Quite to her expectations, her mother looked in for an instant to make sure that nothing seemed suspicious here.

"Good night, dear. Don't read too long!"

"I won't," Jacque promised and didn't.

Now the house was empty; she longed rather much for Jerry. It was not very pleasant to be left all alone in a big house with not even a servant in the place.

"I suppose mother'll play bridge till all hours in the card-room," she mused to herself. "And that's that. The question is what Kathleen will do."

If Kathleen took a notion to hang on Carter "like a bunch of mistletoe" tonight, of course, it would be impossible for him to get away. But if, on the other hand, Kathleen fell into the stag line, he could break away for an hour and a half without even a question.

"She hasn't seen him for about three days," Jacque told herself. "What does that point to? Well, my dear," answering herself, "it points both ways. *But*—I *think,* under the *circum*stances Kathleen will make a heavy raid on the stags. Just to let Carter know he's not the whole aquarium."

Time would tell. At eleven o'clock, in point of fact, Carter came and settled the question conclusively. Still wearing Kathleen's pale-blue and favorite pajamas, Jacque opened the front door by the space of Carter's thickness, put one eye around the corner, and motioned him to enter. She flitted before him into the drawing-room, and only then spun about on one toe to face him.

"Oh!" said Carter, and stopped short. He seemed surprised but not exactly annoyed. He had noticed her costume, it appeared, almost at once.

"Well?" she asked him guilelessly.

"Perhaps I wasn't expected. Were you having me on about really coming to-night?"

"No, Carter! Mother insisted on seeing me to bed. And I wasn't going to get dressed all over again. Why, you might not have come!"

"I see!" He laughed and let his glance drift reluctantly away from her.

"Well, far be it from me to protest. Look what I've brought you, *chiquita*."

Lady fingers and petits fours! Hot puppies! "Oh, thank you," drawled Jacqueline. "Dreadfully thoughtful of you, Carter." Taking a grip on herself, she managed to look at the petits fours with insouciance.

"I thought you'd like them," he said, puzzled.

"Oh, yes," languorously. "I just don't seem to be in the mood for lady fingers this evening."

"Aren't we grown up?" Carter was looking at her in faintly concealed irritation. "Darling, when you get grown up enough to begin surmising about your own moods, with a different mood for every food, color, occupation, or place, you're beginning to outgrow me."

Good for old Carter! Jacque snickered in sympathy. "I know it. Honestly, Carter, that I'm in-the-what-is-it-mood line isn't mine. I just sprang it to see what would happen. But—"

Now he was smiling again. "Yes?"

"I would like a cocktail! I've just been waiting and waiting. I'm not a secret drinker yet."

"I haven't anything left," he confessed.

"Oh, I'll make it. We've got a stock here. Mother has to keep it on hand for her bridge club and her Law Enforcement League meetings."

"Can you make it? And—doesn't she mind?" Carter seemed to have a dread of undermining parental authority.

"Yes," Jacque told him. "She minds. The only thing that isn't *verboten* to me is sleep. But she isn't here. And I hope to tell you I can make 'em. There are sixty-six kinds of cocktails, and I can make sixty-seven. Hm?"

"I didn't say anything."

"Shall we have one?"

"By all means. Preferably not the sixty-seventh kind, if it's all the same to you."

"How about a Gloom Raiser? Come on! Let's go out to the butler's pantry." No sooner said than done. "Like that one?"

"Why, I imagine so. I'm not sure just what it is. It sounds potent."

"'Tis. Maddening! On a coupla dozen of 'em you'd probably almost let go of yourself and kiss somebody." That, she felt, ought to be some kind of a start. What was the matter with him to-night, anyhow? He acted half afraid of her.

"My, my! You don't mean to say so!" Carter murmured incredulously. "Teach me the recipe, will you? I may want to take on a couple of dozen one day." He continued to lean against the door at great ease.

That had been a mean bit of repartee. Jacque withheld attack for the moment. "Lemon peel," she informed him, demonstrating at the same time. "Two-thirds gin—like this. I don't know much about this gin of ours. Mother buys it from a Prohibition agent, and his stuff varies. One-third French vermouth—out of that Italian vermouth bottle, please. Thanks. There! Ice, as usual. Now, then! Two dashes of grenadine. Dash, dash. Isn't it pretty? *And*—very important

—two dashes of absinthe. We haven't got any; I just mention it'" She put the top on the shaker and took it in both hands.

Carter was smiling in his mildly condescending way. "I should think," he observed, "that it might make a difference whether you mentioned the absinthe or added it."

"It does. You're always right about things, Carter. Would you mind picking up those two sautern glasses and bringing them along?" Jacque kicked open the door with a small blue mule.

In the library she filled the two glasses. "The recipe works out all right for me," she resumed, "but not for you. It's unfortunate."

"How's that?" he wanted to know.

"Well. . . It's an odd coincidence. I've got a lipstick that's a little out of the ordinary. It's flavored with absinthe and it automatically adds the necessary two dashes. . . ."

"Quite bizarre! Is it a green lipstick?"

"Nope. Lip-colored."

"Shouldn't think you'd need any."

"I need it for the two dashes of absinthe. Too bad you have to take your cocktail incomplete, but I guess there's nothing for it, unless—"

"Unless?" he prompted, eager to hear more of this joyous foolery.

She raised her drink to her lips, leaving his question suspended. "Down the hatch, old thing." They drained their glasses together.

Jacque moved over to the divan and sat down on the edge of it. "I was only saying," she told him idly, "unless you could happen to think of any way of picking up a dash of absinthe yourself. . ."

"You little imp!"

He was standing over her. He drew her up to him, till her body was a long, supple backward arc. Now, as his lips came slowly down to her, this *finale* which she had provoked half entranced, half terrified her. Without volition, she closed her eyes, even though that intensified the fantasy of her senses.

Carter's arms rather than the tips of her toes touching the floor supported her. She lifted one arm, free of its drapery sleeve, and drew it about his neck. By tightening it she could crush his lips against hers. She did it and was surprised. Emotion in her was like the climax of a beautiful nocturne, at once unbearable and further tempting. This undreamed-of vividness of life, the mystic forces in Carter and herself, transported her. Her own fingers, unseen, groped along his shoulder. She let herself go in an exquisite, sinking vertigo.

His hand on her wrist hurt. In amazement she felt him thrust her arm roughly from his shoulders. Still holding her, he set her swaying, upright, on her feet. Then his lips, and his arms about her, the sense of his nearness, were gone. She opened her eyes suddenly, very round.

Carter stood a few paces away, paces he must have taken very quickly, and he was standing back to her. She was glad and sorry, both and neither, bewildered, chagrined, relieved. Then, quite abruptly, she understood.

Her own identity came back to her,

and his, and last a recollection of the casual, commonplace, safe and stupid world she knew. But Carter's rough act of gallantry no longer astonished her. She took it for what it was. The thing, now, was to be unconcerned, if possible.

"Well, that," Jacque observed, "is that." The words were her own and the speaker was herself, but the voice seemed to be someone's else.

Carter turned, smiled in rather a dazed fashion.

"And this," she added, as a motor headlight swept across the window blind and a sound came from the front door, "is something else again."

Now she heard the voice of Kathleen and her mother. "Why, the lights are on in the library!"

Jacque moved over closer to Carter, "Prison for life," sotto voce. "Never mind. Remember you're a man of the world, Carter. Let 'em talk, but don't mind anything they say."

"Will they say plenty?"

"When they've said plenty they'll be only just starting."

"Ah," said Carter, and his face wore an imperturbable mask. "Good evening again," to Mrs. Minturn and Kathleen who stood in the doorway.

There was a long interval in which Mrs. Minturn visibly ran the gamut of surprise, disapprobation, and outraged virtue. One could see her anger grow in leaps as her mind and glance took in Carter's presence, Jacque's costume, the shaker and glasses. She drew herself up, throwing her evening wrap back on her shoulders with a regal gesture. Her frothy gaze went finally to Carter and lingered on him. "*Jacqueline!*" she exclaimed in her most aghast voice.

"This is me over here, mother," Jacque told her sweetly. "That's Carter you're looking at."

Mrs. Minturn's lips were locked tightly, and she breathed furiously through her nose. She seemed at a loss for words. Kathleen was looking at Carter, too, but her expression was one of sweetly mingled pain and hauteur.

"Well!" Mrs. Minturn spoke to Kathleen. "I must confess—oh, dear me—

"Cocktails!" she went on in rising agitation. "And pajamas! And a man!"

Carter bridled a little, but kept himself quite calm. "Hollis is my name," he said loftily. At least there was no evident sense in treating him as an unknown marauder in this way.

Kathleen smiled faintly and spoke. Her words were the greatest shock of surprise that Jacque had ever experienced.

"Oh, Mother!" Kathleen made a small impatient movement of one white arm. She spoke in her most cultivated and worldly manner. "I'm sure there's nothing to be so dreadfully disturbed about." Her eyes moved to Carter. "We were so surprised at finding anyone here," she explained, "that we were rather upset for an instant."

Mrs. Minturn looked wildly at the speaker. "But—" Unable to finish, she made a sweeping gesture over the scene.

"Oh, well . . ." from Kathleen.

"When one thinks about it, mother, what is it after all? Jacqueline was sent to bed. There was no one else to answer the bell. *Que voulez-vous?* And I daresay Carter's being here has some explanation."

Carter became debonair. "Why, yes. Deserted by you, Kathleen, for eight stags who were taking turns dancing twenty seconds apiece with you in rotation. I wandered—"

"Oh, Kathleen's the popular little thing," Jacque put in.

"And then," Carter resumed, "I got the brilliant idea — like a flash, you know—of taking a pocket full of petits fours down to Jacqueline."

"I see." Kathleen smiled sweetly and understandingly. "I was a little hurt," she confessed. "I was afraid you'd fallen into temptation of some sort," with just a flicker of an eyelash toward Jacque. "Left me for a crap game in the locker room, or something. So I came home with mother."

Mrs. Minturn's position was a difficult one. Kathleen's defection left her at a loss. "Petits fours?" she asked helplessly. "But the cocktails!"

"When Kathleen was my age," Jacque imparted, "she could have cocktails for breakfast if she wanted 'em, without a whimper from anybody."

Mrs. Minturn let the sally pass, blinking anxiously. "Mercy!" she murmured. "I feel as if I could do with a cocktail myself, right now." She contrived to send a relenting smile in Carter's direction. Her cue had plainly been to relent, odd as that seemed. "Shall we have one, Carter? Dear me, I was so startled to find people here. . . ." She sat down sighing.

*Evidently there is some reason why Kathleen is forced to stand anything from Carter, and Jacque finds out what it is—in the next issue.*

## A PRONOUNCED ROMANCE

***By* Hale Merriman**

HE was tall and athletic,
Yet wonderfully slim.
She knew that she loved him,
That masterful Him.

She was tiny and cuddly
As cute as could be.
His heart clamored for her,
That beautiful She.

And now they are married,
And so people say:
You never have seen such
An unhappy They.

*The ancient queens may have gotten away with beheading their lovers, but how can a woman to-day get rid of unpleasant reminders?*

# JOAN DOPES IT OUT

## By LEROY PORTER

JOAN TRAVIS lolled idly in a porch swing on the wide veranda of her pretty Buckinghamshire cottage. She had just returned from the station after bidding farewell to her six-year-old son Robert who, in the safe custody of Netta, the nurse, was off for a week's frolic on the sands of Eastbourne. Joan did not care for the seashore, but she would not allow her personal preferences to interfere with the happiness of her little boy who represented about all there was in life since his father had fallen in the war without ever having seen his child.

For the first year or two after her bereavement, Joan had felt that her future was blasted beyond hope. She had been madly in love with her husband, and when he went it seemed as if everything had been swept from under her — that she never would be able to find herself. But Joan was young, and good old reliable Father Time had done his work. So that the pain she endured in the beginning had long since passed. But it left Joan with a new problem to face, a problem that grew more acute as the months and years slipped by.

Hers had been a hasty war marriage, decided upon quickly when her husband, Robert, had been called to the colors. And she was only twenty when little Bob arrived. Now, at twenty-six, she felt that life was cheating her. Not that she lacked courage to take what she wanted. But she had certain ideas that would force themselves upon her, however she might try to ignore them. To-day, as she sat there in the swing, she mused upon what she considered the injustice of her position. And other things. . . .

Since Bob's death, she had not come in contact with any man to whom she felt she could give her heart. And she could never bring herself to marry a man she did not love. Yet the youth in her cried for expression. As time went on she found herself craving af-

fection more and more, until the battle waged with herself became constant and fierce.

Time and again, as she prepared for bed or her bath, she had stood before the mirror and gazed at the reflection of her glorious body, pink and white and alluring, with something akin to wonder. Had the good God made so much loveliness to be wasted?

Men there had been, especially of late, who had thrilled her by the touch of hand in greeting or a glance of open admiration. She wondered if she was wicked, upon such occasions, to try to imagine how it would feel to be kissed by someone she did not really love. Joan did not fool herself and mistake passion for the real thing. None of the men who had stirred her had for a moment appealed to her as a desirable mate for life. It was that she recognized the feeling for what it was and wondered if she ought to entertain it. Then realized that she had no choice in the matter.

But always her scruples, which, as a matter of fact, she had not been able to define exactly, held her back, prevented her from letting herself go. Thus she had gone over and over and over the same ground in a bootless analysis which left her nowhere, groping for a solution, for some sort of guidance. Often she resented the fact that, essentially, she was a good woman.

Then Reggie Twining, whose family owned the estate next to Joan's little place, had come crashing home from Cambridge, with his good looks and charming manners and animal spirits. And for two months his laughing eyes had said things to her across the tennis net or on the golf course. Until, in Joan's opinion, there was no doubt that Reggie would not fail to take full advantage of any privileges she might extend. The point had been reached where Joan seriously considered brushing aside the restraint which her hitherto correct attitude had placed upon Reggie. Something of her mental process must have wafted itself into that young man's mind. Because yesterday he had made so bold as to pat her cheek and touch her hair lightly with his lips as she bent over the ball at an obscure tee. She had reproved him mildly, but not in a manner to carry conviction. And Joan realized that a crisis was imminent.

The more so, perhaps, because Reggie had begged to have tea with her this afternoon. Bobbie and the nurse were away. So Joan sat there in the swing, perfectly certain that Reggie would try to make love to her and dreamily wondering if it would not be nice to let him.

Reggie was a wholesome lad. Perhaps two years younger than Joan. She knew that he was not in love with her. Nothing serious about him. He was just a big, good-looking boy, reaching with eager hands for everything life had to offer. Joan told herself that she was no more to him than a pretty and attractive woman. That next day he might be prone at the feet of somebody else. Yet . . . how lovely it would be to have someone big and strong and young take her in his arms and kiss her . . . roughly. . . .

Her thoughts ran thus when Reggie appeared, promptly at four o'clock. He was eager and adoring. But he drank three cups of tea and consumed great quantities of bread and butter and small pink cakes. Joan sipped her tea and watched her guest demolish the food. "How like a young animal he is!" she thought. He left his wicker chair and sat beside her in the swing. It was very cozy there—cool and cozy, with the thick ivy shutting them off from the world.

Then Reggie's arm slipped about her shoulders. Joan shivered with pleasure. It was *nice!* He drew her gently toward him and kissed her temple; her hair touched his eyes. . . . Swiftly he crushed her in his arms, his lips found hers. Kiss after fiery kiss he rained upon her face. Her eyes were closed. She was a little giddy. She was floating away on a cloud of delicious irresponsibility. . . . Now Reggie was drawing her close—close. . . .

Joan pushed him away, almost roughly. She sat up and her fingers flew to her disordered hair. Before her mind's eye there had passed a vision, a swift, uncompromising vision!

A delightful affair with Reggie. Delightful, at first—with clandestine meetings, mad embraces, and the wild thrill of surrender to hot kisses. But afterward! The cooling of his ardor—perhaps her own! The stupid necessity of jockeying about to escape detection after nurse and Bobbie returned. The involving of herself in a relation grown sordid. And through all the miserable later stages—yes, when it was over and done—the certainty of seeing Reggie almost daily, of meeting him everywhere she went. It flashed before her in a twinkling. No! She couldn't do it. . . .

"No, no," she cried. "You mustn't, Reggie! You must go, now!" She arose and paced nervously up and down the porch while Reggie managed to recover himself sufficiently to murmur a conventional good afternoon. She was grateful that he was well-bred enough for that.

But even when he had gone, her pulses were beating wildly. Her face, where Reggie had kissed her, burned. She went inside and laved her face and hands with cold water and prepared a long and cold drink of lemon squash. But, somehow, the thing had got into her blood. She hated herself violently and to no purpose.

During the next two days, Joan thought it out all over again. But on different lines.

She knew that should she yield, any sight of Reggie thereafter would be abhorrent to her. What a pity it was that one couldn't have her lovers beheaded when she tired of them, as the ancient queens did. A sweet thought! But there was a lot of merit in the idea at that! Joan developed the same frame of mind as the girl who will not permit the local boys to kiss her but falls hard for the traveling salesman.

For forty-eight hours she mulled it over, weighing this and that, counting the cost, one way and another. And out of her cogitation an idea was born. A daring idea! Joan blushed when she thought of it. . . .

Joan was in the London train, watching the green landscape slip by and feeling wicked, ashamed, and determined, in turn. Beside her was a smart dressing-case, her only piece of luggage.

"Why shouldn't I?" she repeated again and again, "why shouldn't I? Men go on a bust when they want to. Why shouldn't I?"

So Joan was going on a "bust"! That much she was sure of. Just how extensive a bust it would prove to be remained to be seen. At any rate, she was going to have an adventure of some sort. It might be a little one. It might be a big one. But, in any event, whatever folly she might indulge in, there would be no wretched reminders flaunting themselves before her in the days to come. She would cut up as she jolly well pleased and leave the débris behind her.

She started guiltily as she looked up and surprised a young man in the opposite corner of the compartment, in the act of studying her face. He looked away quickly but a dozen times during the journey she felt his eyes upon her. She, in turn, seized the opportunity to observe this particular neighbor.

He was quite as well groomed as Reggie but older and with more poise. He appeared to be about thirty-four and his military service was betrayed by his war-wise blue eyes and the field tan that still lingered. Joan sighed. *There* was the sort of man she could *love*. And the sort of man who could love somebody. That was the dickens of it. Probably he *did* love somebody —was married, most likely. So intent upon London had her thoughts been that it never occurred to her that right here might be the material for her "adventure." And in the crowd at Paddington, he was gone.

Joan registered at the Regent Palace Hotel, close to the heart of things. She knew her London well and her half-formed plan called for some such location. She tidied up after the journey and donned the smart frock she had decided to wear that evening. Over a lonely tea, she grew quite excited at the possibilities presented by her scheme.

Joan never had been in the Starlight Café. But she knew a good bit about it. For the Starlight Café has a reputation. Officers, gentility and vice rub elbows. Officers, writers, artists—famous and obscure — gather nightly about the ornate tables or drape themselves over the worn plush of the wall seats. Velvet-coated Jews from Mile End furrow their brows and hold forth excitedly to their fellows. Native Indians, swarthy and with shiny hair, leer across their drinks at white women. Exiled Russians drink absinthe and grow more melancholy with each sip.

Scions of old families carouse, more or less boisterously, with smartly attired women. Here is a famous critic, lost in his own thoughts and the incidental enjoyment of his excellent meal. There, a high army officer, whispering to his obviously respectable companion frisky comments upon the people about them.

But above all there are the unattended girls. Perhaps eight or ten of them —perhaps more. The personnel con-

stantly changes. They come alone. They may spend the entire evening alone. But that is not likely. A slight bow from a man at another table. An answering smile. And, behold! Milady is no longer lonely. Perhaps twenty minutes or a half hour later, she will bear her trophy triumphantly from the place. Oh, adventure lies in the Starlight Cafe. . . .

It was eight o'clock when Joan Travis ran the gauntlet of gold bedecked commissionaires and door boys and was shown to a small wall table. Her heart had failed her a little as she resolutely plunged through the glittering outer portals, but the deference of the head waiter, as he escorted her to her place, did much to restore her self-confidence. She ordered a dinner with cocktail and wine in a steady voice despite the undercurrent of excitement that seethed through her; then sat back to study the room and its occupants.

But it did not take her more than a few seconds to grasp the fact that she was quite as much an object of interest to the others as they were to her. Especially among the unattached males. From many tables eyes were turned upon her. Some in quick, furtive glances, others in bold scrutiny. Joan knew what they were saying among themselves. "Ah! A new one!"

She squirmed a little under it all. But her sense of humor was strong and she rapidly got control of herself, so that by the time her food appeared she had quite given herself over to an unholy enjoyment of the situation. After all, the reins were in her hands. It was hers to pick and choose. If she didn't choose to play, she didn't have to. No wonder men were prone to go on a lark occasionally.

Joan was conscious of the lively interest displayed by the other girls in the place. Her competitors! She snickered at the thought. One big, radiant, golden creature, drinking champagne alone, grinned amiably at her and slowly winked. Joan laughed in spite of herself. Whereupon the girl came over to her table while the waiter followed with the champagne bottle and an extra glass. Joan managed not to appear flustered as her volunteer companion sank down beside her on the wall seat.

"Welcome, thrice welcome," quoth the newcomer and lifted her glass. Joan smiled and drank with her. "Thanks, so much," she murmured.

"You've got 'em all going, child," went on the girl. "And no wonder. You look as fresh as a pansy after a shower. You certainly ought to clean up around here. Times are booming, anyway, my dear. Look at this." She made a slight sweeping gesture with a be-ringed hand, indicating the scores of men, good looking, well turned out men, but obviously out for a good time and ready for anything.

Joan found that she liked this girl. She couldn't explain just why. But there was something refreshing in her friendly frankness. Joan wanted to ask questions but decided that would not do. So she contented herself with being agreeable. Even to the extent of suggesting that she buy a fresh bottle of champagne. But the girl rose. "No, thanks," she said. "Just dropped over

to say hello. See you again." And she was off. Five minutes later she was one of an animated foursome in a far corner. . . .

Joan was somewhat bewildered. She found it hard to size up anybody because she was certain that if she gazed at any man sufficiently long to determine what sort he was, her scrutiny would be construed as an invitation. Then, as she encountered eloquent eyes wherever she turned hers, little by little, fear stole upon her.

A corpulent man, very drunk, lurched across to her table. He half fell into the chair opposite her. "Well, well," he gurgled. "'N where'd this li'l baby doll float in from?"

Instinctively Joan half rose, alarm in her eyes. Then sank back. She must not make a scene here. Somehow she must get rid of this creature. He was gazing intently at her, laughing foolishly. "How 'bout 'nother li'l boddle, Cutey?"

"No thanks. I've had enough," Joan managed from a dry throat.

"Har, har," he rumbled. "'Nuff, nuff—never 'nuff. Why you an' I, m' dear . . . you an' I . . . why, we . . . we . . . har, har, har!" He leaned forward, swaying maudlinly, reached for her hand. Joan shuddered and drew back.

Then a cool, crisp voice said, "Well, well, Bertha. I'm afraid I'm late. So sorry. Is this. . . ." But the corpulent man already was stumbling away. And Joan was automatically giving her hand into the firm brown fingers of the chap who had watched her so keenly in the train that afternoon.

"Why—why—" she stammered. But he cut her short.

"Come," he said. "Let's get out of this." She sat silent while he paid the bill and guided her to the street.

Not a word was said as he piloted her across Regent Street, through the hospitable portals of the Piccadilly Hotel, and to a snug table in a secluded corner of the tea room. He gave an order, then turned to her.

"Sorry to have been so abrupt," he began. "But I fancied you didn't care much for the attentions of that swine across the way. If I am wrong, you'll pardon me, I'm sure. I mean't well."

"Oh," she said. "I *do* thank you! It was terrible!"

"I called you Bertha," he went on. "It didn't matter what name I used there. But now you might tell me what Joan Travis was doing in that hole, alone!"

The blood flew to Joan's face. "You know my name?" she exclaimed. "Why, I never saw you before!"

"I know it," he continued. "And I never saw you, either. But it did not take me long to place you this afternoon on the train. If it had not been for the other people in the compartment, I would have spoken to you there. But, of course, there was just the bare possibility that I was wrong and I didn't want to embarrass you.

"You see, Bob Travis, your husband, and I were together all the time we were in France. We were great pals and always he had planned to have me out to your home if we could have arranged leave together. But poor old Bob—well. It didn't happen. But I

have seen more pictures of you than I can remember. And your face was as familiar as that of my own sister.

"And I had wanted so much to see you. Felt as if I knew you already. Since the war I have been in India and only came home last week. I would have looked you up, anyway."

"Do you mean to say that you're Jack Burnham, of whom Bob used to write all the time?"

He nodded. "None other. But you haven't told me how I happened to find you in that amazing place. I was looking for some pals who were running a bit large and whom should I stumble upon but you."

His words brought her back with a jolt. She had forgotten about her crazy desire for a lark. She was conscious only of a wholesome, good-looking understanding young man with whom she felt so secure. Now she fought down the panic within her. He must not know how silly she had been. He *must* not. Her brain worked swiftly. And when she spoke, her voice was under perfect control.

She said: "Why, I don't know. I was bored. I wanted to see what London was like at night. Somebody had said that the Starlight Café was Bohemian and interesting and all that. So I went there. Is it so bad as you say? I had no idea. And never for a minute thought anybody would speak to me."

"You poor, silly child," he said. "That's an awful place for a woman to go by herself. I'm certainly glad I happened in. Now let's run over to Murray's for some supper and a dance. And when may I go out to see you in the country?"

"Oh, soon," she said, as she slipped her hand through his arm. "Quite soon—come to-morrow. I'm going back on an early train."

*Violetta hopes to overcome her fiancé's jealousy by making love's greatest gift.*

# MEN I HAVE LOVED—AND LOST

## By The MARCHESA VIOLETTA di V—

*These stories are six authentic episodes which occurred in the kaleidoscopic career of the Marchesa Violetta di V—, whose reputation as one of the world's greatest opera stars and beauties is well known. In relating these particular phases of her love-life, the Marchesa is revealing for the first time secrets that have lain close to her heart. Here is the story of an impetuous character, a story in which the very candor might be sordid were it not evident that the Marchesa, as an explorer in love, always sought that which held forth an ideal, an emotional ideal. This interweaving of passion and love is also held together by the thread of adventure, sometimes touched by tragedy. In reading these revelations of the Marchesa, the reader will doubtless find it impossible not to make a personal application. Is she right—that one may have too much of a desire to* KNOW, *too great a capacity to feel?*

II

I WENT to Paris when I was eighteen years old. I had had my first love affair the year before, and I felt, as I emerged from it, that it had given me a psychic bruise from which I could never completely recover. I kept conning over in my mind certain phrases of my singing teacher, Mme. Zalia. She had said that every love affair meant a definite development in the life of a singer. I had hardly begun my career, and therefore could not understand.

A famous opera impresario, I had been informed, planned to be in Paris at that time, to engage artists to take with him to America. What hope could a young, new artist like me have of securing one of the greatly coveted contracts with this man? Indeed, I had very little hope. But I knew that I had an unusual voice, and my mirror could not lie. I had an unusual, exotic beauty. My hair was raven black, my skin lily-white, my blue eyes almost a deep violet. I was slender, yet round. Perhaps—I fancied I was rather unique, and the applause of the public soon after, proved that my intuition, at least, was not at fault.

So, I plucked up my courage with the reflection that the far chance sometimes comes about, and that the worst that could come to me would be a refusal.

Accompanied by my English chaperon, I went to the hotel where I had learned the impresario stayed. I asked the clerk at the desk for Monsieur M—. He pointed across the lobby. There, in a red plush chair sprawled a man. A thick, heavy and unkempt fellow, with a roving eye. He had

queer graying sideburns that ran halfway down his cheeks, and he chewed upon a yellow, unlighted cigarette. At the moment he seemed to be in deep thought, and by the expression of his face, not particularly pleasant thoughts.

Followed by my eagle-eyed chaperon, I put on my best manner of elegance and courtesy and approached him.

"Monsieur M—?" I felt shy, and wanted to run away as soon as his name had left my lips.

He looked at me in a disinterested manner, and nodded.

"I want to ask you for an audition," I said.

He did not rise. He merely shifted his dirty slouch hat, and moved the yellowed cigarette to the other corner of his tobacco-stained mouth. He continued to stare at me with a coarse impatience. His manner appalled me. I felt suddenly ill.

"What are you?" he blurted.

"Contralto."

"Wish I could get rid of a few contraltos," he said ungraciously. He lurched laboriously and heavily in his chair, turned over and lounged on his other side, turning his face away from me with the greatest rudeness. I became so angry it seemed to me that I should suffocate. My chaperon, horrified at his behavior, pulled at my sleeve to leave.

"Monsieur M—," I forced my voice to an even tone, "I have heard of people with the manners of pigs, but I have never seen one until to-day. In this case the comparison does the pig a gross injustice."

I saw him start, but I turned and walked with my companion to the door. As I was passing through, I heard a thick, excited voice behind me. I looked around. Monsieur M— approached with a strange scrambling run.

"What is the matter with you," he shouted, in an injured tone. "Do you have to get mad? Can't you talk things over reasonably? You want to sing for me, don't you?"

"When I came here," I replied indignantly, "I wanted to sing for you. Now I know that you are the sort of a man with whom I could not possibly have any dealings."

I passed on through the door and left him standing there. As I walked down the street, still shaking with fury, my chaperon muttered her applause gravely.

"That is exactly the way to speak to such people," she said. "I only regret that I permitted you to go and see him at all."

A week later the agency with which I had contracted to place me for singing engagements telephoned. In an important tone the manager announced to me that Monsieur M— had called for me to come to him for an audition. I replied immediately that I did not care to sing for this gentleman. The agent grew angry. Did I realize who this famous impresario was? Would I throw away the opportunity of a lifetime? Was I crazy? I must go. He would not permit me to refuse. We had a long altercation. He was right, in his way. I agreed to go.

The audition was held in a room at Monsieur M—'s hotel. I went reluc-

tantly, and still angry. The impresario received me with exclamations about my being "upstage." I answered with my eyes only. He was dirt beneath my feet. I was in a mood of desperation. I did not care to sing well. Indeed, it was my ambition to sing badly. I no longer wanted an engagement with this man's company, though it were promised I should become famous over night.

I achieved my ambition, for I never sang so terribly before, or since! I burst into laughter as I finished, and turned quickly to go, not caring to hear his criticism. As far as I was concerned one of the most undesirable episodes in my life was over.

But Monsieur M—, the yellow cigarette butt between his teeth, called after me. "Come back, here," he ordered, at the same time motioning to his secretary with his dirty slouch hat which he had not removed from his head. I turned about, amazed.

"Make out a contract," he said to his secretary. Then he motioned to me. "Don't be a fool, Mademoiselle of the snapping eyes! Come here and sign this contract! And let me tell you something—something that may help you in your career." I took the pen as in a dream, and signed the contract that his secretary gave me. As I glanced over it I was astounded to see "one thousand dollars a performance." Was the man mad? I listened to him as he continued, deep amazement written on my features.

"You are very—very fresh. Who the devil are you to give yourself such airs? Not even a débutante. A mere beginner at singing. Do you know that I buy and sell the greatest singers in the world? They come to me bowing and scraping. I talk to them as I please—as I please, you understand? And I order them about as I wish. You think you can talk badly to me, and you think you fool me when you sing rottenly! I am an old bird at this game! Get some sense. You can't disguise the quality of your voice, you know! You will be back here to-night and have dinner with me. Eight o'clock. And you needn't bring that English bodyguard with you, either!"

I suddenly found that I could not remain angry with him. He was so fearfully cocksure of himself he was funny. And as for breeding, well, he didn't know the meaning of the word. And cared less. I knew, too, that what he had said to me was the truth. He was a creator of operatic reputations, and the greatest names in the musical world were at his command. He could do everything for me. Because I was no longer angry, and because I was curious, I told my companion a story about going to see a girl friend that night, and went, instead, with Monsieur M— to dinner at his hotel. But the way he ate was truly astonishing. When I could stand it no longer I asked him if he minded if I were to speak frankly to him. Doubtless expecting to hear something very pleasant from me, his face lighted, and he motioned to me to speak.

"Monsieur M—," I began, adopting a tone of great formality. "This afternoon you took the liberty of reproving me for my ignorance of the values

and powers in the operatic world. You made it clear to me how humble my position was, how exalted yours. I listened to you attentively, knowing you were quite right. For indeed, your experience has taught you much.

"But now it is your turn to listen to me—attentively! For I am about to talk with you upon a theme about which I know much more than you do. My theme is table manners! You masticate your food in a noisy manner. You mistake your knife for a fork, constantly. You have an operatic concert with your soup. Fingers were made for many things, but not to fish oysters from shells. I, be assured, can speak upon these things with authority."

Monsieur M— sat and stared at me. Never have I seen man or woman more completely confounded. I was suddenly sorry for having taken revenge.

"Tell me," I wanted to cover his embarrassment as best I could, "why did you give me a contract at one thousand dollars a performance? It is an incredible amount for a beginner." He would not answer, but grumbled something, and paid his check. I drew my evening cape about my shoulders, and left. He did not even offer to see me to my cab.

It was not long before I began to realize that I was expected to do more than sing for my thousand-dollar performances. For soon afterward, Monsieur began to make love to me. I repulsed him coldly, and without compunction. I did not believe that his feelings could be deeply engaged in any woman. And my youthful modesty made me extremely sceptical of men's protestations of love. During the remainder of his stay in France the ardor of his advances increased. I was happy the day he sailed for America. And I was not to join his company until several weeks later.

It is difficult for me to tell of the poignant meaning to me of my encounter with the American lawyer, Arnell Gentry. It was one of those happenings that are so slight, and yet so immense. Beneath it lay the deepest and most troubled oceans of life and the soul.

Before sailing for America, I had suddenly gone through a feeling of restlessness. I was upset. I passed through days when I could not feel at one with the world. This feeling brought a crisis to me. I am a Latin, and in this heritage there often flows a spiritual strain. A feeling of other worldliness has always haunted me. Now it was rising to a dominant flame. I had often desired to become a nun. This desire appeared with an insistent throbbing, calling upon me to abandon the world and my singing, and to take myself to the contemplative reverie of the cloister. Which was it to be? The glamor of the opera, or conventual prayers and vigils? Days before I was to sail, I remained in a state of internal conflict, in a cloudy agitation, full of unearthly visions and mystical yearnings.

Although I did not realize it then, this eerie agitation colored my life. My visionary emotions made me fertile ground for any event that promised

deep, sympathetic understanding. . . .

I had never crossed the Atlantic ocean before. The majesty of its wide sweep affected me profoundly. The grandeur of the stars and the sea brought to a wild climax my unearthly mood.

I was asked to sing in a concert aboard ship. It appealed to me, and I sang in a way that completely abandoned my sombre heart to the measures of melody. When I had finished, I walked alone out upon the deck, and almost overcome, wept as I studied the enigmatic figures of the stars.

As I wept—for what reason, I did not know—a figure came beside me. I saw a tall man with square shoulders, and a strong, lean body. In the light of a lamp behind us I observed his lean, handsome face, blond hair and singular expression.

"Mademoiselle," he said, in a tone of utter simplicity, "I have just heard you sing, for the first time, and I hope you will not despise my gratitude to you."

There was something magic about his quiet manner, magic and comforting. I murmured thanks through my tears, and suddenly he saw that I was weeping. As though it were the most natural thing in the world, he drew nearer me, and then gently, very gently, put his arms around me, and drew my head against his breast.

It was a glorious dream. It was as though the whole world had changed for me. A different mood, a different light burst out in me, as if started by some vast shock. Another instinct of my nature arose and engulfed me. In the half darkness, I drew his head down, and unashamed, kissed his forehead in gratitude.

"I love you," he said, "I loved you from the moment you came aboard this ship. But I worshipped you the moment I heard the golden tones of your voice, and knew your very soul as I listened to your interpretation."

My eyes were no longer wet with tears. There was something so marvelously simple, so wonderfully primitive about his manner. I whispered to him suddenly, "My name is Violetta. Call me Violetta!"

"Violetta," he said, "I adore you. Love me, love me, if only in the smallest corner of your beautiful heart."

Then he told me that his name was Arnell Gentry. He lived in New York City, and he said many beautiful things that caught my imagination with a deep, calm intensity.

The days of the voyage passed. Arnell Gentry and I were together constantly. I told him of my ambitions, of my desire to become one of the great singers of the world, and I told him how great I considered the opportunity that was bringing me to America. As I talked of these things I could detect in the expression of his face, and his bearing, the power and depth of his feeling for me. He was exquisitely restrained. We became good comrades, and his bearing toward me was one of gentle, unobtrusive solicitude. I perceived in him a fine, clear mind, and all the modest assurance of a tremendously capable man.

One day I mentioned the name of my impresario, Monsieur M—. Ar-

nell frowned, and was silent. I asked him what the matter was.

"I did not realize," he said, "that you were going to New York under his management. His is not exactly a savory reputation."

"I have nothing to fear," I said confidently. "I think he knows very well how any advances would be met by me."

When we arrived, I was much astounded, and my companion much annoyed to find Monsieur M— awaiting me at the dock. Little did I realize that I was being caught in that dreadful, fantastic net of circumstances which increased in its terror as the weeks went by!

I bid good-by to Arnell Gentry in my stateroom, held in his arms, completely happy in the thought of seeing him the following day.

Monsieur M— drove me to the Knickerbocker Hotel where so many famous singers lived. He had engaged an elegant suite of rooms for me, which I knew I could not afford under any circumstances. When I protested —we stood in the drawing-room—he suddenly stood before me and looked at me in the most terrible manner. I had the feeling of standing unclothed before him. For the first time in my life I was at a loss for something to say. I must have appeared very young and shy, very innocent to him. He wet his lips in a hideous manner, and the ever-present cigarette dropped from them to the floor. He paid no attention to it, as he came to me where I stood by the grand piano, and put his hand on my arm. He must have felt me shudder, for he suddenly grasped me about the shoulders in a determined rather than impassioned manner.

"Listen to me, you little fool. None of your tigress manners as long as you are in my company. I have never had to run after any woman from ——— ——— down." He mentioned the name of one of the greatest prima donnas before the public. "You may think it's going to get you somewhere, holding off this way with me, but you are wrong."

I thought for a moment that I should die from sensations of disgust that came over me. I could not move. His arms crept about my neck, his terrible, tobacco-stained mouth sought and found the whiteness of my neck, my cheeks, and at last, my mouth. I tried to move, I was conscious of wanting to do so, yet at the same time I was powerless. I was living through one of those awful nightmares that we sometimes experience in our sleep, where the mind is conscious of wanting to escape from some disaster, and the body remains lifeless.

He took my inability to resist him as a promise for the future. He leaned over and picked up the fallen cigarette. His little eyes sought mine with enthusiasm.

"I knew you were a sensible child," he said. "With that voice of yours, your beauty, and my guidance, there will be no height to which you cannot climb in your career. Your début shall mark my greatest triumph as an impresario."

As he talked, I humored him, for I began to believe the man mad. I decided to telephone to Arnell Gentry as

soon as it was possible. But when he had left, something told me to resist this man's advances alone, unaided. For, with my contract signed, I was completely in his power. My intuition warned me not to endanger the regard that Arnell Gentry had for me.

But as time went on, and Monsieur M— found that I would not respond to his lovemaking he grew angry, and more and more persistent. I had scarcely a moment to myself. He kept near me so constantly that it was only through the greatest conniving that I saw Arnell without his being aware of it. When he was convinced that he could not have me for his light of love he pressed me to marry him. I refused. He repeated his prosopal endlessly.

I made my operatic début as "Aïda" in the opera of that name. It was a most daring thing to do, for I had had practically no operatic experience before that time. My youth, my enthusiasm and my exquisite voice, a voice that was younger and fresher than any before the public at that time, created a veritable furore. I became famous over night. Indeed, Monsieur M— kept his word, and gave me a splendid début. It was a magnificent opportunity for a beginner to be put forward at once as a star. But through it all I had even less rest than before, because Monsieur M— did not neglect to remind me what a boon he had conferred upon me.

"Could you ever have hoped to have a New York début like that?" he demanded belligerently. "I have done this for you. I will do everything for you. But you must marry me."

I refused for the hundredth time. I realized perfectly how much he could do for me, and that as a matter of getting on in the operatic world it would have been an excellent thing to have married him. But I was in no mood for marriage—with him.

Yet love had again entered my heart. And had these same words come from the lips of the man I loved, I should have indeed been in the mood to marry. I would have married Arnell Gentry. His quiet regard, the sustained and even tone of his admiration had pierced my heart. And yet, I had the feeling that he was watching me closely, watching to see how I took success, fearing that it might change me. Not once did he mention the name of Monsieur M—, although every music critic in New York constantly spoke of me as "Monsieur M—'s discovery."

Often Monsieur M— would telephone me to the small hotel to which I had moved in the West Fifties. He had told me that the large suite at the Knickerbocker was paid for in advance. But I did not wish to be under any obligation to him. He would imply when telephoning me that it was a matter of rehearsal or repertoire, and important for me to come to his office immediately. Nearly always he had little more to say than, "Are you ready to marry me now?" Then he would make wild promises, and if I sat there silently he would change his tactics and threaten me.

Unless I married him, he said he would ruin my career utterly. He would have me barred from the opera. Soon I discovered that my appearances

in operas at the famous New York opera house depended upon some queer turn that the man's feeling for me had taken. A brightening of the hope that hung in him persistently and rose and fell with no more seeming reason than could be discovered in the changes of the stars, and I would get a rôle to sing. A darkening of despair and I would be kept out of the casts. As I was a great success, the metropolitan papers constantly inquired why the "young woman of beautiful voice and person" was appearing so spasmodically. To save his face, Monsieur M— gave it out that I was a creature of difficult temperament, unreliable. This man who loved me in a grotesque manner thought to trick me into realizing the depth of his love for me! I doubt if ever before was a woman to learn of the immensity of a man's devotion to her through his villainy!

The public affectionately called me "La Viletta." I was their idol, and yet each day people were receiving reports of my bad disposition. These Monsieur M— sent out methodically from his office in the opera house. If he could not have me he did not want me to continue in his services. But, if he did not want me, he wanted no other manager to have me! Therefore, he would begin to wreck my reputation. Few operatic managers care to have an artist who is absolutely unreliable. He could not ruin me with the public, my success had been too great. But he would ruin me with the next best thing, the managers.

This insidious working within an opera house was not surpassed by the intrigue of any di Medici court. I became so nervous that I was actually ill after rehearsals. And yet, at the performances I sang divinely.

Quite unexpectedly one night Arnell Gentry called for me in my dressing-room. I had disrobed, although a mauve chiffon negligée was thrown about my shoulders. Monsieur M— had come to my dressing-room a few minutes before Arnell, and I angrily asked him to leave until I was ready to receive him.

Fate, which has ever played the lead in my *affaires de coeur,* arranged that Arnell should knock upon my door as Monsieur M— stood upon the other side about to turn the handle. The door opened, and the two surprised men looked at each other with expressions of distrust and antagonism. My dressing-room was not far from the huge stage which was constantly swept by great drafts, especially when the opera house was empty. With the huge golden curtain drawn back, the scenery was being shifted about for the following day's performance. As the door opened, this draft burst through like a small cyclone, and catching my light negligée in its embrace, blew it from my shoulders.

How well do I remember the expression that passed over his face, an expression of horror, and alas, complete misunderstanding. My maid, who had been busying herself about my dressing table, turned, and with an exclamation of surprise, rushed to my assistance with a cape of ermine that was thrown over my *chaise longue.*

For a moment we said nothing. And

then, realizing the network of circumstances about to encompass me, I explained to him the terrible situation I was living through with Monsieur M— ever torturing me. As I did this I prayed silently, as that afternoon I had prayed audibly before the Virgin in the large cathedral on the Avenue. To help me, I took the pearl rosary that was lying upon my dressing table, and held it tightly in my hand. Oh, if he would only understand me now, as he had understood upon the boat that night that he found me weeping! Oh God, if he would only say, "Violetta, drop this, or sing as you please, but let me protect you. Marry me, Violetta!"

But Arnell Gentry did nothing but eye me in a manner that confused me. I could not fathom what was going on in his heart which he had so often said held every good wish for me.

I told him of Monsieur M—'s ideas, of how he was trying to ruin my reputation. He interrupted me before I could finish.

"He will have no difficulty in doing that if you receive him as you did tonight!" His voice was hard, and so cold that I suddenly wondered if this man, Arnell Gentry, was doubting all that I said.

After leaving the opera house that night, we went to a small Italian restaurant in the neighborhood. Conversation came in fits and starts. We talked with difficulty, and it was with a sigh of relief that I finally arrived at my hotel.

All the night long I lay staring into the darkness. He had said nothing about marriage to me. Then my mind traveled back to my student days, when Madame Zalia had talked so knowingly of free love. Perhaps she was right. Marriage and a career did not mix. Free love was the *sauce piquante* which never lasted long enough to become the monotone that is death to art.

The next morning a special messenger came with a note from Monsieur M—. I was informed that I must be at the opera house, at a certain time. That I must go immediately to his office. I did not have to read the letter twice to realize what he wanted me for. I had been caught in wild scenes in his office before this. I decided not to go. But some peculiar feeling in me made me rebel from this decision. I was afraid of no one. Why should I be? I was at Monsieur M—'s office door at eleven o'clock sharp, the time that he had asked me to come.

He was seated before a large desk of yellow oak, the cigarette butt hanging limply from his lips, dictating to his secretary, a dwarfed Italian, who immediately left the room. I thought I detected a leer upon his face, and had I been at all calm this expression would have inflamed me.

"So, you are not afraid to face me, after last night?" For the moment I could not remember what happening of special portent had occurred the night before. I had sung another performance of "Aïda" and never in better voice nor mood to portray the dusky Egyptian. I looked at him silently. His pale face was bloated and dark with the growth of bristly beard, his sideburns appeared matted.

"How long has *this* been going on,

*cara Violetta?"* He smiled and even his yellow, fang-like teeth did not disturb me. But at his "Cara Violetta" I turned upon him. Yet he held his dirty hand up to imply that he was not finished. I continued to remain silent, although I could feel my anger rising with the sudden *accelerando* of my heart. "Now, I know why your voice is going to the dogs, my young lady, why your performances are so uneven! For days I have wondered. Ah, what a fool I have been. I might have known you had already found a lover in this country!"

"You lie!" I said, suddenly infuriated by this accusation. "I have given no bad performances, and Arnell Gentry is *not* my lover!" My voice was so firm despite my anger that he knew I was speaking the truth. Feeling defeat close at hand, he decided upon other tactics.

"Violetta," he cried, "I believe you, I believe you! Take me, *take me!*"

He was on his knees now, on the floor before me. As I look back, I cannot recall anything more grotesque, or more repulsive than this ill-begotten creature. His love for me was a veritable calamity. One moment he was groveling on the floor beside me, grasping at my skirt, endeavoring to kiss the hem of it, the next he was storming at me in a disappointment of jealousy which, aided by anger, accused me of things unmentionable, shouted in words, both Italian and English that were so vile I had never heard them before. His mania took the form of the wildest imaginings, and the most impossible romances about me.

Of a sudden, my blood began to freeze in my veins. Monsieur M— had fallen to the floor, and in a convulsion was writhing there, while streaks of yellow foam came from between his lips. I shrieked for help, as I thought the man before me was about to die. People employed about the opera house rushed in and lifting him up placed him upon some chairs which I quickly formed as a couch. The doctor was sent for, and when he came he asked to speak with me alone. I explained to him frankly what had happened. He asked me for my address, at the same time telling me that he thought Monsieur M— was a very ill man. I promised to go to him at any time of the day or night, should he want me.

Innocent promise! Little did I realize that the net, even then being woven by the fates, was almost complete, almost ready to ensnare me!

That night I slept peacefully. For Arnell Gentry had come to me again seeking forgiveness for having doubted me. He could not live happily without me he said, and when he asked me to marry him I crossed myself superstitiously, in the very fear of having my prayers answered, my dream come true.

Arnell and I were forced not to see each other the night following, because of a law case that he was handling. It was his intention to spend the evening with his client, who was in New York at a hotel for a few days. As I was to sing my first performance of "Carmen" the night after that, I planned to retire early.

I had just fallen asleep when my

maid awakened me. A doctor, she said, had sent his carriage for me. Monsieur M— was asking for me, and would I go to him immediately. I might be the means of saving his life. I hurriedly threw my clothes on, and went down to the waiting carriage. When I arrived at Monsieur M—'s hotel, the doctor met me. He was sorry to have bothered me. Monsieur M— had been rational for the first time since his convulsion, and had asked for me. He was asleep now. Would I wait? He might awaken again, soon.

But Monsieur M— slept all that night, and I left his room at a little after two o'clock. No one knew of his illness, as it was thought that it might affect the public's attitude toward my appearance in "Carmen," were the manager known to be away from the opera house. I had been careful, needless to say, not to mention his name to Arnell.

As I walked out of Monsieur M—'s door, the entrance to the lift opposite, opened. A lone passenger in the elevator was my fiancé!

How we returned to my apartment I shall never know.

I would not explain my presence there at two in the morning. Something in me, an inner pride battling with my love, won, and I refused to speak.

"I have thought things over, since last night," Arnell Gentry told me, suddenly. We were seated in my small drawing-room, before a cold open fireplace in which a fire had died earlier in the evening. "I had accepted the fact that Monsieur M— was your castoff lover, but now, you must think me as gullible as those who have preceded me!" Was this the impassioned lover of the twenty-four hours before, seeking forgiveness, this man whose voice was strange to my ears in its accusatory tone? I put my arms about his neck, I wanted to make sure, to see that this was real, to understand that I was not living another horrible nightmare in my life!

I was very close to him, my wrap had fallen to the floor. A change came over his face. The blood coursed to his cheecks, his eyes became hot as his anger, forgotten in that heat of sudden love, was smothered by the kisses that burned my lips, my face, my neck and breast.

I was caught, swept upon the dangerous wings of emotion. I was desperate. If he was mine, truly mine, he could never leave me! Excess emotion blinded me. I would hold him as he had never been held before! What were the words of a marriage contract, the empty promises of ordinary people? After the fullest blossoming of our love, Arnell would forget his suspicions of me.

He left me early the next morning.

I sang "Carmen" that night. It was said that no singer before me had so completely held her public in the interpretation of the gypsy courtesan.

I have never seen Arnell Gentry since.

*Monsieur M— continues his jealous persecutions and then Violetta becomes involved in a hot affair with a Russian prince.*

*If all is fair in love, then one device is as good as another, when it comes to capturing a man.*

# NEW YORK NIGHTS

## By W. CAREY WONDERLY

THE FIDDLING DOLL

BECAUSE parents weren't permitted backstage at the Jewel Box, "Daddy Jack" Delafield was in the habit of dropping in the front of the house and watching his daughter from the last row of chairs in the orchestra. In a way Julie was a disappointment. Delafield was fond of saying he had given up his own career in order to advance his daughter's —and she had failed to repay him to the tune of capturing a millionaire.

Pretty chorus girls invariably smiled their way to luxury in novels and Julie was anything but hard to look at. A gay, impulsive young woman. Daddy Jack didn't think much of her in the Violin Number, when the girls were dressed in the costumes of Vienna of another day—stiff, voluminous silk skirts, tight waists, and flat, saucy little hats over one eye. Julie had a decidedly "foreign" look in this number, with her soft brown hair in little curls all over her head, and with her pretty ears showing. Delafield, no less than the girls themselves, objected strenuously to this horrible exposure of a young woman's organs of hearing.

"Whoever heard of such a thing!" he grumbled. "You look like you just landed at Ellis Island. It's—indecent, if you ask me."

Nora L'Estrange was more tolerant, if not downright abandoned about it.

"Why not uncover our ears?" she queried. "God knows they're the only thing left to reveal to the public. According to my light, ears are a better draw than legs, nowadays. Why, I've met quite a few sheiks of the younger generation that didn't know a woman was born with ears!"

"I'll wager you took care of that part of their education," sneered Follie Levy.

Nora only smiled. "Now you're talking politics," said she.

But just the same, Daddy Jack felt like apologizing many times for his daughter's state of undress until he

heard a man say, one night in the smoking-room during intermission, that the second girl from the right in the "Viennese Melody" scene was as pretty as a picture.

"And if she can really play the violin," added this gentleman, to a friend who accompanied him, "why, she is—gorgeous!"

Which remark drew a good-natured laugh from the other man. "Naturally! Of course! You've been infatuated with every violiniste from Maud Powell to a vaudeville headliner. And now this girl! Granted she's pretty, but . . . that's probably everything. Certainly she isn't an artiste—"

"She may be a student, working in this show for experience. If she is gifted, and ambitious—merely needs instruction and money—"

Delafield heard no more, for the two gentlemen passed on. But Daddy Jack had heard enough. In a fever of excitement he turned to the doorkeeper, an old chum of his, and directed his attention to his daughter's unknown admirer.

"Quick! Who's that bird—the guy in the soup-and-fish, with the misplaced eyebrow?"

The doorkeeper knew the man "Him? Howell Clendening. He—"

"*The* Howell Clendening?" Delafield thought a moment. "Owns a chain of big hotels all over the country—"

"You said it, Jack. Rotten with money. This is the third or fourth time he's been in to see the show—"

But Delafield was too excited to stop for details. What he had just heard sent him hurrying into the crisp night air, his active brain already scheming and planning.

After the final curtain Julie always got into her street clothes as quickly as she could, just as if she were going to meet the Prince of Wales instead of only Daddy Jack, according to Follie. Julie hadn't any smart frocks, rich furs or flashing jewelry, but then she lived with Delafield, who was really only her step-father, and gave him a part of her salary. She was one of the very few persons in the world who believed Jack had given up his own career for the sake of his daughter's and he could wring the last dollar from her merely by recalling this fact. Fortunately she was the type that looked very chic in a black velvet skirt and a scarlet tam. For if her beauty had demanded fine feathers, her youth could never have secured a place in the Jewel Box chorus by itself.

"What would you do," asked Follie Levy, "if some regular sheik should lay his heart and fortune at your door, Julie?"

"Oh, I'd bring in his fortune and close the door on his heart—isn't that what you expected me to say, dear?" Julie retorted, with a sly wink at Nora L'Estrange. "By the way, do you get much of a kick out of Bernie?"

Follie turned a bilious green as Nora answered for her, "About as much as a chauffeur would out of driving around all day in a taxicab on one of his holidays. It's all right, Julie; if they know any more riddles, let 'em ask me."

Laddie Schuyler broke into derisive

laughter. "Heavens! Is Bernie that slow, old egg?"

"About fifteen miles an hour," Nora said, answering for Follie.

"What do you mean?"

"He stays within the limit," vowed Miss L'Estrange, enjoying Follie's discomfort. "After a week of flowers and telephone calls and a platonic diamond or two, Bernie always pays the check without a murmur when the girl brings mamma along for the first *tête-à-tête* supper. That's the kind of wild youth he is. Plain vanilla. What would *you* do if a regular sheik made eyes at you, Levy?"

When the joke was thus turned on Follie, Julie laughed with the others, but she didn't linger in the dressing-room, adding insult to injury, for she wasn't the sophisticated, Broadway type. Innocent, but not ignorant. New York born and bred and yet oddly sweet and guileless. Poverty, chicanery, she had been familiar with from the cradle and still they had left no marks on her soul. Far from bewailing the lack of a lover, she ran out to meet Delafield with affection and anticipation, for whatever else Daddy Jack was, he was never dull.

To-night Delafield was unusually attentive, drawing Julie's hand through his arm and proposing a snack at the Momentary Club before they went home.

"You don't know how pretty you looked to-night, honey!" he whispered. "I'll swear you fairly took my breath in the 'Viennese Melody' scene, dear."

"I know—my ears flabbergasted you, Daddy Jack," she said slyly.

"Not a bit of it!" he maintained stoutly. "I love your ears. You should wear your hair that way all the time, doll."

At the Momentary Club he left her for a minute or two while he went upstairs to the Saratoga Room, where he checked up his gambling debts. Julie knew of course that her step-father owed his more or less precarious living to cards or horses, and when he returned, solemn-faced and silent, she at once divined that he had lost again. No need to question him; no need for explanations.

"It's all right, Daddy Jack," she cried, giving his fingers an affectionate squeeze. "We'll have a cocktail. And I'll pay the check."

Delafield had a long story of hard luck. He had wagered on the right horse and then the jockey had to go and get his mount disqualified for fouling another plug. And as if this wasn't enough, he had lost a roll playing roulette. If he didn't know Sue, who conducted the Saratoga Room, as well as he did, he'd be tempted to say the game wasn't on the level. The breaks were against him; sometimes he felt like putting an end to it all.

Julie was fond of him, and so she urged him to dance, and ordered more cocktails.

"I haven't had any luck since we went to live in Forty-ninth Street, honey," Jack declared. "Some houses are like that. Yes, it's that place. I wish we could move out, baby."

"All right," Julie agreed, smiling. "We'll move out, then. Only . . . you'll have to find the new flat, Daddy

Jack. I couldn't find a lucky house with a horseshoe in my pocket and a shamrock on my blouse. It's up to you, old dear."

Jack Delafield knew what he wanted. It was a little difficult to find, for after all his finances were limited, but by the end of the week he took Julie down to Greenwich Village to show her their new home. A little flat in a mews in back of Washington Square. Daddy Jack was quick to point out that you approached it from Fifth Avenue, and that Valerie Vantine, the popular hostess at the Momentary Club, lived in the same neighborhood. But it wasn't until Julie entered the rooms and glimpsed the lovely view from the rear that her disappointment vanished and she found herself smiling again.

For the two back windows looked out on a garden in the rear of a house on Washington Square—a prim and charming garden where throughout the summer old-fashioned flowers bloomed. There was a brick walk and a tree with a bench under it. Julie's eyes grew sentimental and seizing her violin she began to play the love-song from "Maytime." Only a bar or two before Delafield snatched the instrument from her hands.

"Don't do that!" he fairly thundered.

Julie looked her surprise. "Do I play as badly as all that?" she cried. "Are you afraid I will intimidate our neighbors before we are settled? Oh, very well!"

But she wasn't really angry or even indignant and when Daddy Jack explained that he had chosen a house in a mews for their residence because he hoped to ingratiate himself with the horses, Julie laughed as if he had told her the best joke in the world. She even accepted with good grace his assertion that he was going to buy a phonograph, with records by Heifetz, Zimbalist and Kreisler, so that she could study these masters of the violin and profit by their art.

"Dear old boy," she smiled, "you're dreaming big for your Julie." Still it was infinitely better than the card games and pool-rooms. Even if he was only ambitious for her, that was something.

When the phonograph arrived Julie tried to conceal her surprise from Delafield, for she didn't want to hurt his feelings by having him think she had ever doubted his sincerity in the matter. A big, handsome instrument, with a fine assortment of violin selections and some extra loud-tone needles.

"Now," beamed Daddy Jack, "we're going to make an artiste out of our kid. If your playing was as pretty as you are, you'd be—gorgeous, honey! Ah, that's the word—gorgeous!"

Every morning, then, Julie gave an hour to her violin lessons. With Delafield's help she had turned the rear room into a sort of studio, and here, when days were fine, she stood before the open window with her fiddle.

Daddy Jack had charge of the phonograph. "Listen! Listen!" he'd say. "Don't attempt to follow Heifetz, honey. Mute the strings. Not a sound. Simply go through the motion and try to absorb his method; fill your soul with his technique."

Howell Clendening first saw Julie

with her violin one morning when he was walking in his garden. Really the music attracted his attention and after he had glanced up at the open window and recognized the girl, he was as pleased as a kid with a new toy. The fiddling beauty from the Jewel Box, who Bob Stafford had said was certainly no artiste! Well, old Bob ought to hear her now. Hear her playing this divine Nocturne of Chopin's. It was all Clen could do to keep from applauding when she put down her bow.

After that first morning he used to steal into the garden, deliberately to listen. He wasn't a very clever young man, perhaps, and the things he loved best he either did very badly or else not at all. Music he worshipped and he couldn't play a note! Perhaps it was the most natural thing in the world then that he should venerate genius and consider it an honor to aid financially such young men and women as possessed the divine spark. Although this young lady—Julie Delafield—didn't require help; she was an artiste already.

Naturally it didn't take Julie very long to discover Clendening under his apple-tree, gazing, moonstruck, up at her window. Daddy Jack of course had seen him there the very first morning.

"Somebody sure does admire Heifetz's records," Julie observed, with a wagging forefinger in Delafield's direction.

Their eyes met and Daddy Jack smiled. "Perhaps," he grinned, the rogue. "Perhaps he don't know 'Yankee Doodle' from 'Bambalina' and only admires . . . flesh and blood. Why not, baby? You know you're the sweetest, prettiest doll on earth. No, it ain't applesauce, either. And I'm not throwing bouquets at myself, because you don't belong to me except by the heart-strings, eh, kid? You're gorgeous, Julie, and if that lad is nuts over you, I for one don't blame him. Nice looking boy, too. Respectable. All American, not a Latin or Spanish model, I mean. I don't like sheiks, not for my Julie."

Delafield bided his time patiently. One morning after Julie had finished her lesson in front of the phonograph, and had rushed away uptown to meet Nora L'Estrange for lunch at the Ritz, Daddy Jack took his daughter's violin to the window . . . and dropped it down on Howell Clendening's brick walk. Of course the young man was loitering in his garden, and of course the violin was splintered beyond repair. When Delafield got to the window, Clendening was bending over the pieces of the broken instrument.

"How did it happen?" asked the younger man.

Daddy Jack shook his head. "Julie will be inconsolable," he murmured. "She had placed the fiddle on the sill for a sun-bath just a moment ago. Perhaps you heard her, my daughter—?"

"I did, indeed, sir!" Clendening said eagerly. "I'll—have to confess that often I've come out here just to listen to her play. Of course this instrument was valuable?"

"It was said to be a Stradivarius although it isn't marked or dated. I am sure my daughter looked upon the vio-

lin as a human being almost. What a tragedy for my poor Julie."

The young man nodded soberly. "It was a treat just to hear her, sir."

Whatever success Jack Delafield had known before the footlights, he was a consummate actor away from the theater. After the briefest hesitancy, he said with just the right shade of intimacy, "My daughter is only in the ensemble at the Jewel Box, but she is a diligent and ambitious young woman and her friends are hopeful for a career for her. Unfortunately, I am not a wealthy man, and Julie must work in order to pay her way. . . . There! I don't know why I am telling you all this, unless—"

"I am deeply flattered by your confidence, Mr. Delafield," interposed Clendening.

"Then you know who we are?" cried Daddy Jack, registering surprise.

"I have seen your daughter on the stage," the younger man explained, with heightened color. "Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Howell Clendening, and inasmuch as we are neighbors—"

Jack Delafield walked around the block and met his neighbor at his front door. A fine old home, a beautiful house, filled with beautiful things. Clendening declared he had bought it because it was so unlike a hotel—he owned so many hotels that he knew he could never be happy in an apartment. Daddy Jack drank some Scotch and smoked some Havana cigars, after which he returned to the mews with the splintered violin under his arm.

"Perhaps it can be repaired—I hope so," he said, when parting with his young host. "Julie lavished the affection which some girls bestow upon a dog or horse upon this old fiddle. How shall I meet her when she comes home this afternoon?"

Eventually, Julie did return to the little flat in the mews—out of breath and bubbling over with laughter because two young men had mistaken her for an artist's model.

"They followed me for a block along Fifth Avenue and then, when I turned in this alley—"

"My dear Julie, this isn't an alley," interpolated Jack Delafield. "Do you happen to know who our neighbors are? There is more art to the square inch in this mews than there are honest young men on Fifth Avenue."

"I know it, darling," she cried quickly. "And I didn't flirt. I never flirt with men who read *La Vie Parisienne* —they're sure to be lacking in a sense of humor. . . . Hello! What happened to the fiddle?"

"My love," replied Daddy Jack, without looking at her, "your Strad took a header out of the window and when I went to fetch it our neighbor, Mr. Clendening, invited us to supper at the Momentary Club, to-night, after the frolic. Neat?"

"Oh, pretty!" enthused Julie. "Now we won't have to spend so much money for dinner and you can have a wager on Miss Tomboy when she goes again to-morrow at Pimlico."

As events proved that evening, Delafield had lost some of his love for thoroughbred horses; he was gambling for bigger stakes now. There was never a

maneuvering mother more solicitous of her chick than was Daddy Jack that night with Julie. Following his daughter and young Clendening into the Momentary Club he positively radiated importance, much to the amusement of Nora L'Estrange, who watched the little drama from the sidelines. When the young people rose to dance, Delafield beamed like a benevolent godfather. He left all the ordering to his host and ate lobster with gusto, a dish heretofore described by him as "chorus girls' chow."

"Beautiful! Marvelous!" he cried, when Julie and Clendening returned, red-cheeked and laughing, to the table. "It's a treat to watch you two dance—upon my soul it is!"

Julie tantalized him with her smile. "You know very well I don't dance like a Pavlowa, Daddy Jack."

"Ah, my love, but you are wonderful with Mr. Clendening! A good partner, now—"

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Clendening doesn't dance as well as you do, you old rogue," laughed his daughter. And then she brushed Jack Delafield's ear with her lips and whispered, "Though he's more exciting to dance with!"

Presently they began to discuss Julie's future, and after the first shock of hearing herself called a virtuoso by her father she sat back and rather enjoyed it all. It was decidedly pleasant to be paid such glowing compliments and to know that one of the men at least meant them. Clendening spoke of a scholarship and was willing to finance Julie and Delafield for two years in Paris, where she was to study with a great teacher of the violin.

It was a tempting offer and for about ten minutes Daddy Jack saw himself swinging down the boulevards in chestnut time, with Julie clinging to his arm. And then the scene changed to Longchamps and he pictured himself mingling with the gay racing throng and winning a fortune in the pari-mutuals. But these dreams quickly vanished. It wasn't always spring even in Paris, and Jack Delafield knew—none better!—that there are few fortunes won at the race-track. Besides, Julie . . . what about her? She would never be a great artiste. But . . . it was highly probable she would make a great wife. For any man! Even Howell Clendening.

So Delafield thanked Clendening warmly and replied that pressing business affairs would keep him indefinitely in New York and it was impossible, of course, for Julie to go to Europe without her dad. What about American teachers? Were there no good ones? Delafield rather thought so. And then he played his ace and said that, anyway, Julie preferred to be self-supporting; if possible, they would pay for her lessons out of their own little moneys.

"Believe me, sir, we are not ungrateful," Daddy Jack assured Clendening, "and it is a great compliment you pay my daughter by wishing to act as her patron. But . . . we are Southerners, Julie and I — I guess that's it. The Delafields weren't always paupers. I remind myself of this fact every time I see my daughter in the chorus, Clen-

dening. Just now it is impossible for her to secure a concert engagement—indeed, we have discussed the feasibility of her playing—well, here. Just to show, you understand. To prove she can play the violin. Why not? Ponselle sang in vaudeville before she went to the Metropolitan. Elsie Ferguson started in the chorus. So I say to Julie, if she could secure an engagement here—in the Momentary Club—"

He paused and glanced at Clendening, but the young man was looking at Julie, his good-natured face aglow.

"Of course!" he cried at last, trying to fire the girl with the same eager interest. "All you say is quite true about Ponselle and Miss Ferguson. It's the very thing! Start here and finish at Carnegie Hall!"

"Unfortunately," sighed Daddy Jack, with an expressive gesture of the hands, "Julie is unable to obtain an opening at the Momentary Club. Professional jealousy, of course. The management may talk all it wants of contracts with Bee Dawn and Ivy Lynne. 'Bosh!' I say to that. It's jealousy—politics—nothing less."

Howell Clendening nodded thoughtfully. "If that's the case," he vowed, with a steely glitter in his eyes, "we'll . . . open a supper club especially for Miss Julie. And that's that."

When they said good night at the corner of the mews, Julie was just a little tired of it all, for she had wanted to dance again, and exchanged a joke with the *enfant terrible;* but Daddy Jack walked on air and let himself in their door, whistling the waltz from "Maytime."

"Why all the applesauce to-night?" she queried somewhat crossly. "Nora kept giving you the glad-eye and you sat like a professor, discussing Mendelssohn and Tschaikowsky and Schubert. Do you know who they are?"

"Sure!" Delafield grinned. "Schubert's got a theater named after him in Forty-fourth Street. . . . And it wasn't applesauce, honey. That young fellow is batty about your fiddling."

"My fiddling?" Julie laughed, stopping short and looking at her stepfather. "Be your age, laddie buck."

"No, it isn't your fiddling, either," Delafield said then, suddenly serious. "Clendening thinks it's your violin, but it isn't—it's you. He's head-and-heels in love with you, baby doll."

"John! As you were! Don't try to kid me, father; I've seen you with your molars out."

Just the same, Howell Clendening called on Daddy Jack early next morning, and the two men drove uptown in the big Rolls-Royce to look for a suitable location for the proposed supper club. Before the day was over, Clendening had bought a piece of property in the East Fifties, just off the Avenue, and Delafield was able to tell Julie at dinner that work was already underway on the Club Violin.

"Oh!" ejaculated the girl. "Am I supposed to laugh or burst out crying? I heard a better one than that from the infant to-day."

"The Club Violin, I said," repeated Delafield, with all the dignity he could muster. "Say, you haven't got a lame ear, honey. The Club Violin—and Clen picked the name himself."

"Oh, 'Clen' did, did he? The Club Violin, eh? Why not the Phonograph Cafeteria? When I fiddle, must I wear a dunce cap, and will you print a line on the menu cards, stating it is all in fun? Suffering tuna!" She mopped her brow with a comedy gesture and sought an echoing smile on Delafield's countenance.

Instead, he was as grave as a judge.

"Listen, daughter," he said, gently for him, "things haven't been so rosy for you all your little life. Not like I wish I could make 'em. Seldom velvet. Here's this nice young fellow comes along and he's strong for you—strong, baby. If you could have heard him to-day—"

"Dad, you know it's just because he thinks I'm a genius—"

"Wait, honey! That boy wouldn't know a genius if such a person was pointed out to him. Sure, he likes music; is batty over the violin! But you or Heifetz—and I don't know but that he wouldn't like you best! Of course! Because you're—*you!* Once you're married, you can develop writer's cramp or something."

Julie just looked at him. "Now I'll tell one. I'll never marry Clendening; I don't want to, in spite of all his money. Life isn't so bad, dad, despite the fact that you will back the wrong horse occasionally. Or more frequently than that—what? Run along now to the Saratoga Room and 'dope' tomorrow's races. It's time for the opery—I'm off. Ta-ta."

Work continued, however, on the new supper club just off the Avenue, and every day, and all day, Clendening and Daddy Jack were in conference. An old mansion was being remodeled and everything was being done on a most artistic scale. There were to be no gambling rooms upstairs and simply a small rectangle for dancing, with everything revolving around Julie and her violin. It was all for the glorification of Julie, and Clendening didn't care who knew it.

"All I want is to bring people here to listen to her, Delafield," the young man said to Daddy Jack. "I don't care if the place loses money—I'll feel more than repaid if I can make New York recognize Julie as a genius. If people could only hear her as I've heard her—in the garden there— Perhaps it can be done! The interior of the restaurant must be done over to represent an old-fashioned garden and there'll be a window—a stage—for Julie."

"But," argued Delafield, "it will mean tearing out everything—new decorations—just when it's almost ready."

"What of it?" demanded Clen. "It's quite important that Julie shall have exactly the right setting."

When he told her about the new interior, Julie merely smiled. "You liked that, I bet," she murmured, later. "Now you can hide the phonograph."

Delafield shook his head. "If you play your cards well, honey, you'll never have to play a note in public. For one thing, you can only perform on your dear old Strad—see? And that's bu'sted. Clendening is going to send it to Cremona to have it repaired by a famous old violin-maker and that'll take months, I've figured. By that time you'll be Mrs. Howell Clen—"

"Say, I'm going to marry one of the violet-eyed chorus boys at the show shop if you keep up that line of talk," his daughter interposed. "How would you like that?"

"You'll be sending me straight to the electric chair, that's all," Daddy Jack grinned, "for I'll put arsenic in the bridegroom's ice-cream soda at the wedding breakfast."

At the end of two months, newly decorated throughout, the Club Violin was ready to throw open its doors to the public, and the only excuse for the delay was the missing Stradivarius, still in the shop of the maker in Europe. Daddy Jack thought it would be asking too much of Julie to expect a brilliant début with another instrument. A strange violin—anything but her beloved Strad? Impossible! Still, he was anxious to open the place. He wanted to bring Julie and Clen together more and this seemed the only way. For it was only natural that Clendening would show up at the club every evening for a time at least, while if Julie worked there it was a foregone conclusion they would see more than a little of each other. Daddy Jack believed in the power of propinquity no less than he had faith in his daughter's charms.

Finally it was decided to engage another violinist, a man, so that it wouldn't take the edge off for Julie when her missing fiddle arrived; and with Daddy Jack greeting his guests, and Julie herself as hostess, Manhattan's newest supper club opened its doors to the public.

While there was little artistic triumph for Julie, she certainly scored a big personal success in her rôle of hostess. All the beauties from the Jewel Box attended, while Howell Clendening entertained a big party of his society friends. That evening, for the first time, Julie and Delafield met Clen's best friend, Bob Stafford, and in spite of the fact that Mr. Stafford followed Julie around like a shadow, showing her every attention, and showering her with honors, the young man scarcely succeeded in making himself liked.

He asked a great many questions about the Club Violin and appeared equally curious regarding Julie's future. Clen had said something about a career, and Stafford confessed he was very much disappointed because she wasn't playing to-night. She must be sure to let him know when she was ready to make her début.

"He smells a rat, Daddy," Julie whispered to Delafield, during a hurried conference.

"Naturally—the big cheese!" growled Jack. "Turn Laddie and Beatrice and Follie on him—they'll leave him nothing but regrets before they're through. How do you like Clen's aunt and cousins? They're your kind of folks, honey."

Dear old Daddy Jack, delightful old scalawag and rogue! Of course he'd say that. Julie knew what he wanted of her and Clen.

Every night Clendening entertained a big party at the Club Violin, and such entertainment cost a pretty penny. Clen signed the checks and Delafield took care of them. At the end of the week the restaurant held his I. O. U.'s to the

tune of something like four thousand dollars.

"Send them down to my bankers and they'll give you the money," Clendening told Delafield.

Julie went over the account with a stubby lead pencil. As a bookkeeper she was a charming young woman.

"Here's Clen spending four grand a week and Stafford dropping in every night and spending only the evening," she observed to her step-father. "He's forever talking about my music, too. If he doesn't hear me play the violin soon he'll fret himself to death."

"Good! I'll contribute the funeral wreath," nodded Daddy Jack, busy with morning newspapers.

Just the same, he realized it would never do to antagonize Bob Stafford, for he and Clendening had been friends since boyhood and Stafford still had a lot of influence over the young millionaire. Not enough to close the Club Violin, as a waste of money, or to keep Clen from seeing Julie, but sufficient to ruin everything if he discovered anything discreditable to the Delafields. So Stafford was welcomed warmly, had the entree to the place, and in a short time was calling Julie by her given name.

It was one of the girls from the Jewel Box, probably Nora L'Estrange, who disliked him exceedingly, that told Stafford Julie would have a birthday on Wednesday. The Jewel Box girls had planned a little surprise and Stafford must be there to help make it a success.

"Now he'll probably go out and buy her a stick of Wrigley's," Nora said. "That chap is closer than the next second, and if he wouldn't rob a hot dog of its mustard, he'd refuse pointblank to let a bird take a drink out of the Atlantic Ocean. He's the kind who'd be glad to have a girl walk back from a joy ride, because it would save gas."

"Huh! You didn't see any dust on my shoes, did you, when I went for a spin in his car?" sniffed Beatrice.

"No, nor any 'dust' anywhere else," declared Nora.

But when it came to a gift for Julie, Stafford did himself proud. He opened his heart and his purse, the one because of the other, according to the Jewel Box girls. The joke was now on Nora L'Estrange. Stafford was a prince of generosity! . . . Only Julie and Daddy Jack could have told them it wasn't munificence which prompted Bob Stafford to offer Julie a violin along with his congratulations.

Her face flushed to the roots of her hair and for a moment killing fear gripped her heartstrings.

"For—me?" she forced herself to say. "You're very kind, Bob—but—why?"

"Your birthday celebration," Stafford answered, bowing.

The supper club was crowded to the doors, and as Nora and Follie and Beatrice began to close in around Julie, some of the guests, despite the fact that Laddie Schuyler was doing her act, commenced to applaud.

"They want you to play for them," Stafford said, and Julie could feel his eyes eating into her flesh. "Everyone knows that you are the star of the place and only the fact that your violin

is being repaired prevents your playing. Now that they see you with this instrument—"

"But it isn't Julie's Strad," Delafield cut in quickly, elbowing his way into the circle.

Julie met his glance gratefully; saw Clen looking at her and went as white as death.

"Nor is it my birthday!" she ventured. "Hush! Laddie has the floor. This new number is a riot—"

Miss L'Estrange eased her way to the front and addressed herself to Stafford. That Laddie was strutting her stuff made little difference to Nora. She considered Miss Schuyler very small potato—and said so.

What she said to Stafford was scarcely more complimentary. "The joke's on you, old fruit. Really, you've done yourself proud, Robert — I wouldn't believe it unless I saw it with my own eyes. You know," she explained to all within hearing, "I made a little bet with the girls—and I've lost. We got to talking about Bob Stafford, and after each of us had contributed our mite, it set us to thinking what he'd do if — Julie, say, had a big birthday party. Nobody dreamed he'd ever come across with anything so handsome as this! And a bunch of pansies or a box of gumdrops could be sent to the Home for Destitute Cats without hard feelings anywhere. Instead of which . . . a fiddle. Robert, you don't know how you've risen in my estimation."

Several of the girls laughed, and Stafford's eyes threatened a quick death, but before he could find his voice, Beatrice called the room's attention to the gyrating Laddie.

"My God, look at Schuyler doing her Salome Dance; she just let go of the seventh veil and—good night! Don't crowd, boys! Women and children first. It isn't your fault, Julie, dear. An ambitious girl just don't stop at anything nowadays and you can't blame her, the way Nora was crabbing her act. I never knew Laddie was vaccinated there before, did you?"

"Where?" demanded an optimistic youth, but Beatrice's ear had gone suddenly lame.

Julie was fair enough to appreciate the fact that Stafford had been imposed upon by her friends, and humiliated before her, and next morning, when he dropped in the Club Violin, she was unusually kind. She was at the desk, going over some checks of the evening before, always a difficult task with her, and on the whole she wasn't sorry for the interruption.

"But you know I can't accept that violin from you, Bob," she told him, when he begged her to keep the instrument just the same. "Daddy Jack says it is an Amati and worth a fortune—at least, to us. I'm furious with Nora. Can't you persuade the firm to take it back?"

"If you won't have it, I'll keep it myself, Julie, as a sort of memento," he said. "I don't mean to be tight with the girls, but I'm not a rich man, and then why should I spend money on them? They mean nothing to me—I'm insensible to their beauty, charms, wit. With you it is different."

"Please!" Julie shook off his hand and drew away.

"I'm mad about you, Julie," Stafford whispered hoarsely. "I love you better than anything in the world. I'll admit I've fought against this love, but it wasn't to be denied—"

"Bob, I'm sorry," she interposed gently, "but I don't care for you—that way. Dad and I—we're not your kind, after all. You were right to fight against me. If you married a girl from a cabaret, your mother would be heartbroken. So let's be friends, if you wish, and forget all this moonshine. I've got this work to finish before noon." She made an appealing little gesture, but it was a full minute before he responded to it and sat down to help her with her accounts.

It was nearly twelve before she was ready to start for the bank, where she would receive cash in exchange for Clendening's I. O. U.'s. The sum was nearly ten thousand dollars, Julie noticed, glancing at the total which Stafford had affixed for her—a lot of money for any man to fritter away in a single week. Daddy Jack would require every penny of it to meet the payroll, but . . . art—or hearts—came high.

"Sorry I haven't my car to run you down," Stafford said, watching Julie with her hat before the mirror.

"That's all right, Bob. One of the boys will get a taxi," she replied cheerily.

Instead, he went for the cab himself.

When he returned, she was tapping her foot impatiently in the doorway. "The bank will be closed."

He thought not. Or, at least, they would let her in. "Want me to go with you?" he asked.

Julie answered "no" and stepped into the taxicab.

On her way downtown she began to think of Bob Stafford. And then about herself. Somehow, Julie couldn't bring herself to believe that Bob loved her very deeply. Nor, for that matter, what reason had she to believe that Clen cared for her! He always talked about her genius, her career, never about herself. What a farce it was! She felt just a little tired and impatient, like an actor who has been through a hard season. Squeezing laughter where there was no comedy, tears when the heart was dead. After last night she was afraid, for she realized that only Laddie Schuyler's rather shameless exhibition had saved her from admitting her fraud with Stafford's violin. Bob knew. That was why he had selected the Amati for a gift. And another time she would be forced to play or—or confess.

Arriving at the bank, she went to the private office where bills and silver were given her in exchange for Howell Clendening's signatures. The clerk merely looked at the total and remarked pleasantly that it was a lot of money to carry around, but Julie had her taxi at the door and she gave little thought to the words. Thanked him. Hurried to her cab. And was driven away.

It was perhaps fifteen minutes later that Julie happened to glance out of the window and discovered that she was in a strange neighborhood, somewhere within sight of the Brooklyn

Bridge. Then she realized that they were traveling at a pretty fast rate. She spoke to the chauffeur, but he paid no attention to her. There was a second man in the front of the car, too.

It seemed certain that they must run down someone, kill or maim some of these children who crowded the narrow streets. Julie tugged at the door, but it wouldn't open. The money—it was the money, of course, these bandit drivers wanted. Strange that she should never have dreamed of such a possibility! But men killed men every day for a great deal less than ten thousand dollars. Clen's money. God! She and Daddy Jack had cost him enough without letting these desperadoes get away with this sum.

Glancing out of the little window at the back, Julie saw a car which she decided must be following them. Making better time, too, for the taxi cleared the way and the other merely pushed ahead over open ground. She wondered if the chauffeur was aware of this other automobile, and as if in answer to her unspoken question, heard him shout in his companion's ear that the "bulls" were at their heels.

The bulls! That must be the police! Without thought for the consequences, Julie smashed the glass with her little clenched fist and shouted through the aperture for them to "come on!"

The next moment everything went dark. She was pitched forward on her face, gave a last thought to Clen and his money as she heard the cab splinter around her head, and then . . . oblivion.

When Julie opened her eyes she was half-reclining in a big rocking-chair in the back room of a little shop under the Bridge. As soon as she recognized the clerk from the bank, and the private detective, who was always on the floor, she sighed her relief.

"They didn't get the money! Mr. Clendening's money is safe!" she cried, starting up.

"We've got the money and we've got the crooks," answered the clerk, but without his usual friendliness.

Then the detective said something to him in an undertone and the young man shut up.

Julie tried to rise and felt suddenly weak. The room danced before her eyes. Then she noticed a bandage around her wrist and detected the pungent odor of blood.

"What happened?" she asked faintly.

"When the taxi driver found he couldn't escape he ran the cab into the stone foundation and jumped. When they stopped to get the valise from inside the cab, however, we nabbed them." The clerk smiled now; he was rather pleased with himself.

Julie stood up. "I'm all right now," she said, forcing a smile. "If I could have a taxi—and the money, please—I've got to get back to the club with the payroll, you know."

The two men exchanged glances and there was something in their look which stirred Julie to vague alarm.

"Miss Delafield," said the clerk at last, "I'm afraid we can't let you have that money until Mr. Clendening comes. We've communicated with him and he'll be here any minute. You see, those checks you brought to the bank

weren't — weren't quite correct. As I've always done, I just glanced at the total and handed you out the money. Usually the — er — mistake wouldn't have been noticed right away, but the new assistant took the checks right up and began to go over them. You were scarcely out of the bank. We saw you enter the cab and could follow you. Quick work."

"Yes, yes! But what was wrong with the checks?" Julie interposed, pale to her lips.

"They added up about seventy-five hundred and you had made the total ten thousand dollars."

"There was a mistake in the addition, then?"

"There were several mistakes in addition, Miss Delafield. For instance, a mistake of a couple hundred in a single supper check. There was scarcely one correct check in the lot, in fact. It seemed so — criminally negligent —"

He stopped short. Clendening had emerged from the shadows of the little shop, where he had been listening.

Going over to Julie, he said: "Where's Delafield? I phoned him directly I got word —"

"It wasn't Daddy Jack," she cried, gripping Clen's arm. "Whatever he's done, my father has never handled those checks."

"Who, then?" Clendening demanded, as white as the girl herself.

Her eyes closed to blot out the picture she saw with such clear vision. This was no mistake; a child could have done better than that. A difference of nearly three thousand dollars — and every check wrongly totalled! What could she think? — how otherwise? And yet . . . Stafford was his best friend, they were chums from boyhood.

Never had she seen Clen so grim-featured and unyielding before. In a flash, Julie saw herself floundering helplessly in the morass of her own deceit. She was a fraud, a liar, and worse. And Clen would never forgive her. This was the end, for, of course, he'd never want to see her again. No wonder Stafford hated her — and would Clen when he knew. So . . . why not leave him . . . his old pal —

"I did it," she said, unable to meet Clendening's eyes.

She swayed and he caught her in his arms, straining her against his breast. Before she fainted for the first time in her life, Julie seemed to hear him say: "Little fool! Dear little fool! As if I can't recognize the figures on the checks!"

It seemed as if all the roses in the world were blooming in her cool little room when Julie opened her eyes. A white-capped, uniformed young woman said something and Daddy Jack sprang forward.

"There you are, honey — as right as paint!" he cried, with nervous cheerfulness. "It was all Bob Stafford's fault. When the big fish went to get a taxi for you, he ran around saying he had to have a chauffeur who could be trusted, as there was a fortune at stake. Julie, could you invite a crook to help himself in better English? And the checks — why, he added them up for you, baby doll! I told Clen Bob must 'ave been tipsy."

"Yes, he must have been tipsy," Julie said. "Where is Stafford, Daddy?"

"Clen tried to reach him at his club, but the house valet said Bob had packed his bags and left in a sort of hurry."

Julie sighed. "Bob Stafford doesn't like me."

"You should grieve yourself to death about a little thing like that. Here's somebody who does!" And Delafield opened the door and called to Clendening, who had been cooling his heels in the living-room.

"Here she is, old top—as right as paint!" Daddy Jack cried, rubbing his hands together. "Not a bone broken, only nerves and that wrist, where she cut it on the glass. Talk about a nervy young devil, eh, Clen? Detective Burke says she saved the boodle. Held on to it—shouted 'police!' As good as ever, Clen," he added, beaming at the pair of them. "Of course, that arm is going to hinder her violin playing—"

"Of course. Her bow hand," murmured Clendening quietly.

Julie shook her head slowly. "Daddy Jack, Clen's got to know the truth," she said, in a low voice. "Even if it means never seeing him again, he's got to hear how we deliberately schemed and planned to cheat him."

Clendening dropped down on his knees beside the bed and put his arms around her.

"Perhaps I've always known the truth, dearest," he said. "Or — I've known for a long time, Julie. What I didn't know, of course, was how much I cared."

"You're just saying that to let me down easy, Clen," she whispred, trembling in his clasp.

"I can prove it."

"How?"

"By your old violin, sweetheart. I never sent it to Europe to be repaired. I have it in an old chest at home, along with my most-cherished treasures—my jack-knife, my grandfather's Confederate coat, and a lock of my mother's hair."



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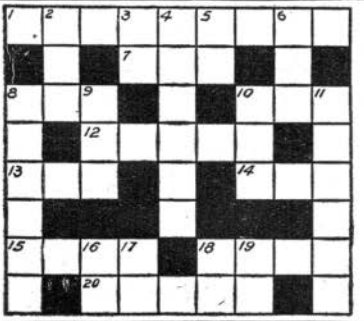

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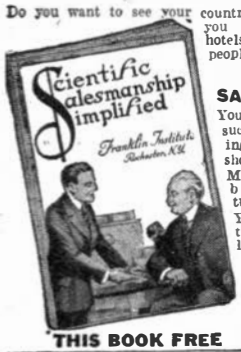


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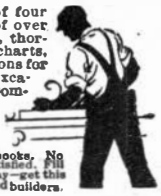

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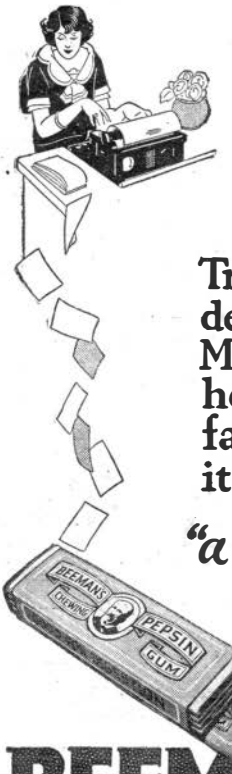


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# Now! You can darken Gray Hair

**safely, surely, and without that "dyed" appearance—with the preparation that has given satisfaction to uncounted thousands of once gray haired people—*you can darken your hair* and**

## ~even your friends won't know!

GRAY HAIR may become some few people but in all cases gray hair denotes age and, oh, how we dislike to be called old! After all a person is only as old as he or she looks and we all want to look as young as possible.

For those to whom youth is dear and precious and *necessary*, we now make it possible to hide those tell-tale gray hairs; to darken the hair so no one will know—not even your most intimate friends and associates unless you choose to tell them.

A frank discussion of the subject may be of interest to you.

Many people who are gray have been trying everything, only to find that most of the rapid hair "dyes" give a metallic, dull and lifeless cast to the hair that is far from natural in appearance. Besides, the change in color is so abrupt that everyone notices it.

Perhaps, you also are confused by the claims made for the countless gray hair preparations. You are entitled to know the facts so that you can choose the kind you wish to use without experimenting. There are many preparations that will change the color of your hair "overnight" or in "fifteen minutes." No doubt they do so but they are dyes and work the same way that you dye a piece of cloth, except that hair dyes do not do the job so well. We hardly think you want to use that method—it simply advertises immediately and certainly the fact that you are using something on your hair.

## Now There Is a Better Way The Q-ban Way

Now the Q-ban Hair Color Restorer works differently. It has certain chemical components that, when applied to the human hair according to simple and easy directions, cause a slow darkening of color—a change so gradual that it takes place unnoticed by your friends and the dark color has a natural appearance. Although slow, the action of Q-ban Hair Color Restorer is positive and seldom fails. It is safe to use and is not messy—a clean, daintily scented liquid used in the privacy of your home without fuss or trouble. You will like Q-ban, and you will not be experimenting, for millions of bottles have been used by hundreds of thousands of gray haired people during the last twenty-five years.

## Read What These Users Say About Q-ban Hair *Color* Restorer

Mr. C. F. C., Tampa, Fla.
"I have used your Q-ban Hair Color Restorer for years and find it highly satisfactory."

Mrs. J. W. C., St. Louis
"Q-ban Hair Color Restorer cannot be improved. I know because I have used it many years."

Mr. L. P. H., San Francisco
"Am delighted. Q-ban gradually darkened my hair in twenty-four days and no one noticed it."

Mrs. A. K. B., Lancaster, Pa.
"Tried tints and dyes but Q-ban excels all. Does exactly as your book says."

Miss M. L., New Orleans
"Age would be detrimental to me in the business world. Thanks to Q-ban, no one knows."

Mrs. H. A. W., Battle Creek
"Change to dark color very gradual and appearance is wonderfully natural."

Mr. G. W. S., Denver
"Have used Q-ban nineteen years. Only my wife knows."

**Just do this:** Purchase from your druggist a 75-cent bottle of Q-ban Hair Color Restorer. See that the hair and scalp are thoroughly clean and free of any other preparation that you may have been using. Apply Q-ban liberally to each lock of hair. Allow hair to dry, preferably in bright sunlight, in daylight if possible, but *do not rub off*. Apply Q-ban Hair Color Restorer each day for a week, putting nothing else on the hair meanwhile.

After seven or eight applications you will see a gradual change. Make two applications the second week and only occasionally thereafter. A slow and sure darkening of the hair will take place and your associates will not have noticed it. Sometimes the process requires several weeks, sometimes one bottle and then again several bottles. But you use only the one preparation to darken the hair—Q-ban Hair *Color* Restorer, sold by all druggists, 75 cents the bottle.

*First cleanse hair and scalp thoroughly*

*Apply Q-ban Hair Color Restorer to each lock*

*Dry in sun or daylight. Do not rub it off*

### Sold Under Positive Guarantee

Owing to the fact that Q-ban Hair Color Restorer works so gradually, a sample would prove nothing to you, for sometimes several bottles are required to obtain the desired results. Therefore we authorize all druggists to sell Q-ban under our money-back guarantee—to refund your money if *you* are not entirely pleased, you to be the sole judge. Nothing could be more fair.


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