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Love

10¢

DREAM WITHOUT END

A Fascinating Complete Novel

By **MONA**

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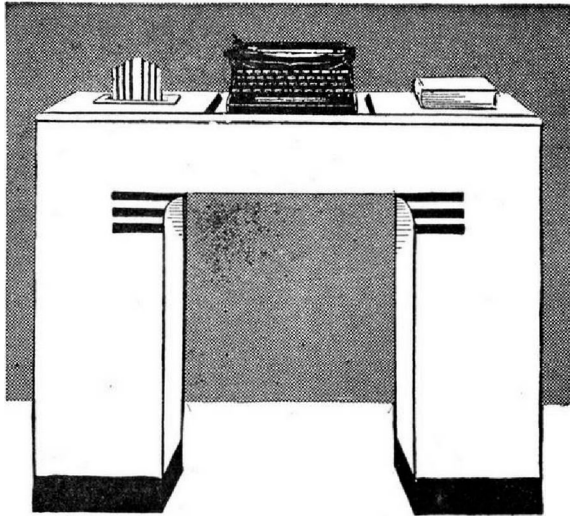
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**FASHIONS
FOR LOVE**
By **ROWENA
R. FARRAR**

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

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for only \$1.00 EXTRA**

**WITH ANY
REMINGTON
PORTABLE TYPEWRITER**

A beautiful desk in a neutral blue-green which will fit into the decorations of any home—trimmed in black and silver—and made of sturdy fibre board—is now available for only one dollar (\$1.00 extra) to purchasers of a Remington Noiseless Portable Typewriter. The desk is so light that it can be moved anywhere without trouble—it is so strong that it will hold six hundred (600) pounds. With this combination of desk and Noiseless Deluxe Portable Typewriter, you will have a miniature office at home. Learn the complete details of this offer. Mail the coupon

-The
**COMBINATION
FOR AS LITTLE AS
10¢ A DAY**

How easy it is to pay for this combination of desk and Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable Typewriter! Just imagine, a small good will deposit with terms as low as 10c a day to get this combination at once! You will never miss 10c a day. Yet this small sum can actually make you immediately the possessor of this amazing office-at home combination. You assume no obligations by sending the coupon.

THESE TWO EXTRA FOR YOU

LEARN TYPING FREE

To help you even further, you get free with this special offer a 32-page booklet, prepared by experts* to teach you quickly how to typewrite by the touch method, when you buy a Noiseless you get this free Remington Rand gift that increases the pleasure of using your Remington Noiseless Deluxe Portable. Remember, the touch typing book is sent free while this offer holds.



SPECIAL CARRYING CASE

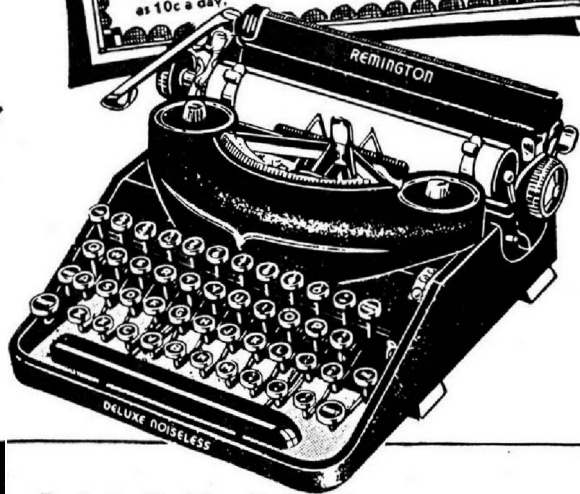
The Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable is light in weight, easily carried about. With this offer Remington supplies a sturdy, beautiful carrying case which rivals in beauty and utility the most attractive luggage you can buy.



SPECIFICATIONS

ALL ESSENTIAL FEATURES of large stand, ard office machines appear in die Noiseless Portable—standard 4-row keyboard; back spacer; margin slops and margin release; double shift key and shift lock; two color ribbon and automatic ribbon reverse; variable line spacer; paper fingers; makes as many as seven carbons; takes paper 9.5" wide; "writes lines 8.2" wide. There are also extra features like the card writing attachment, black key cards and white letters, touch regulator, rubber cushioned feet. These make typing on a Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable a distinct pleasure. Thousands of families now using the Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable know from experience how wonderful it is!

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE
The Remington Noiseless Portable Typewriter is sold on a trial basis with a money back guarantee. If, after ten days trial, you do not wish to keep the typewriter, we will take it back, paying all shipping charges. You risk nothing in buying a Remington Portable Typewriter on terms as low as 10c a day.



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NOW!**

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Electrical Engineers, Diesel and Air-Conditioning Experts, Builders, Contractors and Automobile Mechanics, too, have good chances for profit through BIG DEFENSE PROGRAM

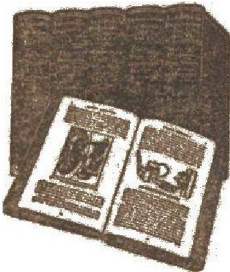
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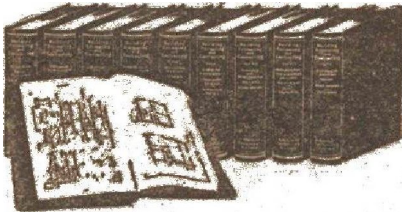
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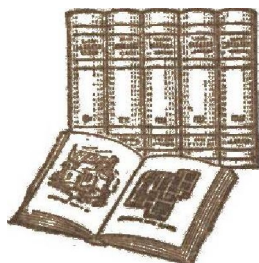
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THRILLING LOVE

Vol. XXXIX, No. 1

DOROTHY SANDS, Editor

August, 1943

A Complete Romantic Novel

DREAM WITHOUT END. Mona Farnsworth 14
When Heartbreak and Despair Cloud Marge's Path, Love Alone Can Bring a Sunburst of Joy and Triumph to Light the Way to Romance!

Complete {Novelet

FASHIONS FOR LOVE. Rowena R. Farrar 68
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Here's how I did it

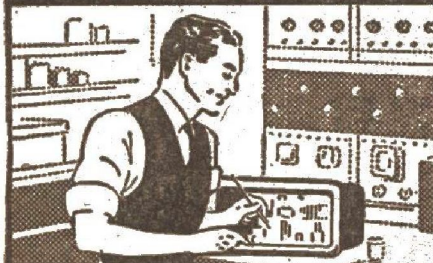
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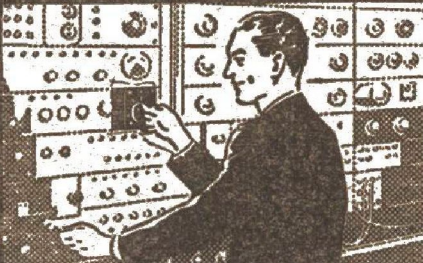
"I had an \$18 a week job in a shoe factory, but desired to make more money and continue my education. I read about Radio opportunities and enrolled with the National Radio Institute."



"The instruction I received was so practical I was soon able to earn \$5 to \$10 a week in spare time servicing Radios. This paid for the N.R.I. Course and led to service work paying for my college education."



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Washington, D. C.

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Radio broadcasting stations employ operators, technicians. Radio manufacturers employ testers, inspectors, servicemen in good-pay jobs. Radio jobbers, dealers, employ installation and servicemen. Many Radio technicians open their own Radio sales and repair businesses and make \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make \$5 to \$10 a week fixing Radios in spare time. Automobile, Police, Aviation, Commercial Radio; Loud-

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WHEN THEY FOUND THEY COULD PLAY

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* B. F., Bronx, N. Y.

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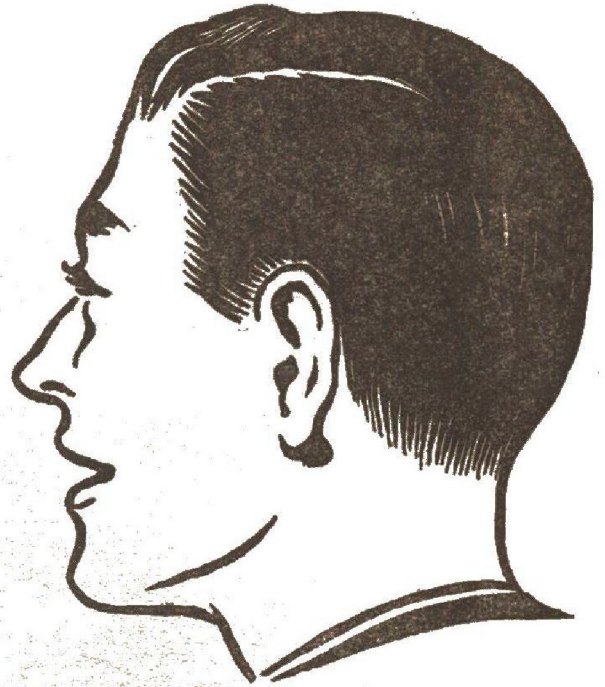
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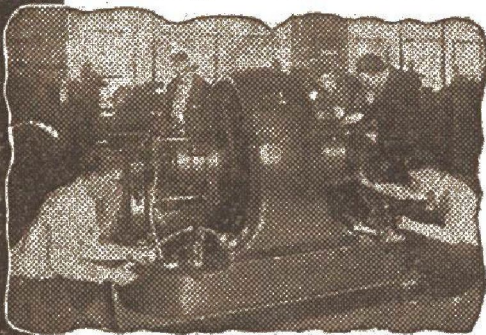
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Doris T. D., New York: No, you shouldn't have introduced your soldier friend as Mister. He is Private William M. while he is in the army. Address his mail as Private, never Mister, also! It is quite proper for you to visit him at camp. Ask him beforehand to find out where you will be able to stay in the nearby town. He may make the arrangements for you, but you pay all expenses, except for the entertainment he provides while you're there. A summer evening dress would be quite proper to wear when he takes you dancing. He wears his uniform at all times.

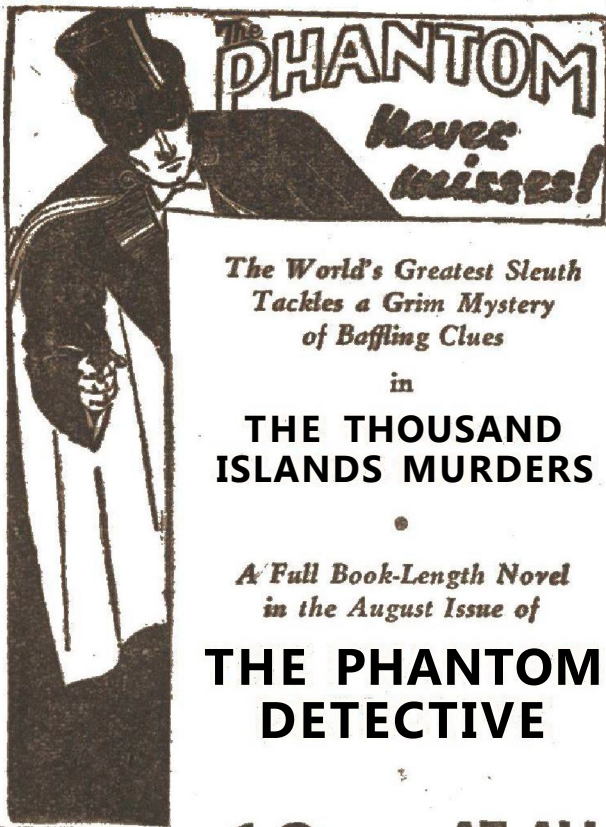
Linda G., Fairbanks, Ind.: A floor-length dinner suit would be a proper choice for your mother to wear to your wedding. Loveliest for a very young bride would be the color scheme chosen by one of this season's society brides. Her wedding gown was of tulle with a matching veil falling from a Juliette cap of pearls. Maid of honor wore yellow mousseline de soie, the bridesmaids pale green. All the attendants wore calots to match their dresses and shoulder-length veils in matching net.

Helen J. G., Seattle, Wash.: The Tracy crawl is the latest and most favored swimming stroke. You will find an instructor at all public pools who can help you perfect this stroke. Be sure to follow the advice of specialists and blow the air out through your mouth when under water. Form the lips as for whistling and expel the air slowly. Expelling the air through the nose was found to cause sinus and other troubles.

N. S. R., Wilmington: Yes, to keep from regaining the weight you so laboriously lost is a problem! You'll find, if you go back to your old eating habits, that you will gain it back, every ounce and pound! However, a gain of about five pounds is to be expected. Here is a good maintenance routine: eat every day 1 egg, 2 green leafy vegetables, meat (as much as you want), 2 pats of butter, 2 glasses milk, 1 slice whole wheat bread.

See **LISTEN, GIRLS!**

on Page 53



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CHAPTER I

FUTILE YEARNING

MARGO slipped on her gloves, pressing the fingers firmly to try and stop their trembling, Prom behind the closed office

door at her shoulder Anne Brett's low, vibrant voice could be heard saying throatily:

"Peter—Peter, you do love me, don't you?"

And Peter Schuyler answered with slow, deep tenderness:

WITHOUT END



"Oh, Anne, I'd like to have you meet Morgo Wayne"

"More than all the world, Anne,
More than anything."

Morgo, for just a moment, leaned weakly against the outer office wall, Her whole body felt sick and her heart was suddenly a weight she

couldn't bear. If only Anne Brett were a little less glamorous and lovely! If only she didn't have Peter Schuyler's own irreproachable background of unlimited wealth and untouchable social position! If only—



ANNE

"I'm being a fool," whispered Margo miserably. "I'm nothing but a dratted little filing clerk—and I love him, and love him, and *love* him!"

Then, suddenly, another thought struck her, and she looked down with the old still horror at her hands. No girl whose hands had done what Margo's had done could have the right to love a man like Peter Schuyler, even at long distance.

Her face still quiet with that frozen stillness, Margo carefully tilted her small hat to the correct angle over her chestnut curls, and firmly she snapped her heels on the floor as she crossed the outer office toward the door.

WHEN she got to the lobby door she found it was raining. That gave her something else to think about. You couldn't think of a horror you had lived with, tight behind your close-locked lips, for two years when you had to concern yourself with things like getting your only hat wet, and soaking your only pair of bargain-basement shoes.

So she stood there, with the heavy rain slanting icily, and made herself think of nothing except how in the world she was going to get home.

And while she wondered there came the clang of an elevator

door, then the pattering *tippety-tap* of high heels. Without turning her head Margo knew who it was. She shrank back, making herself small in the space next the revolving door. So, as they spun through with a gay gust of laughter, they didn't see her.

But she saw them. Peter, pulling the snap brim of his hat down over those deep brown eyes that turned Margo's heart whenever she saw them, and Anne Brett, tall and slim,



PETER

gathering in the soft folds of her mink coat so that it hugged her warm from her lovely legs to her honey-colored hair.

They went out laughing, but on the step they paused. Anne's voice went suddenly sharp.

"It's raining, Peter! You certainly can't expect me to get *wet!*"

Peter laughed, that low chuckle that Margo loved. But Margo couldn't hear what he said. She just knew that he went off and a minute later came back behind the wheel of a huge low-slung convertible. He jumped out, slammed the door and, with the flourish of a delighted magician, produced an umbrella.

"Lo!" he cried. "The lady stays dry."

He whipped the umbrella up and held it carefully over Anne's dainty

head as she crossed the pavement. Then fee tucked her into the seat, closed idie door and ran around in the rain to the driver's place. The car slid silently away from the curb.

Margo watched through a blur of tears. Siok longing flowed through her. Hot rebellion glowed to a high flame in her heart. What possible justice was there in Anne Brett's having everything and she nothing? Why should Anne's precious head be kept dry while Margo's only hat would be drenched? And why, oh, *why*, couldn't Peter Schuyler have loved her instead of Anne? Anne who had everything anyhow—money, social position, and a thousand men waiting, breathless, on her smile.

Then, once more, Margo pulled herself together, and squared her shoulders.

"Snap out of it, kid," she told herself firmly, "Just remember how much worse it could be—behind bars." She threw that reminder at herself fiercely, then plunged out into the rain.

When she got home she was soaked as she'd known she would be. Small rills of water ran from her hat. Her shoes were a pulpy mass.

But the moment she saw Billy waiting for her she forgot everything. She felt warm and dry and happy, with

a deep happiness, rich and strong. That was what love could do for you. Love for a person like Billy, with his blue eyes big in his pinched, pale little face and his small crutches lying, ready to hand, beside his chair. Billy so helpless, needing her so much. Her small half-brother; born of her mother who had died at his birth, and the man her mother had married when Margo herself was seven.

Marge's stepfather, At thought of him the old horror welled up again. Once more Margo lived through that awful hour when, coming in from a late errand to the butcher's, she had met big Dan Spode in the narrow dark hallway of the dingy tenement where they lived. She had just come up the first flight of stairs—and there he was, the big bulk of him looming in the shadows above her.

Even in the darkness she had recognized him instantly. The big silent thick-shouldered stepfather" she



had always feared, and hated, too, for the way her instinct told her her mother must have suffered before she died. Though Margo had been only nine then and could remember little.

But that night on the stairs, she had suddenly been more frightened than usual. And at the sound of his rough voice she had been terrified.

"H'lo, sweetness," he had said, "How 'bout li'l kiss to get you by?"

He had reached for her—and instantly she had known he hadn't recognized her in the darkness, and had suddenly realized that Dan Spode was the kind of man who would reach for anything in skirts when he had been drinking.

Margo, terrified, had shrunk back against the wall, but Dan Spode's huge hands had dragged her out. Dan Spode's arms had grabbed her. She had smelled the awful odor of him—stale tobacco, stale beer, stale dirt. She had fought, then, like a wildcat. Biting, scratching, kicking. All the wiry strength of her slim fifteen-year-old body beating at the bulk holding her.

And she had won. Only not the way she had meant to win. It had been worse, almost, than if she had lost. For in their fighting Margo and Dan had lurched to the head of the stairs—and suddenly Dan hadn't been there. He had lost his footing, crashed down—and was dead at the bottom.

A crowd had gathered. Little Billy on his crutches and young Dan, eighteen years old then, had been in the crowd. Young Dan was Dan Spode's son by his first wife. He had the same darkly handsome, smoldering face, the same thick shoulders. He had been nine when Margo's mother married his father, and Margo had always been a little afraid of young Dan, too. Especially this last year when his eighteen year old eyes would rest, like pools of hot oil, on Margo's loveliness.

But suddenly in that crowd Margo had not been afraid any longer. Margo, in that moment, had grown up. A woman's head on her slim young shoulders. And she had known instantly what she must do. What she must not do. She must not spend a moment alone with young Dan under the roof that, with old Dan's death, would hold a strange new menace. She must get away from

young Dan. And she mustn't leave Billy. Little, crippled Billy who had been so strangely all hers since their mother had died.

Wherever Margo went, there Billy, would go too.

That night Margo ran away—to get away from young Dan. From the liquid blur of his seeking eyes and from the too red curl of his thick lips.

It wasn't till much later that she came to think what else she had run away from—the knowledge that she had been responsible for Dan Spode's death.

At the time the police had questioned nothing. A drunken guy had fallen downstairs and killed himself—so what? But the police might change their minds. They might grow suspicious and begin to ask questions. Somebody might have seen Margo fighting with her stepfather. Somebody might tell. Then the police would begin hunting for her. Not murder. It wouldn't be that. But manslaughter. It had a sickening, ugly sound.

BUT by the time Margo had figured all this out Billy had gone through pneumonia that left him frailer than ever—and more dependent on Margo. So what was Margo to do? Go to the police and tell her story honestly, trusting that justice would exonerate her? Or stay in hiding and care for little lame Billy?

What would happen to Billy if justice went astray? Marge winced, picturing it. If she went to jail, they would put Billy in an orphan asylum. Little, pale, big-eyed Billy with his eager loving arms always reaching for her—in an orphan asylum!

Margo didn't think of it twice. She got a job, first in the five-and-dime, then in a department store, and finally in Peter Schuyler's office. Peter Schuyler who, with his aristocratic background and his wealth, was taking up the cudgels to clean up the city, and so had become the youngest

district attorney ever to be voted into office.

So Margo got the job of file-clerk, and she took care of Billy. They had fine gay times, the two of them.

They were having a fine gay time tonight when, after Margo got off her wet clothes and into dry ones, they sat down to supper together.

"And did Mrs. Flynn get you a good hot luncheon?" Margo asked. Mrs. Flynn was the neighbor who kept an eye on Billy while Margo was at the office.

"You bet she did," said Billy, "Soup. Thick. It had meat in it. Boy, can Aunt Maggie make soup! But," he added quickly, "it's not as good as yours, Margo. I love your soup best,"

Margo laughed and kissed him. That was always the way it was. Nothing, ever, was quite as nice as the things she did for him herself. And the smallest thing she did would always bring stars to his eyes and that lovely curling smile to his sensitive mouth. . . .

It was late the next afternoon when Margo left the office. And she was still trying to shake off the sense of miserable depression that had held her all day. For she knew, sensibly, that there was no reason for her to feel depressed. Everything was going all right—as right as it could go when your heart was always ragged with pain, and just the voice of Peter Schuyler dictating cold legal letters in his office had the power to bring a lump to her throat and a sharp sting echoing along her veins.

"You're such a fool," Margo told herself sadly. She leaned toward the mirror in the washroom making carefully perfect curves on her lovely lips, and dabbing powder on her small straight nose. "Such a fool! Haven't you anything better to do than to break your heart over a man who doesn't even know you're on earth?" She gave her hat a final tweek: -agidr closed the door of the outer office

firmly behind her. "If you had an ounce of brains," she muttered, "you'd get a job in another office. This foolishness is doing nobody any good."

She punched the elevator bell with a vicious finger, and so wrapped up was she in the turmoil of her thoughts that she was down in the subway before she realized she had left her bag in her desk. There was nothing for it but to go back.

CHAPTER II

PETER—OR LITTLE BILLY?



REACHING the office Margo opened the door quietly. The outer office was dark. The desk, the telephones, the file cabinets, the tall bookcases filled with leather-bound legal tomes all gleamed ghostly in the dark. But underneath Peter Schuyler's door there was a sliver of light.

Margo stopped, and as she looked at it, the door opened. Framed in the amber glow behind him stood Peter Schuyler. And even against the light that way Margo could see how miserable his eyes looked and how his Viking gold hair looked as if his long restless fingers had tried to tear it out.

"Oh!" he said, his voice as ragged as his eyes were desperate. "Your name's Margo Wayne, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Margo. And she thought, "I love you and love you, and you're not even sure of my name!"

She stared at him, her eyes clinging to his face the way her arms ached to cling to his body. And suddenly he said a surprising thing.

"I wish you'd come in here and let me talk to you a little," he said. "If I don't talk to somebody I'll explode."

Margo couldn't speak. Her voice and her breath knotted in her throat, and her dreams had started with jililgS

an idea like this. Walking quietly into Peter Schuyler's office and having Peter Schuyler look at her, and really see her, not as part of his office equipment, but as a person.

Though he didn't see her as a person even now. He was just conscious of her as a human being, a fellow creature with ears to listen and a heart that might, possibly, understand.

He didn't ask her to sit down. He didn't ask her to loosen her coat. In fact, once she was in his office, he didn't pay any attention to her at all. He just walked to the window and stood there, staring out over the city lights thirty floors below him. And she waited, her eyes touching hungrily the gold-crested waves of his hair, the tweed-covered breadth of his shoulders, and the fine long lines of him standing there, one hand in his pocket, his head bent.

Until he turned and said fiercely:

"Tell me it doesn't matter! For heaven's sake tell me that no girl in the world is worth all this wrenching agony! Tell me!"

Margo's heart turned completely over. She felt her nails dig deep into her palms. So that was it! Anne Brett and Peter had quarreled. Anne, perhaps, had even broken the engagement. The thought exploded, like a bomb of joy, in Margo's heart. It almost brought tears to her eyes and it made her voice shake.

"That isn't love, Mr. Schuyler, when it can hurt you," she said. "A girl who really loved you would rather die than m-make you suffer."

He turned from the window, his back to the garlanded lights. And he looked at her. He saw her quivering lips and the shine of tears in her eyes.

He didn't know it was because her heart was tumbling about inside of her like a crazy thing. He thought he had upset her by the demand he had tried to put upon her sympathy. He took two or three quick steps

toward her, contrite, embarrassed.

"I'm a hog," he said, pulling his mouth into a sudden grin. "Heaving my troubles onto your shoulders when no doubt you've quite enough of your own. I guess we all have. But what you've said is true. It's cleared my mind." He looked at her, his eyes dark and blue as the deepest sea. "If Anne had loved me the way I thought she did, she couldn't have hurt me like this. And if she doesn't love me that way, I'll just have to get over it. Our marriage wouldn't have worked out anyway. No marriage could work out with one person loving the other more than the earth and the moon and the stars, and the other person loving nothing quite so much as—an Italian title!"

BITTERNESS gouged his voice over the last three words. But before Margo could speak, his grin broke into a chuckle.

"Come on," he said. "How about a little light dining and dancing? That'll relieve my conscience which is soggy with the guilt of burdening you with my troubles. Come on—• will you?"

Would she! Margo stopped breathing for a second just to let the sheer bliss of this moment wash over her. Then she smiled.

"Let's go," she said.

The place Peter took her was cozy, with amber lights and mirrors and the heady scent of perfume and flowers and a name band that made the air vibrate to deep slow rhythm laced with melody.

But suddenly as the waiter was holding her chair she stiffened, shamed alarm sending a chill scurrying along her spine. She had forgotten Billy! Little Billy who began to watch for her the minute dusk gathered, his small pale face pressed close to the window, and his eyes great pools of longing.

"I've got to phone," Margo said quickly. "Or else go home right away."



'You're the most beautiful thing in the whole wide world!'

Oh"—her fingers twisted—"this is dreadful."

Billy! How could she ever have forgotten Billy?

"Phone, of course," Peter Schuyler said. "We'll have one brought to the table."

But she hadn't waited for that. She was already threading her way between the tables toward the booths in a quiet alcove of the foyer.

She dialed the number of the candy store on the corner with shaking fingers. Billy alone. Billy frightened. She had never been late like this before.

Oh, how could she have done it? How could she!

The candy store finally answered. No, there was no one they could send with the message. It was a slow night, and nobody was around. They were sorry.

Margo went back to the table. Her face was white and her eyes were almost frantic.

"I'm terribly sorry," she said, "but I can't stay. Not a minute. It's my little brother, you see. I'm all he has, and he's a cripple, and I've never been late coming home, and I can't get a message to him and he'll be scared to death." The words rushed and tumbled, "Oh, please take me home right away! Can you? I'm so sorry to be such a nuisance."

"Nuisance?" said Peter Schuyler. "Nuisance! To take a girl home who's willing to give up an evening's dancing rather than worry a crippled brother? Girl"—he said it wonderingly—"this is a privilege. I didn't know they made people like you any more."

MARGO hardly heard him. She was just grateful for the speed with which he guided his big roadster through traffic so that, almost before she knew it, she was saying:

"It's that door next to the barber shop—the one with the three ash cans out front." It wasn't until hours later that she thought, with cold panic, "What must he have thought of knowing a girl who lived in a neighborhood like that?" Where she lived must be just a plain slum to Peter.

But at the time all she could think of was little Billy. And when she saw his small white face still pasted patiently in the window sobs tore at her throat and tears came thick on her lashes.

Peter unlocked the door for her, but she didn't know that either. All she knew was the thud she felt when she dropped to her knees and the way Billy's thin arms felt, clinging to her.

"I didn't get scared much though, Margo," he assured her. "I just said, 'God, you've got to bring her back to me.' That's what I said."

"Oh, Billy!" sobbed Margo, holding him close. "Oh, *Billy!*" And then she turned, remembering Peter. "You see now," she said, "why I couldn't have stayed, don't you? You do understand?"

"Yes," said Peter, "I understand—a lot of things." And those deep-sea eyes of his looked as if they were seeing something for the first time. . . .

In the days that followed Peter and Billy became great friends. And though Peter never suggested again that Margo stay out for dinner, he did manage to bring in the most delicious

exotic food from places he knew, so that the three of them—Billy and Margo and he—had a gay little dinner of their own almost every night.

Billy loved it. He would watch them, from his small chair by the window, as Margo rustled around laying the snowy cloth and clinking down the silver and Peter sat, one long leg cocked over the other, smoking his briar pipe.

"I never knew that there was such peace in the world," Peter would say.

"Look, Uncle Peter," Billy would say. "Remember that story you said you knew? The one about the little boy and the pirates and the man with the patch over one eye?"

So Peter would take Billy on his lap to tell him the story, and Margo would want to cry watching them. It was almost the dearest dreams of her life come true. Though not quite the dearest. For that would be the moment that Peter, gathering her into his arms would say, "Margo, of all the world I love you best. Will you marry me?"

But Peter had said nothing of the sort. They were the best friends in the world and he loved Billy, but that was all.

Then came the gala night when they actually went dancing.

"You deserve a break," Peter had said. "I'll bet you can't remember when you danced last. Now can you?" That was true. Margo couldn't. "Well, we're going dancing tomorrow night—and the good Flynn is coming in to sit with Billy. I've already talked to her about it."

ALL the next day Margo's feet were butterflies. They wouldn't stay still. They would flutter. She almost skipped around the office. And at noon she went out and blew in a crazily extravagant amount of her savings on a dance frock that looked as if it were made of rose-colored dreams and whipped cream. She

bought some silver slippers too, and a twinkly thing to hide in the tricked masses of her chestnut curls.

When she was dressed that evening Billy's eyes nearly popped from his head,

"Margo!" he squealed. "You look like a fairy princess!"

Margo laughed and kissed him. But there were tears in her eyes. She was so happy. A whole long evening with Peter—looking at him, laughing with him, dancing in his arms. Her heart warmed suddenly to a pulsing thing of fire. And stars came straight down from heaven to live in her eyes.

They were still there when Peter came for her. When she opened the door for him he stood stock-still on the threshold staring at her.

"Margo!" he whispered, "*Margo!*" He took her by the shoulders and looked for a long minute deep in her eyes. "You're the most beautiful thing in the whole wide world," he said softly, and then he said, promising himself, "Some time I'm going to kiss you."

Margo's lashes fell, sweeping her cheeks. And a flush came, veiling her throat with rose. Peter's hands tightened. She could feel the warmth of them through the light froth of her dress. A rill of delicious electricity skittered through her veins. Her heart and her breath got snarled in her throat. Peter bent nearer. And Billy, from his chair by the window, said:

"Margo, is Uncle Peter saying something that hurts you? Your face is all red and funny."

Peter dropped her hands. Margo turned away quickly.

"No, Pudd'n' Face," said Margo, and then with gay assurance, "Your Uncle Peter couldn't say anything to hurt me!"

Afterward she thought of what a fool she had been to be so sure. You should never be sure of anything in this world. Not anything.

For that was the night, when she

was so gay and so happy and so certain that everything was turning out in the most beautiful possible way—that was the night they ran into Anne.

CHAPTER III

ANNE AGAIN



IT WAS at the Stork Club and Margo, never having been there before, was enthralled by the glamor of celebrities drifting in and out, and the beating rhythm of music that made her blood and her glowing eyes, her tapping shoes and her slender fingers all dance together.

She sat at the table, too excited to do more than taste her first champagne and knowing a deep happiness she had never known before in her life. This was living. This was wonderful. All her life to be bottled up in misery and privation, to live in near-slums and never be any too sure of your next meal, and then—to burst into this. Her starry eyes, her flushed cheeks, the quick rise and fall of the froth of the net of her frock told of the radiant joy that was pouring through her.

And then she saw Anne. Glamorous, poised, beautiful, she was threading her way quietly among the tables, walking toward them. A light smile touching her perfect lips. Her dark eyes glowing.

Margo's heart turned to chilled lead. For a minute she couldn't breathe.

"For heaven's sake," said Peter, "what's the matter? You look as if you're seeing spooks." Then he turned. "Oh," he said helplessly, and then his whispered gasp said, "Anne!" And it seemed to Margo as if his very heart went toward Anne with her name.

Then Anne was standing **there**, close-'beside'-their table,..-and she was

saying, in her vibrant, throaty voice:

"Peter. So many weeks since I've seen you. And Peter"—her voice and her eyes caressed him—"life isn't quite the same. Is it?"

Peter was standing up, and it seemed to Margo as if he had all he could do to keep from taking Anne in his arms.

But all he finally said was:

"Oh—Anne, I'd like to have you meet Margo Wayne. Margo, you remember Anne?"

"I remember Margo, too," Anne said sweetly. "She does the files in your office—or is it the switchboard?"

Margo felt scalding blood surge into her cheeks. The cat. The viper. Hate rose, beating at her breast.

"It doesn't make much difference what she does, Anne," Peter said. "It's useful—which is more than some of us manage to achieve."

Margo thought, "Oh, the *darling*—he's defending me!" But before she could speak any further Anne said coolly:

"Peter, you're trying to scold me—but I'll forgive you this time." Her eyes smiled up, touching his mouth and the curve of his chin and then his eyes. "And, oh, I almost forgot! Peter—this is Count Elciano. Giovanni"—she turned to smile at the tall, slim man behind her, the man with the velvet eyes and the perfectly modeled Roman face—"Giovanni, this is Peter Schuyler. I think you've heard me speak of Peter?"

"Quite." The count bowed from the waist. "Many times have you spoken to me of Mr. Schuyler."

Anne smiled sweetly from one man to the other. She acted as if Margo were not there. And it was Peter who said gently:

"Margo, may I present Count Elciano?"

But the count's liquid brown eyes had already found her. And appreciated her. Margo flushed under their open admiration.

"When a maiden blushes she is

doubly beautiful," the count said instantly.

AT THE tone of his voice Anne's eyes snapped from the count's face to Margo. For the first time she seemed really to see Margo—the lovely lift to her head, her freshly glowing skin, the shining mass of her chestnut curls. Anne's perfect eyebrows went up. They went still higher when Count Elciano said coolly:

"I am sure you two old friends would like to dance together. Miss Wayne, may I have the pleasure?"

Margo laughed. She couldn't help it. The dismayed, furious expression on Anne Brett's face was too funny. But she danced with the count, and he danced like a dream. And he held Margo as if she were infinitely precious. Which, before they stopped dancing, he told her she was.

"I have been looking for an American girl like you," he said quietly. "My mother, I think, was like you."

"Your mother was an American?"

The count enjoyed her surprise. "And I was born here," he said. "But my father's people trained me. But I am as American as you are. And always"—he smiled down at her—"I have been looking for a truly American girl—like my mother."

"But," said Margo, "there are thousands of American girls. Lovely ones."

"Ah," said the count, "there you are wrong. Thousands of girls, yes. And lovely, yes. But truly American?" He looked down at her and asked gently, "Have you ever thought what the real American girl should be like? She should, of course, be sweet and wise and kind, for all women should be that. Then she should be brave, as the pioneer women were brave; and loyal; and unspoiled." His smile came swiftly. "Do you see now why I believe my perfect American girl does not come by the thousands? Do you see why I

think you are the first one I have ever found?"

Margo was ready to laugh at what she thought was a particularly deft and charming "line." But it was no line. The count's eyes, meeting hers, were dark and deep and filled with sincerity.

"I mean it," he said quietly. "I must know you better. May I—would it be possible for me to take you home? I think"—he smiled—"it might be arranged for Mr. Schuyler to take my place with Miss Brett."

"Oh, no!" Fright edged Margo's voice. Fright stabbed her heart. Peter take Anne home? No, no, *no!* "I'm sorry." She tried to smile. She mustn't hurt the count. "But Peter would never understand it if I went home with you. He—"

She stopped abruptly. She wasn't handling this at all well. She was sounding rude and she didn't mean to be rude. But she must get back to Peter.

If the count had been saying all these things to her while they danced, what might Peter have been saying to Anne?

The music stopped and Margo flew, like a homing pigeon, back to their table. One glance and her heart soared. Anne looked cross, and Peter looked decided. They hadn't made peace! Things were as they had been. Margo, suddenly, wanted to dance. She wanted to sing. Music throbbed out again.

"Oh, Peter," she cried gaily, "let's dance this one!"

Peter, suddenly as happy as she, held out his arms and she went into them.

"I'm a jealous fool," said Peter without preamble. "I nearly lost my mind wondering what that handsome gent was saying to you. Was he very convincing?"

Margo's eyes twinkled. "Convincing enough," she said teasingly. "And he's as American as I am. Isn't that surprising?"

She told him how it was. But Peter didn't even pretend to listen.

"Look here," he said, "I'm scared. Don't fall in love with anybody else, will you please? I—I couldn't stand it."

Margo didn't dare look up and meet his eyes. Her own were too revealing. And she didn't know what to say. He hadn't said enough. He had left too much unsaid. Did he love her? Did he—oh, *could* he?—want to marry her? A pulse in her throat pounded chokingly.

"Forgive me, Margo," Peter, misunderstanding her silence, said quietly. "I guess I had no right to try to build a fence around you. I guess . . . well, Count Elciano looks like a pretty fine fellow."

The music stopped then, and they walked back to their table in silence. Margo felt a crazy desire to scream. Because there was nothing she could say, and because she wanted to say so much. But what could she do? Peter, without even asking for her, had handed her back to herself on a silver platter. Oh, men were fools. *Fools!*

They left the Stork Club not long after that. Something had happened to their evening. The lovely tingling joy had all gone out of it. Standing on the sidewalk, waiting for a taxi, with a cold early morning wind swirling her long full skirts, Margo felt a chill misery creep slowly over her. She shivered. And Peter put an arm around her.

"Poor kid," he said. "You're cold." And then he said, his arm tightening, "What's the matter with us? Nothing's gone really wrong. Has it?"

"Of course it hasn't."

She leaned against him suddenly, snuggling her head into his shoulder. And all at once everything was fine. The lights glittered. People passing laughed. Everything was great. Margo herself laughed, her eyes shining again up into Peter's. And he laughed back. •

The taxi appeared at the curb. Margo started across the sidewalk toward it. Halfway over she stopped. Her heart lumped, choking her. Her eyes flew wide, staring. And she could feel the color drain from her face, leaving it cold and white.

For the man driving the taxi was young Dan Spode, the son of her stepfather! Dan Spode from whom she had run away the night after she had the battle with his father that had ended in the older Dan's death.

Margo stood still, staring. And all the old past rushed up, terrifying her. Suppose Dan should ever guess that, no matter how indirectly, she was responsible for his father's death? What would he say? What might he do?

And while she stared she saw that Dan was staring back at her. But quickly he had turned away, so that she wasn't sure whether he had recognized her.

"What's the matter?" Peter asked. "Are you so cold you can't move? It'll be warmer in the taxi."

He swept his arm around her again, rushed her across the pavement and into the cab. The door slammed. The wheels slid away from the curb,

Margo tried her best to pull herself together, to talk and be gay. But all she could think was, "Did he recognize me? Is he trying to listen to what I'm saying?" And she imagined that Dan's sleek head was tilted so he could hear, and thinking this all her words went dry in her throat.

"You're tired, Margo," Peter said. "Our round of night spots was too much for you."

"No," she said. "Oh, no, Peter. I loved it," And then she stared straight ahead, her eyes on Dan's head.

WHEN they reached home Peter left her quickly, with just a brief good-night and a briefer handclasp, because she looked so white and strained he felt she must be so tired.

He couldn't know she was scared. And he never could have imagined how she stood, after he had left her, in the window of her small living room, hidden by the folds of her window curtain and her eyes pasted to the vanishing tail-light of the taxi.

"Oh, God," she prayed softly, "please fix things so that Dan hasn't recognized me. Please don't let him come here to bother me—and Billy. Billy's little and lame and helpless, God. You don't want him bothered any more than I do. *Please!*"

But it wasn't an hour before she knew that her prayer had not been answered.

For an hour later her doorbell rang.

Instantly Margo knew who it was. She sat up in bed and she thought, "I won't answer it. Nothing on earth can make me answer it."

It rang again. A long, ear-splitting peal that meant the person was determined to get in, and that he was quite capable of standing, with his finger on that bell, until she opened the door.

CHAPTER IV

DAN'S ULTIMATUM



MARGO hopped out of bed, whipped a bathrobe around her and ran. That bell would wake up Billy and everybody else in the house. She had to stop that clamor. She flung open the door.

"Please stop ringing that bell!" she cried. *"Please!"*

"I thought that would get you." Dan was grinning, pleased. "That bell stunt late at night almost always works."

He came into her small hall without waiting to be asked. He tossed his taxi driver's cap on the little table and sat down, stretching out his long legs from her most comfortable armchair.

Margo didn't sit down. She just

-stood, her arms folded so that the thick folds of her bathrobe swathed her like a cocoon.

"Gosh, Margo, you're more beautiful than ever," Dan said. "I knew that a girl who looked the way you did at fifteen would be a breath-stopper in three years. And you sure are."

Margo said nothing. There was nothing to say. Dan shook a cigarette from a paper pack and cracked a match head with his thumbnail. Seeing him that way, with his head slightly bent over the light, Margo was struck again, as she had always been struck, by his sheer physical handsomeness. He was handsome as a black panther is beautiful. The planes of his face, his clear olive skin, the chiseled lines of his mouth were all perfect. Only the eyes betrayed the Man for what he was. They were large velvet brown—but the way they could look at you, Margo thought, brought cold shivers down your spine. They made Margo curl up tight inside, so that she was one hard lump of defense.

"Gosh, you're beautiful, Margo!" Dan said. And then he smiled a little, and his eyes looked cunning, "To be honest," he said, "that's why I took the job of cab driver. I figured that sooner or later I'd run into you. Because I've always known just how much we were going to mean to each other." He leaned forward, and pulled deep on his cigarette. The smoke came blowing out his mouth and nostrils in such a cloud that his eyes were veiled. Then his voice came, quiet.

"How about it, Margo?" he asked. "How do you feel about—me?"

Margo felt a sudden wash of sickness. She tried to hide it, but Dan's eyes were well trained in watching the reactions of women. He got up and came toward her. He was smiling. A nice, kind, friendly, big-brother sort of smile. He had trained the smile too.



He held the umbrella over Anne's dutiful head

"Oh, look here, Margo, don't be so scared of me," he said. "I'm not going to do, ever, anything you don't want me to do. Sure, I love you. I've always loved you. And I'm more crazy about you now than I've ever been. And just because your mother married my father doesn't mean that we can't think of marrying each other. We're no blood relation. So that doesn't need to worry us."

His hands came up and rested on her shoulders. For a dreadful instant Margo thought he was going to kiss her, the way men can always kiss girls if they want to—by holding down their arms and keeping out of the way of their kicking feet.

But Dan didn't kiss her. He just looked down at her and said:

"You'll love me sometime, Beautiful. And when you do—it'll be as if no two people ever loved each other before!"

Then, before Margo could think, he turned away.

"How's Billy?" he asked coolly. "I was always crazy about that kid."

MARGO flashed to warmth, the way she always did when Billy was mentioned. Dan saw that, and made a mental note that whatever he wanted from Margo he could get through Billy. With proper and careful management.

"Funny thing," thought Dan, "everybody has their price. Margo's would be the kid."

So he warmed up and asked all kinds of questions about him, grinning to himself as he watched Margo's eyes shine and her face grow radiant and lovely with her love for her small crippled brother.

When he finally left Margo said:

"I'm glad you love Billy the way I do, Dan. I mean I'm glad you want to be a real big brother to him. He needs it. You must come back sometime during the day when he's up and around, and get acquainted with him."

"You bet I'll be back," said Dan, and grinned happily as he trotted down the stairs and slid under the wheel of his taxicab. . . .

Count Elciano lost no time in following up his interest in Margo. He called her at the office the very next day.

"But I'm not supposed to talk over the office phone," said Margo, "I'm only—"

"I know," said the count. "Either file clerk or switchboard operator. I heard that too. That's how I knew where I could find you. So would you consider having dinner with me some time?"

"No," said Margo promptly. "Thank you."

There was a small silence on the count's end of the line. Then he said quietly:

"I think I understand. Mr. Schuyler is a very fine gentleman and I will wish you, if I may, every happiness."

"Thank you," said Margo.

Her voice was clear and even, but her face was scarlet. Did her love for Peter wave itself like a flag for everyone to see? Had the whole world guessed how much she loved him? The whole world, that is, save Peter himself. Peter the blind; Peter the stupid; Peter who had come into the office that morning and said only, "I'm sorry you got so tired last night, dancing. Feel better now?"

His tone had somehow shut her away from him, so that these words of Count Elciano's made her feel like a fool. The count had guessed how she felt, but Peter was blind as a bat or—a horrible thought struck her—suppose Peter wasn't blind? Suppose Peter had guessed, too, and was only pretending blindness because he didn't want to see?

Margo replaced the telephone receiver slowly and stared at the thing. And that second the door burst open and Anne Brett, mink coat, orchids, little fur hat perched on the perfect curls of her gold head and all, swung

arrogantly into the room. Her eyes touched Margo with no trace of recognition.

"Mr. Schuyler, please," she said to the receptionist. "Miss Brett. He's expecting me."

While she waited she took out a jeweled compact and became calmly intent making her lips more perfect.

Margo felt cold and sick. She tried to pretend that Anne wasn't there. But she knew she was. And she knew that Anne knew that she knew it—and Anne, standing there touching her perfect lips with her jeweled lipstick, was loving every minute of Margo's misery.

THEN Peter's office door opened, the girl came out to say that Mr. Schuyler would see Miss Brett at once, and Anne, with a swirl of expensive perfume and a swing of her mink coat, disappeared inside.

She was in there almost an hour and Margo, during that hour, knew that she had never suffered before in her whole life. Nothing, at any time, was equal to this agony that tore through her, this torment of burning questions that blazed uncontrolled through her mind.

What were they doing now? Anne and Peter behind that closed office door. Had he taken her in his arms? Had he kissed her the way, of course, he had kissed her once? Was peace restored? Were they engaged again? Was this the end? The end. The *end*.

Margo felt that word, that small, terrible word, grinding down like an iron heel into her heart. And agony, red hot, writhed through her.

But the pain of that hour was as nothing to the sharp stab she knew when, finally, Peter's office door opened and he and Anne came out of it—together. Anne laughing up at him in open triumph, and Peter looking down at her as if his eyes could never get enough.

They crossed the outer office and

went out. The door closed. And crazily, after that one stab, Margo felt nothing. Just numb. Just empty. It had happened. It was all over.

She could see now just what it had all been. Peter had never loved her, nor come anywhere near loving her. It had always been Anne. It was just that, when he thought he had lost Anne, it had been nice and comfortable to have Margo around. Margo, a little, had made him forget.

Well, he didn't have to forget any longer. He had Anne back.

Five o'clock came and it was time to powder her nose and wash her hands and put on her hat. She did it all dully. As if she were somebody else. Without thought of feeling. She went down in the elevator the same way. But when she stepped out of the elevator and saw Count Elciano standing there, leaning slightly on his brace stick, she came suddenly awake.

"Oh!" It was the merest gasp, then he had come toward her, and his hands were holding hers.

"You shouldn't be surprised," he said smiling. "You should know that no man who calls himself a man would give up easily the chance of knowing a girl like you."

Margo said nothing. But her heart, under the open fire of his admiration, began to warm a little. Somebody liked her anyhow. Somebody wanted to have her around.

The count saw this in her eyes and he lost no time.

"Dinner?" he said. "Dancing?"

Margo hesitated. That meant going home to dress. It meant having the count call for her—in the slums. And it meant wearing the same thing he had seen her in the night before. Which, like any other girl, she hated. A glamor girl would have fifty glamorous things from which to choose.

BUT the count, with some fine instinct of his own, settled this difficulty by saying.

"You will go. I can see it in your

eyes. And you will wear for me that so lovely frock you wore last night? It would make me happy—if you don't mind?"

"I—don't mind" said Margo.

But there was something else she did mind. Telling this tall and handsome aristocrat where she lived and having him come for her. Her pride cried out against that. And again, as if with infinite tact he had read her mind, the count settled the whole matter.

"I have," he said, "a most unfortunate business. I am an art dealer. I have galleries on Fifty-seventh Street. And this evening, of all evenings in the world, I have conference with a most important client. So would you mind if my car called for you? And I will meet you at ten at the El Morocco. Would you mind?"

"Not at all," said Margo gaily, and she went on home trying to make herself feel excited.

Why shouldn't she be excited, she asked herself fiercely. A titled nobleman sending his chauffeured car for her and taking her to El Morocco dancing. Could any glamor girl in New York do better?

She dressed with care as she had the night before. And, as on the night before, Billy watched her.

"I know!" He chuckled in high delight. "You're going out again with Uncle Peter. Is Mrs. Flynn going to stay with me?"

"Yes, Punkin," said Margo, "Mrs. Flynn is. But I'm not going out with Peter." She swallowed something big, and said gently, "I'm going out with a man who is tall and handsome—and just next door to a fairy prince. He's a count."

Billy's eyes bugged. "A real count?" he asked. "He lives in a castle?"

"Well," said Margo, "maybe not a castle. But I think he could manage a palace. I'll ask him."

She kissed Billy then and, half dressed as she was, scurried him off to bed because it was getting late.

CHAPTER V

THE CASTLE OF DREAMS TUMBLES



DANCING with the count was a lot of fun—if you didn't keep thinking of other arms, and another voice, and other eyes that were deep and sea-blue and held all the dreams you'd ever had.

But you mustn't think of that. You mustn't think of anything. Just laugh and be gay, and then laugh some more. For when this evening was over you'd have to go home and be alone—then there would be nothing you could do but think.

Think of Peter and Anne; and Anne in Peter's arms; and Peter's lips on hers. And agony would writhe through you and your heart would feel as if it were being torn apart and crushed slowly.

That time was coming—so while you could, you must laugh and be gay. Dance lightly and closely, and let the count see your eyes shining behind the lovely gold fringe of your lashes.

Count Elciano liked Margo's eyes. He liked Margo. He kept telling her so all evening. And when he was taking her home he held her small hand, warm between his, telling her so again. Margo let her hand stay there because the warmth of that contact would be something to remember, perhaps, when the thought of Peter hurt too much. She wouldn't have the count either much longer, for when a man like Count Elciano discovered that she lived in such a poor neighborhood, such a shabby house—

But, with his exquisite tact, the count made it clear that it didn't matter at all. When his long gleaming car pulled to the curb, in front of the barber's pole and the ash cans, he glanced out and said casually:

"Are we here?"

and stiffen
JliSelf against the cold snobbery

which she felt must come. It didn't.

"It is as I thought," the count said quietly, instead. "You are truly American — democratic, courageous, and very sweet. May I kiss your hand?"

He lifted her finger tips and kissed them gently. Then he walked with her to her door and unlocked it for her.

"It has been a perfect evening," he said gravely. And kissed her hand again.

Margo stood in her open doorway watching him go, and she thought, "He's nice—*nice*." And a small smile came to touch her lips. Then she turned and went in, suddenly realizing there was a light in her living room, suddenly realizing that it was not empty. Her eyes, startled, whipped around. And her heart stopped entirely.

"Peter!" she whispered. "*Peter!*"

He gathered his long legs and climbed out of the deep chair. His eyes, looking at her, held that deep blue look she loved.

"I had to come," he said. "I had to tell you what I'd just discovered." He stood there, very still, his eyes holding hers. "I love you, Margo. I didn't know it till this afternoon. But I love you, as if I'd never loved anyone before. I love you more than anything. Does it—could it—mean anything to you?"

Margo couldn't speak. She stood flat against the closed door, her throat closed with the joy that choked her. Her heart was so melting with tenderness that tears rose, overflowed and slid in two bright crystal drops down her cheeks.

PETER saw them, and misunderstood. His face went white, and his mouth went to a tight line. You could see how stiff it was by the way he had to work his lips whenever he spoke.

"I'm sorry," that painful stiff mouth said quietly. "I—shouldn't

have said anything, I guess, Margo. Just—forget it."

Margo turned, facing him. With the back of her hand she brushed the tears from her eyes, and saw the agony in his.

"Peter!" she cried. "*Peter!*" And then she half sobbed, "Oh, you idiot! I'm not crying because I'm miserable. I'm crying because I'm *glad*. Oh, Peter!"

She half held out her arms to him, because she couldn't help it. And her eyes must have been filled with sweetness and surrender, because she felt that way.

She saw his eyes change, from incredulity, to doubt, to a glorious golden shining. And then two strides had brought him to her. His arms were around her and his lips warm and deep and tender, were folded down on hers.

She clung to him, the warm glory of that kiss surging through her until she was weak and helpless, until nothing in the whole world mattered but never, never, never losing him. That was all. Just let her cling. Just let her hold him. With this gorgeous glory pouring through her, this lovely wonder awake in her heart.

An amazing sound snapped them apart. The sound of a key grating in the lock.

Margo whipped around. Fright stabbed her. Nobody had a key to her door. What—who—

But before she could move, before she could speak, the door swung quietly open. And Dan Spode walked into the room.

Margo was shocked to ice. For a second she stared, silent. Dan, calm and completely at ease, walked slowly into the room. He dropped his coat on a chair and scaled his cap to the top of a bookcase. Obviously he was a person coming home. This was his place. And the warmth of his eyes and the curl of his smile implied that this, if he liked, was his Margo.

Rage suddenly ran through Margo

like a black and bitter poison. It flamed her cheeks crimson and blazed, hot, in her eyes. What right had Dan to behave like this. She whirled on him to tell him what she thought—and her eyes fell on Peter's face. Her words died in her throat. Her breath, for a minute, stopped.

For Peter, his puzzled eyes on her, was waiting for her to say something—to introduce this man who had had his key to Margo's door, to explain him in some way. And Margo, in that cold second, knew there was no explanation.

What would a man like Peter Schuyler think if he knew a man like Dan Spode was her step-brother? Peter Schuyler, aristocratic, brilliant, the youngest district attorney ever to gain office, and with his whole future lying dazzlingly before him. Perhaps he'd be governor, perhaps even President. And Dan Spode, his handsome face not offsetting his gangster slouch, his eyes shifting nervously here and there and his smile the easy, oily smile of the born liar.

HOW could Margo admit him to be . . . her step-brother? What would Peter say? What would he do? She had only just this minute won his love. Must she lose him after only knowing once the dear feel of his lips on hers?

"Well, for crying in a sink," Dan said. "You two look like I'd done something awful to come home. Maybe"—he leered at Margo—"this wasn't the right night to come home. Or maybe"—the leer grew to a grin—"I came home just in time."

"Dan!" Margo's fury exploded.

She spun on him, her small foot stamping, her rage crackling. But before she could say another word Peter got to his feet. The quiet, cold dignity of his face froze her. And his voice was a mask of perfect courtesy.

"I had better go." He collected his hat and gloves, and then, with terrible

quietness, he added, "I am sorry if I have embarrassed you, Margo."

"No!" cried Margo. "Peter—you haven't! It's just—"

She stopped, her wretched fingers twisting together. Her eyes, wordlessly, sought his. What could she say? How could she say it? Behind her she heard Dan Spode snicker.

Margo's face flamed—and Peter let himself gently out the door.

The instant it closed Margo turned in white heat on Dan.

"Don't blow *me* up, Beautiful," Dan said calmly. "Is it my fault you're ashamed to introduce me as your brother?" And then he chuckled, "I've



got friends who would sure be pleased to know my lovely step-sister is palling around with the district attorney. Wow! What a break that could turn out to be!"

He grinned, and the grin touched Margo's spine with ice.

"Dan—" she said, but she couldn't say any more because his eyes mocked her and his curling lips were suddenly filled with meaning. So she ended, stupidly, "Where did you get the key you came in with?"

His grin became a laugh. "Easy," he taunted her. "I dropped in to see Billy just after you'd gone out and I got an impression of the lock and had it made." He laughed at her surprise. "I know lots of tricks like that," he boasted. "And"—his eyes slanted down at her suddenly—"lots of tricks—like this!"

He reached for her, and before she could move he had her; her arms held fast by his arms, her body pressed

in a tight curve to his and his hungry lips crushed close.

She struggled, she beat, she fought. She might just as well have battled against a strait-jacket. Dan held her. He kissed her. He lifted his head, finally, and laughed at her.

"You beast!" she gagged, her throat sick. "You horrible beast!"

He laughed again. And let her go. She got to the farther side of the room and stood there, furious, sick, her back against the wall, her hands spread on either side of her.

Dan made no move to follow her. He just said:

"You'll never get away from me again, baby, so don't try. That kiss"—his lips curled—"was just about the sweetest thing I've ever had, and you're about the sweetest thing I've ever known. And you're staying right here in my arms where you belong—whenever I want you to be there. Is that clear?"

"No," said Margo, "it isn't. I wouldn't marry you—"

Dan burst right out laughing. "Who's talking about your marrying me?" he asked. "A man doesn't have to marry the girl who pushed his father downstairs and killed him. Does he? Think that one over for awhile."

HE STOOD and watched her. Saw her sway against the wall and try to cling to the flat surface for support. Saw her face drain white and

her lips, under her lipstick's red, go pale and stiff as marble.

He crossed the room then and looked down at her. His hands were in his pockets but the way his eyes raked her brought the hot crimson blood pouring up her throat. For a second she forgot even the thing that Dan had just said, that look in his eyes made her so sick.

Then it came back into her mind again, and with it came a quick, instinctive knowledge. Dan wasn't sure of what he had just said. He didn't *know* that she'd had anything to do with his father's death. He was just guessing. He was just groping, trying to find a bludgeon he could use to force her to his will.

The feeling came in a flash. And in a flash she used it. She tossed her head and laughed back at him.

"What a crazy idea," she flung at him. "How in the world could I have had anything to do with your father's falling downstairs? That's the silliest thing I ever heard of."

"Not so silly." He looked down, that hot-oil look in his eyes, that slight, cruel smile touching his lips. "You ran away that same night, didn't you? Because—his eyes narrowed—"you were scared of the police. Now, weren't you?"

"No," said Margo. Her tone was flat, unequivocal. Her eyes met his in honest cold disgust. "No, I didn't run away from the police," she said

[Turn Page]



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truthfully. "I ran away from you. And I wasn't scared of you either. I just hated you. I've always hated you. And"—her shoulders stiffened, her chin went up, and fire spat from her
 always will hate you! I loathe you I I detest you! And I'd as soon have you touch me as have a snake crawl over my skin. Now get out!"

She whirled across the room, flung open the door and stood there, her back against it.

"Get out!" she said again. Her voice was low and clear, but there was no mistaking the fact that she meant what she said. "If you don't get out this minute, I'll yell for the police. There's one who lives right across the hall. Mrs. Flynn's husband. He'd be tickled to death to take care of anybody who was bothering me. Now—get—out!"

Dan got. But as he passed her he said:

"I'll go now. But I'm coming back. I've waited for years to get you, and I'm going to do it. And remember this—if the police aren't looking for you now in connection with my father's death, they will be when I get through talking to them. And they won't have to take my word, either. I've got pals who'll swear they saw you push him



down—and then where'll you be? You and your high-hat boy friend who's district attorney. What do you think he's going to think of you when I get you all nicely mixed up with the police? I tell you"—he leaned toward her and his eyes had a red glint in them—"you'd better play the cards my way. You'll have to play 'em that way in the end anyhow. Think it over."

He went out then. And the street door slammed behind him.

CHAPTER VI

ALL THAT COUNTED



THAT night Margo didn't sleep. She got up a dozen times, lashed by her troubled thoughts, and went in to look at Billy curled, small-boy fashion, in his little bed. She would touch his hair, and his cheek, and once she knelt down by the side of the small bed and laid her face against his sleep-warm hands.

Because, as always before, Billy was the basis of her problem. Nothing, now or any other time, must ever happen to Billy. And if she held out against Dan as she must do—for the mere thought of not holding out sent a throbbing sickness through her that was unendurable—might not harm, eventually, come to Billy?

For Margo knew instinctively, as any one looking at him must know, that Dan was, in some way, a thug. Maybe he stole; maybe if ran a racket; maybe, even, he might deal in killings. Yes, his eyes made you think even of things as bad as that. But no matter what his line was, one thing was certain. He was a thug. Tall, handsome, smooth, easy-talking—but a thug.

And he meant what he said. Margo would do, in the end, what he wanted her to do, or he would frame her with the police so that she would . . . well, what? Get put in jail most likely.

"Oh, don't laugh at it, Margo," she told herself as her lips began to twist at the craziness of the notion. "Other people have been framed. Other innocent people have gone to jail."

And, anyway, how Innocent was she? Hadn't she, actually, no matter how innocently and justifiably, been the cause of old Dan Spode's death? Hadn't she?

But then there was Billy. Little Billy. And, also, there was Peter. Peter with his high ambitions and his

splendid future lying straight before him like a broad road stretching clean and fair to the horizon. Peter's life must not become cluttered and confused by his ever getting mixed up in any way with a girl who might, at any time, get trapped by the police. Or who, even worse, was connected with a man like Dan Spode.

And Dan, she knew now, would hover somehow in the background of her life always. He would be there, even if she managed things so he didn't bother her. He would still be there, like a huge ugly shadow. There would be no shaking him. He would be a threat to her peace and a threat to Billy's happiness—for Billy's happiness depended upon her peace. Just so long as Dan knew where she was he'd be a threat. Just so long as he knew where she was!

Margo, when the sky was gray with dawn, went to sleep repeating that last sentence. And when she woke up she knew what she must do. Get out of Peter's office. Get out of his life. Once more she would run away with Billy. So that nothing would touch him. So that he would be happy. And safe. Maybe on a farm somewhere. She would work for their keep. And there would be chickens. And a cow. Billy would like that.

That day, at the office, was the hardest day she had ever lived through. Looking at the puzzled hurt in Peter's sea-blue eyes was the hardest thing she had ever done. Because Peter was waiting for her to explain. He was waiting to learn from her lips who Dan was, and why he'd had a latch-key, and by what right he had spoken to her as he had the night before.

AND Margo was not going to explain. She was just going to let Peter think anything he might want to think. Because in the end, it would make everything easier for him. When he found she had run away, he would probably think she had gone

off with Dan. That would hurt him, but it would give him a protective shield of disgust and anger, too, so that the hurt wouldn't matter so much.

And that was what Margo wanted •—not to have Peter hurt. Anything was better than that. She loved him just that much.

It was a great relief to her when he left the office in mid-afternoon. It made things easier to have him walk out of her life with just a casual, courteous nod. Though the hurt, puzzled look was still in his eyes.

"But it won't be there tomorrow," Margo said to herself. "Tomorrow you'll know I'm gone and I'll fix it so you'll think it's Dan, and you'll hate me—but you won't be hurt. And that's the better way."

She tried to smile, but her lips tasted salty. So she knew she was crying.

Five o'clock came finally and she went down in the elevator, for the last time. She had written the note and left it propped on Peter's desk. She had written:

Dear Peter:

By the time you read this I'll be gone. You remember the man you saw in my place the other night? Well, I'm sorry, Peter, but sometimes life is like that. Please forget me and everything about me as soon as you can.

Margo.

"There," she had thought as she had balanced it against his bronze pen stand, "that ought to settle everything."

It told nothing—and implied everything.

As she got off the elevator, Count Elciano, complete with stick, pearl-gray gloves, and the most charming smile in the world, stepped toward her. He had been waiting. And he was so glad to see her that, for a minute, her heart was no longer a hollow crystal ache. It warmed and throbbed as if, again, it had come alive.

"You are so beautiful and so

sweet," murmured the count, bending above her fingertips. "Is it not possible that we may have another evening together?"

Margo looked up at him, but before she had a chance to answer, the revolving street door whirled, there was a small gust of chilled air, a delicate whiff of perfume, and Anne Brett's voice said gaily:

"My dear, isn't this wonderful? *Giovani!*" She offered the count her hands. She offered him her gay, lovely smile too. And her lifted face. "I was just coming in to see if I could persuade Peter to take me out for a cocktail, but I'd so much rather go with you. Would you—please?"

"The pleasure," Count Elciano assured her, "would be mine, except that I am trying to do a little persuading myself."

He turned to smile at Margo, but Margo had gone. Slipping out the street door, running around the corner. She had seen her chance to get away, to cut off everything, quietly, smoothly, with no embarrassing explanations. And she had gone, leaving Anne Brett looking up with her gay bright air of invitation at Count Elciano, and sooner or later, Margo was sure, the count would accept.

HE WOULD have cocktails today with Anne; he would have luncheon tomorrow; and one day soon he would be waiting at the altar of St. Thomas' for Anne, lovely and glamorous in bridal white, to come to him up the aisle. He would come to know, when he thought about it, that Anne, beautiful and socially impeccable, was the right girl to become his countess.

Margo was so sure of this that she didn't even think about it going home. She thought about Billy. He would be waiting for her as he always was, his small face pressed to the window, his blue eyes large with eagerness and love.

And she must do all that she had to

do quickly—pack up, plan, get away. For somehow she felt the need of haste pushing her.

The feeling increased as she climbed up out of the subway and walked down her block. So that soon she was no longer walking but running, a queer unreasoning fear tapping at her heels. As soon as her apartment house came in view, her eyes raked the windows for Billy's face, and when his face wasn't there, watching and waiting, she ran faster.

She flung open the door with real fright clutching at her heart, so strong was her premonition of disaster. And when she saw the dark rooms, when she felt the empty, hollow atmosphere of the place she began calling, in wild, high hysteria:

"Billy! *Billy!* Billeeeeeee!"

He was not there. The apartment was empty. She ran across the hall and hammered at Mrs. Flynn's door. Mrs. Flynn knew nothing. Her round Irish face went red, then white.

"But he was there," she kept insisting. "I tell ye, Margo, he was right there, there when I left him at five o'clock like I always do to get my Tim's supper. I tell ye, he was right *there!*"

But he wasn't there. And it was only when Margo had searched the place the second time that she found the note, jabbed to a chair back with a long corsage pin. It read:

I told you that you'd come around to my way of thinking one way or another. I meant just that. You didn't believe me when I told you what I knew about you and my father. All right, don't believe. But you'll come around anyhow. Because, before you see Billy again, you'll spend a nice friendly week-end with me in Atlantic City. So how do you like that. I'll get in touch with you.

It wasn't signed. It didn't have to be. Only Dan could have written it.

Margo didn't know when Mrs. Flynn went home, nor when she came back with a dish of steaming stew and a juicy slab of apple pie. Margo just sat there in the big chair, her

eyes straight ahead, trying to think.

"Eat the stew, mavourneen," Mrs. Flynn said. "There's never a trouble but what stew will help."

"Yes," said Margo politely. "Thank you."

But she didn't eat it. She didn't even know Mrs. Flynn had spoken. Finally, with a worried sigh, Mrs. Flynn went home. And Margo still sat there.

Finally she stirred. She had thought of everything, sitting there with her wide eyes pasted on the wall, and now she knew there was only one thing to do. This was no time to think of pride, or love, or even hurting people. This was the time to think of nothing but Billy. So Margo got up and put back on her hat and coat and went out.

THERE was a public telephone in the candy store and Margo used it, her finger trembling a little as she dialed Peter's number, while the clang of her dropped nickle still echoed in the instrument's black throat.

But Peter wasn't at his home and he wasn't at his office. She knew one or two of his clubs, and he wasn't at either of them. Finally she put the receiver back into its hook. Terror laid a large cold hand on her shoulder, and a panic of grief knotted her throat and burned tears behind her eyes.

Peter would have been the one person in the whole city who might have

helped her. Peter with his knowledge, and with his power and influence as district attorney. Peter would have known what to do. He would have had the police throw out their net that would have, somehow, caught Dan—and Billy.

What matter if she would have had to tell him the whole sordid story to gain his aid? What matter if it hurt him and he hated her? What matter anything now? When Billy might be frozen with terror, when Dan might be mistreating him, when—at the very least—his little-boy's heart would be tearing itself apart for her? Nothing mattered in the whole world but that.

couldn't find Peter. He was gone somewhere. Probably dancing with Anne. Certainly dancing with Anne. But even that thought brought no pain now. Just the thought of Billy brought pain.

Margo left the telephone booth and walked out on the street. Cool night air touched her cheeks and she shivered. The lights were too bright. They made her dizzy. And a terrible sickness grew in her throat that was nothing but stiff, stark panic.

"What shall I *do*?" she cried to herself. "What *can* I do?"

She didn't know. All she knew was that she had to find Billy. Little, alone, frightened, crippled—she *had* to find Billy.

"Oh, dear God," she wailed softly, "please send Peter to me somehow. Please send Peter!" [Turn Page 1

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**EXCITING
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IOC AT ALL STANDS

She went two doors down from the candy store and turned in at her apartment house. A long, lean figure moved out from the shadow. Margo looked at it, thinking wildly, "I'm not seeing him. I'm not. He isn't real."

Then the figure moved unmistakably into the light.

"Peter!" whispered Margo, and slipped into soft, quick darkness.

She opened her eyes to the amber lamplight of her own living room. Peter was bending over her and her throat was still burning from the brandy he had forced through her

"Feel better now?" he asked, and screwed down the cap of the silver flask he held in his hand.

She tried to sit up.

"Take it easy," he said, and put pillows behind her head. "If you haven't had dinner maybe food will help."

"Food!" she said. "It's Billy." The awfulness of it rushed back over her. "Dan's taken him away!" she sobbed. "Oh, Peter, get him back for me! Peter!"

Peter stood still and looked down at her.

She saw his face go white and stiff and tight. And his voice had in it a note she'd never heard before when he said:

"Let's get this straight, Margo. Who's Dan?"

"He's my step-brother. His father married my mother when we were both children. He was the one who was here last night. The one who came in with the latch-key."

There! It was all out. And it didn't seem to matter. Peter wasn't bothering with those facts at all. His mind cut through to the core of the thing.

"Why did he take Billy?" he demanded.

"Because he's after me." That truth was plain and simple and came out that way. "He tried threats last

night and it didn't get him anywhere. So now he's taken Billy."

"And he's holding him—"

"Until I spend a week-end with him in Atlantic City. Here's the note he left."

She held it out. It shook in her trembling fingers, but her eyes were steady and so, now, was her heart. Peter was here. Everything, somehow, would be all right.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT PETER'S LOVE COULD DO



PETER took the note and read it, his eyes going to steel and his lips moving with the muttered things he was thinking. But when he looked up at her his first question was the question of a lawyer who has to have all the facts.

"This reference he makes to you and his father. That was the threat you mentioned?"

"Yes. It happened three years ago, when I was fifteen. I was coming in one night from an errand. It—we lived in a tenement, and the halls and stairs were narrow and never lighted. I . . . my step-father met me at the top of the first flight. He had been—drinking. He didn't recognize me. He just knew I was a girl. And when he reached for me I fought. It was—dreadful."

"You poor kid," said Peter. His eyes were deep and very blue as they rested on her face.

"No," said Margo, "don't offer me sympathy—yet. Because I fought so hard that—that old Dan slipped and fell down the stairs—and was killed. Instantly. He was dead when they picked him up."

Peter said nothing and Margo, now, didn't dare look at him. She didn't want to see what Ms eyes might be like. Peter who loved the law and goodness and things that were right.

So she said, making her voice clear:

"I killed him, you see—and then I ran away."

Peter did say something then. He said it, with his eyes still watching her.

"You didn't run away to save yourself because of what you'd done." His voice was very sure. "You ran away perhaps to save Billy from something—perhaps to save yourself from this same man who's taken Billy now. Was he living in the same house then?"

Margo's eyes whipped up, wide with amazement.

"How did you know?" she cried.

Peter smiled. Margo remembered that smile all the days of her life. It was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen.

"I know you," said Peter, "and I know that you would never be capable of running away from anything. You'd stick and face it if it meant the gallows. But you'd run to save Billy."

"I had to," said Margo. "Don't you see? Young Dan was only eighteen then, but"—a shudder touched her—"he would look at me. As long as his father was there he didn't dare try anything, but the minute his father died—"

"You couldn't lose time," said Peter. "Your ran away that night?"

"Yes. And—please believe me!—I didn't honestly think about my being to blame for old Dan's death and that it might look as if I were running away from that until weeks afterward. And then I couldn't go to the police and explain. I couldn't. Don't you see what might have happened? If they had put me in jail Billy would have gone—would have gone to an orphan asylum. And I couldn't *stand* that! I couldn't. Don't you see?"

"You poor, brave, wonderful little kid."

PETER looked as if he couldn't stand any more either. Not unless she was in his arms. So his arms

went out and gathered her in. He held her close, her head cradled in the hollow of his shoulder. And suddenly her tears came, gushing in floods like a spring freshet that pours out, washing away all that is dead and bitter and leaving behind it nothing that isn't sweet and clear.

"And I thought," Margo said finally, as her sobs died down and as she mopped her wet eyes with the big handkerchief Peter gave her, "I thought you'd hate me. I thought—"

"Hate you?" said Peter, whispering his soft reproach into her hair. "I'd never hate you. Because I know *you*. Not the things you've done or even the things you might do. But the person you are. And the Margo I know I will always love. Always and always and always."

Margo stirred and lifted her eyes. And by the look in Peter's eyes she knew he told the truth.

Her throat made a long and lovely line of surrender as she gave her lips to his kiss.

But they both knew this was no time for love-making. Perhaps, even now, they might be too late. If Dan got Billy too well hidden, if he should take him across the river to Jersey, or over into Connecticut.... Time. Time was so important.

"Where is the nearest phone?" said Peter, and when Margo told him he went out right away.

He came back with excitement packed tight behind his eyes, though all he said was:

"Get your hat on, sweet. We're going downtown."

"Where?" said Margo. "Where?"

But still he wouldn't tell her.

"I'm not sure," was all he would say. "We're going down to talk to the commissioner first. We've got to start somewhere."

But she knew there was something he wasn't telling her, either because he was afraid it would make her hope too much, or be too frightened. She couldn't tell which. And she could

tell still less from trying to read Peter's eyes. He was excited and his brain was racing, but what it meant she couldn't know.

They reached the big stone building on Center Street, and went through great corridors that were echoing with that strange hollowness that busy office buildings have after hours. But all the doors opened to Peter Schuyler—District Attorney Schuyler! And all elevators ran promptly.

Before Margo realized it they were in a room that seemed to hold nothing but a pair of clear, steady gray eyes above the polished expanse of shining desk.

"Commissioner," said Peter, "this is Miss Wayne. Margo Wayne that I spoke to you about. Margo this is Commissioner Morgan. And if anybody in the world can find Billy for you, he's the man." Peter turned back to the commissioner. "Have you checked on the story you mentioned?"

The commissioner picked up an ink-well and put it back again carefully. His eyes were on Margo. Then, from nowhere, he produced a soiled, mused-up scrap of paper.

"Does anything about this look familiar to you?" he asked.

Margo took it. And suddenly her hands were shaking.

"Billy wrote this! He *did!* Peter, look! I'd know that funny writing of his anywhere. Peter!"

PETER came and looked over her shoulder. Billy's funny little-boy scrawl. Half-printing, half writing. Billy who could never go to school and who had taught himself with Margo's help—and Peter's.

But now Margo's face was white. She stared at the police commissioner.

"Where did you get this?" she whispered? "Where?"

"One of our men on his beat saw it flutter down from a shuttered window on Delancey Street. He picked it up and brought it here. The minute

we read it, I'm being kept here by a gang. It sounds like they were planning to do something bad. Please send the cops,"—Well"—the commissioner's mouth was touched at the corners with a smile—"we sent the cops. Your Billy"—his gray eyes looking at Margo softened—"your Billy is in the next room."

But Margo didn't leap for the door as they had expected she would. Instead she stood very still. And her eyes were wide and almost black in the pallor of her face as she stared at the head of the police force.

"I don't want to see Billy." Her voice was hardly more than a whisper, and her words sounded as if she had to take each one separately and push it up through her hard, dry throat. "I don't want to see Billy. Now now. Not again. If he doesn't see me, he'll never know, never really know, that I—had to go out of his life. He'll just think that—well, that Dan kidnaped him and that, for some reason, I couldn't find him. You'll let him think that, won't you? I mean—it won't be the truth—but just let him think it so he won't be hurt. Will you?"

Neither Commissioner Morgan nor Peter answered her directly.

"What will be the truth, Miss Margo?" the commissioner asked quietly.

"That I will be serving the term in prison for being the direct cause of my stepfather's death," Margo said.

She heard the quick pull of Peter's breath as amazement drew it in. Her eyes, for just a second, went up to his. But Peter, then, was sending some kind of message, or some kind of question, across the desk to the commissioner. And the commissioner's eyes had, deep within them, a faint twinkle.

Again he picked up the ink-well and, very carefully, put it down.

"I wish," he said in quiet complaint, "that real criminals would come into my office and give themselves up as

as self-accused criminals do. But it seems to me—"

"Self-accused!" The words caught Margo's throat, "You mean—"

"I mean," the commissioner was smiling now, frankly. "I mean that when this young district attorney here telephoned me to ask about Billy he also asked me to have certain records investigated. It was after hours and the offices were closed but, for a district attorney—and a district attorney who is young and has the future before him that Peter Schuyler

report was quite clear. The man, this Dan Spode, had been a heavy drinker and it was thought, at first, that he'd fallen because he had been drinking,, and that the fall had killed him. But, according to the doctor's report, such was not the case."

Margo went to ice. She could feel it, brittle, around her heart. She could feel it, dry and terrible, in her mouth. They were going to tell her now that she had killed him.

"No," said the commissioner, "the fact was that Dan Spode had died

TRUE BLUE

*My lover is a soldier lad,
And days are dull and bare,
For he has gone away to camp
To serve his country there.*

*I miss the kisses of his lips.
And yet it's ecstasy
To know my lover's true and blue
To Uncle Sam and me!*

—HELEN ARDSLEY.



has—many things can be done. The records were investigated."

"And what," said Peter, "did you find?" But he looked somehow, as if he already knew all the answers.

"We found," said the commissioner, "that on a certain evening some three years ago, a man named Dan Spode had fallen downstairs to lie dead at the foot."

Margo felt the shock of that, stated so calmly, go through her like an electric charge. She stiffened and went white.

"We also found," the commissioner's voice went on, "that the'doctor's

probably before he began to fall downstairs. He'd died of heart trouble. You have, my dear*—he smiled at Margo—"been troubling yourself without cause."

But Margo didn't hear him. Weak, limp, she was leaning unashamedly against Peter, and tears of relief were shining on her cheeks,

"Peter!^ she sobbed helplessly, 'Oh, Peter!'"

And Peter gathered her into his arms.

"My little love," he whispered, and felt her head nod against his shoulder.^ "My little—wife,? . . .

She stirred and raised her tear-wet eyes. Peter's eyes bent down.

"You will be my wife," he whispered, "for always and always."

Her head ducked back on his shoulder, and again he could feel the faint nod against the roughness of the tweed.

"Would you like," said the commis-

sioner in a loud voice, "to see Billy now? He's waiting for you?"

So together they began to walk toward the door that would open and show them Billy. And Margo walked with her head high and her eyes like stars. And Peter walked with his arm around her—as he always would.



COMING NEXT MONTH

THIS MUST **BE** LOVE

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PARLOR DATE

By KAREN COOKSON

Author of "Old Man's Darling," "Derry—Nice Girl—Dale," etc.



Fanchon holed Joy because he fitted the room she had planned for Bob

Fanchon Learns that You Have to Stand Still to Catch Love—Not Go Chasing It!

FANCHON MACE had a bedroom with silver walls and exotic black glass fixtures. She had a stunning living room with a pale yellow rug, brown satin furniture and a huge studio window that overlooked the town.

It was a wonderful apartment for the smart little cocktail parties that Fanchon gave on Sunday afternoons, but it was no place for a parlor date. Because Fanchon didn't live alone.

Fanchon lived with her mother and her twelve-year-old brother, Joey, whom she helped support. On Sunday afternoons, when Fanchon wanted to entertain, her mother and Joey went willingly to the movies. But they couldn't be expected to go to the movies three nights a week when Fanchon and Bob Bishop had dates!

When Bob called, Mrs. Mace and Joey retired to the breakfast nook



while Joey did his homework, and then went to bed. Fanchon felt guilty and selfish about shooing them out of the way. And now Bob had an audience for his courting. If you could call such a gay, casual affair as his friendship with Fanchon, courting.

It was a dreadful arrangement all around, but Fanchon hadn't been able to afford a larger apartment. As time went on, Bob and she had had fewer and fewer home dates, and more and more dancing and cocktails and running-around-with-the-crowd dates.

Perhaps that was the trouble with them, Fanchon mused now on a rainy afternoon when she felt too utterly exhausted to go dancing with Bob that night. She was grimly facing the fact that Bob and she seemed to be on a no-stop merry-go-round, having an amusing time getting nowhere.

Perhaps that was why Bob didn't propose in spite of the fact that she dated no man but him for fully a year now. But maybe it was because he really didn't have a proper place or chance to propose to her?

Love has to have privacy in which to blossom. Night clubs and cocktail bars aren't the spots where a man's mind turns to marriage. No, it takes a home and a cozy fireside to make a man think of a home and a cozy fireside of his own!

So Fanchon excused him. But, in her heart, she knew that she was afraid. Terribly afraid. Afraid that Bob didn't really want to marry her, after all. Afraid that he thought of her only as a party girl, vivid and smart and amusing.

And, if Bob didn't want her, she didn't know how she was going to be able to bear it! Because Fanchon loved witty, blond, self-assured Bob Bishop. She had loved him from the day, a year ago, when he had first walked into the office of the Star Pharmaceutical Company and insisted that she let him see her boss about getting a job as a salesman.

Tears gathered in Fanchon's dark

brown eyes and splashed down on her desk, appalling her. What a thing for the super-efficient Miss Mace, secretary to the super-efficient Jay Beverwyck, Eastern States sales manager of the Star Pharmaceutical Company, to be doing—crying on the job! How amazed the stenographers and clerks in the outer office would be if they could see her! And how annoyed Jay Beverwyck would be!

Jay Beverwyck, lean, keen-eyed and firm, wasn't exactly a slave driver, but he was all for strict attention to business during business hours. That was why, Fanchon supposed, he held such an important, top-salaried job when he was still less than thirty.

SECRETLY, she didn't like him, although they worked together very well. He was hard to know. Regardless of the fact that she had been his secretary for a year and six months now, she didn't feel that she knew him personally at all. He was handsome, with deep gray eyes and crisp, black hair, tall and sophisticated, but coolly reserved.

Fanchon fumbled for her handkerchief to dry her tears. And then, a dreadful thing happened!

Jay Beverwyck, poised and efficient and good-looking in a new gray suit with a narrow, white pin-stripe, came in the door. He had some letters in his hand, but he put them down when he saw Fanchon's little red nose and tear-filled, brown eyes.

"Really, Miss Mace," he remarked crisply, "I do wish you'd get your personal affairs under control so that we could get a little work done in this office for a change! You've been moping for weeks! If there is anything I can do to help you, I assure you I will be only too glad. What is it—money trouble, or have you been taking the dashing young personality lad, Mr. Bishop, in the detailing department, too seriously?"

Fanchon drew in her breath on a

choked little gasp. Her small hands were clenched; her brown eyes were smoldering. Her auburn curls seemed to stand on end.

"I hate you!" She blazed at Jay Beverwyck. She couldn't help it. Any girl would hate a man who talked to her that way, even though he was her boss. How dare he speak so contemptuously of Bob, who was one of the company's ace salesmen? How dare he imply that Bob didn't love her?

That torturing, dark doubt was for the secrecy of her own heart alone.

"Help?" she derided bitterly. "You wouldn't help anyone with personal affairs, Mr. Beverwyck! You're too busy being efficient and squeezing the last bit of work out of everyone!"

"Oh, yes, I would," Jay Beverwyck said, more gently now. "I'd help the best secretary a man ever had, to regain her composure. I sincerely dislike seeing you upset, Miss Mace."

"Because it interferes with my work," Fanchon thought wryly, her red lips scornful.

She got up and walked away from him, over to a window. She stood there, staring out at the rain with unseeing eyes, her back stiff, her auburn head held high. She loathed Jay Beverwyck for the careless way he had trampled upon her pride!

Jay followed her. He put strong, brown hands on her shoulders, and spun her around so that she was forced to meet his eyes.

"I'm sorry if I've hurt you," he said. "I shouldn't have offended you about young Bishop, perhaps. But I didn't dream you were fool enough—" He broke off quickly as sparks flared in Fanchon's eyes again. "I didn't know you were really serious about him," he went on. "I thought you were too sophisticated to let yourself care about any man. I didn't think you cared much about anything except having a good time."

Jay's handsome, gray eyes were smiling now, begging her to smile

back at him. But Fanchon refused their demand. Instead, she stood unmoving, straight and formal in her trim, figure-fitting dress of office black. Her long, dark lashes closed down stubbornly against her cheeks, and she tried to twist away from him.

"We'll forget my affairs, Mr. Beverwyck, if you don't mind," she said icily. "I prefer not to discuss them with you."

"Ouah!" Jay said, with a grin that was a small boy's grin.

And Fanchon, looking up, startled at his undignified word, was amazed to see a dimple dancing in his cheek. A handsome, rougish dimple that she had never seen before in all the time she had known him! An intriguing dimple that made Jay seem like a college boy, carefree and full of deviltry, instead of a brilliant, on-the-way-to-the-top executive.

Then, as if the dimple weren't shock enough, he did an amazing thing! He bent, swiftly and surely, and possessed Fanchon's soft red mouth in a fiery, madcap kiss that started with his gay, half-laughing words: "This is to teach you not to snub your boss, young woman," and ended with his heart thundering against Fanchon's and both their bodies trembling as they clung, unreservedly, together.

FANCHON pushed him away finally, trying to be angry for the stardust and the magic and the rapture. But she couldn't find words with which to reprove him.

One look at Jay's face told her clearly that the kiss had been entirely unpremeditated on his part, and that he was far more angry with himself for having kissed her than she had managed to be! The dimple had vanished completely. It was hard to believe she had ever actually seen it.

Shame swept Fanchon then, stinging, burning. Shame for her impulsive, reckless yielding to him. And

something more. Was it her regret that tall Jay Beverwyck with his thrilling lips and his cool gray eyes clearly didn't like her? But that was an absurd idea! She had known always that he didn't like her, hadn't she?

Always there had been some subtle, below-surface antagonism between them. She had known how Jay felt about her personally, and hadn't cared. Why should she suddenly begin to care now? Just ruffled feminine vanity, Fanchon decided hurriedly, and pushed the subject from her mind.

Jay offered Fanchon a cigarette. He held a lighted match for her and for himself with fingers that Fanchon saw were not yet quite steady. But his voice, when he spoke, was firm enough, firm and brusque and cold.

"I guess you're right, Miss Mace," he agreed. "I'd better forget your affairs."

"And you," his gray eyes added coolly. "You, with your soft red mouth and adorable face."

Fanchon inhaled deeply, and the smoke seemed to go down inside her very heart, hurting her and yet steadying her at the same time, so that she was able to reply to him in a tone fully as reserved as his own, fully as frozen and uncaring.

"Then let's get back to business, Mr. Beverwyck. You brought in some letters for me to take care of, didn't you?"

THE episode with Jay Beverwyck, disturbing and upsetting though it had been, served a purpose, however. It crystallized certain half-formed decisions and plans in Fanchon's mind. Something had to be done about her unsatisfactory, heart-breaking relationship with Bob. Fanchon had realized that for a long time.

Now, as the afternoon wore on and she busily typed Jay's letters, defiance burned and raged within her. She would show Jay Beverwyck that he

was mistaken! Bob loved her. She knew he did! It was just that their romance had taken a wrong turn. The kind of dates they had been forced by circumstances to have, were the kind that resulted in a man taking a girl more or less lightly.

You were hardly supposed to get *very* intense at a night club or a cocktail party. You didn't have a chance.

But when she provided Bob with a sweet, sane, secure setting in which to do his love-making, things would be different. Bob would be serious then.

In no time at all she'd have his diamond to wear on her left hand and proudly flash at Jay Beverwyck's cynical gray eyes! She knew just how Bob's voice would deepen with tenderness as he held her in his arms. She could hear his words, passionate, adoring:

"Fanchon, I want you to marry me." Not just the usual light, "Baby, I'm crazy about you."

She knew just what she was going to do to bring it all about, too! She realized that deep down in her mind she had known it all along. She was going to move into a house that had a parlor where Bob and she could have real old-fashioned, homey parlor dates.

She knew the very house. She passed it every morning on her way to work. And, suddenly, Fanchon realized that the house, empty and lonely and sweet, had been calling to her all along.

She would get Great-grandmother Mace's lovely old pieces of cherry and maple and mahogany out of storage and put them in it. She would hang bright-flowered chintz in the windows and polish the tiny square panes until they sparkled. She knew now that the antique brass door-knocker had bothered her every morning. Somebody ought to clean it. Somebody ought to shine it up until it looked like gold!

When Bob telephoned her, she told

him that she couldn't go out with him that evening, that she wanted to stay home and talk to her mother about moving.

"But you have a charming apartment, Fanchon!" Bob protested. "Very smart, and a good address."

Fanchon laughed gayly. "The place I want is even more charming," she assured him. "Wait/ until you see! You'll love it!"

And, in it's different way, it was even more charming. The house that Fanchon rented the very next day was a quaint, rambling old colonial, with low, beamed ceilings and flowered wallpaper, with wide-boarded floors and interesting old hardware, and with—most importantly—separate bedrooms and adjoining sitting rooms for Joey and Fanchon and Mrs. Mace.

There was a front parlor and a back parlor, connected by folding doors. There was a basement kitchen and dining room with wide window sills and casement windows that overlooked a walled, flagg-stoned garden.

It was old-fashioned and roomy and comfortable. And it actually cost less than the chic, tiny apartment where they were now all crowded in together!

Of course, it wasn't modern, or air-conditioned and streamlined and decorated. There was no elevator or maid service, and there was no janitor. But Joey said, enthusiastically, that he certainly was big enough to take care of the furnace.

Mrs. Mace said that she would be so pleased to have a kitchen big enough to turn around in again, that she wouldn't miss her all-electric fixtures in the least.

FANCHON'S heart sang a song of happiness all the day as she thought of the privacy that Bob and she could now have. The lovely long evenings on the love seat beside the wood-burning fireplace in the quaint, pretty parlor. The little suppers she

could serve him on a candle-lit table in the big bay window that looked out upon the garden.

She even thought of the intimate fun of having Bob help her wash dishes in the large, gay red and white kitchen. Oh, it would all be marvelous! More marvelous than any times they had ever had together!

Fanchon was lovely in a two-piece evening dress of yellow moire taffeta the night she first invited Bob to call at her new home. The little jacket was trim and zippered, the long skirt fell about her dainty feet in wide, graceful folds. Fanchon's pretty auburn curls were combed high in a sleek pompadour. Her cheeks were pink with excitement and her brown eyes were aglow.

This was her night! The night she had worked so hard for, and dreamed about!

As the door-knocker sounded, she glanced around her charming parlor, loving it. The fire sang cheerfully on the hearth. The new chintz draperies were drawn against the gloom and darkness of the cold December night shutting out the bleakness.

The exquisite old tables and chairs that had belonged to Great-grandmother Mace had been polished until they shone softly in the firelight glow.

The bookcases had been filled with Fanchon's favorite books. Tall vases on an 18th Century desk and drop leaf table, held chrysanthemums the russet red of Fanchon's hair and the clear yellow of her gown.

It was an enchanting room, she thought. A warm, gay, happy room. It seemed almost to smile at her. She touched the walls with a caressing hand, straightening a lamp shade, patting the cushions of a chair. Then she went on winged, eager feet to let Bob in.

Bob sat down on the sofa before the fireplace, and he didn't seem to relax. Not even when Fanchon mixed him a whiskey-and-soda. He lit a

cigarette slowly. Then he glanced thoughtfully around.

"This new place is awfully big, isn't it?" he asked. "Why do you want so much room, Fanchon? Planning to give bigger and better parties?"

"Oh, no! No parties—" Fanchon began emphatically, and stopped. Somehow, now that Bob was here, staring at her with curious and slightly wary blue eyes—or was that merely her imagination?—her reasons for moving seemed a bit absurd. You couldn't say to the man you loved: "I wanted to supply you with a place where you could propose to me."

No, if he didn't get the idea, you certainly couldn't say it!

Color stained her soft cheeks. She felt unpleasantly guilty. Bob's aloofness and quite evident lack of approval made her feel that she had done something cheap in renting and furnishing this house. Her hand shook a little as she lit a cigarette for herself.

"We were so crowded in the old apartment," she murmured, trying to sound casual.

"By the way, where are your mother and Joey?" Bob asked. "I miss hearing the youngster struggle with his arithmetic and history."

Joey and her mother had been chaperones—was that what he really meant, that he preferred not to be alone with her? Fanchon's nails bit into her palms. Her heart was beating thickly. She felt almost sick with disappointment. Bob hadn't said the house was pretty. He hadn't noticed her new gown. He hadn't said he liked being alone with her! He had, in fact, implied the opposite!

Bob stood up suddenly and added a log to the fire, although it really didn't need one. Then he began to prowl uneasily about the room, glancing at the title of the books, staring at the pictures Fanchon had chosen for her walls.

Fanchon watched him, with desolation in her heart. The room was warm, and yet she shivered. She was cold all over. So terribly cold!

"What have you done with the radio?" Bob demanded abruptly. "Goodness, it's quiet here! I can almost hear myself rattling around!"

SHE forced herself to laugh, and pointed out the lovely old rosewood piano that stood in a corner.

"I'm going to play that when I want music," she explained. "I used to play when I was a child. Loved it, too. But we're all so lazy nowadays. We push a button and let someone else play for us. I've banished the radio to Joey's room because I think it's more fun to create, no matter how unprofessionally, than to depend on automatic entertainment all of the time. Don't you agree, Bob?"

"Oh, sure, I suppose so," Bob admitted indifferently, "But Jose Valia and his band are playing out at Captain Jimmy's Inn tonight. I'd like to tune in on them. They're great! All of the crowd are out there. Ed and Joan, Lee and Helen. I told them we might join them later."

Fanchon stood up and mixed herself a cocktail. For a moment her hurt brown eyes stared unseeingly into the curling scarlet flames of the fire, where all her dreams seemed to be going up in smoke.

Then she raised the glass to her lips and her red mouth twisted into a smile that was self-mocking. So all Bob had needed was a parlor in which to make love to her, a chance to be alone with her! What a joke that was! How she had kidded herself along!

Her laughter pealed out, reckless, a little shrill in the quiet room.

"Here's to Jose Valia!" she cried. "Here's to Ed and Joan, and Lee and Helen and all the gang! Here's to bigger and better merry-go-rounds! I'll get my coat, Bob. I can hardly wait to get to Captain Jimmy's!"

Bob's sigh was a sigh of relief.

"That's better, Fanchon. That's *my* girl talking! Do you know you had me scared for awhile? I was afraid you were going stuffy on me, pal. I thought you were doing yourself over eighteen century style as well as your house. And I like you modern, honey."

Attention without intentions, that's the modern style, Fanchon thought. Dates three nights a week, but no proposal. Kisses, but not "I love you."

Jay Beverwyck had been right. Jay had known that Bob didn't love her. But she had been so stubborn, so sure. She had deliberately blinded herself to a fact that was plain for all the world to see. Bob had no intention of marrying her. What a fool she had been!

But no one need know. Not if she held her head high enough. Not if she laughed enough. Not if she danced enough and kept the merry-go-round spinning. What was it Jay Beverwyck had said? Oh, yes.

"I didn't think you cared much about anything except having a good time."

That was her cue! Definitely, that was her cue. Fanchon Mace, good time girl. Fanchon Mace, who didn't care a darn about love! Fanchon Mace, who made the rounds of the night clubs as regularly as any columnist! And that was an idea, too.

Perhaps she ought to give up being a secretary and get a job as a columnist. Then she could sleep in the daytime and not annoy stern Jay Beverwyck with her running around.

Her laughter rang out again. She sounded terribly, terribly amused.

"You're a wacky redhead," Bob said, intrigued, "but I like you that way." His blue eyes narrowed. He crushed out his cigarette and moved toward her swiftly, trying to catch her in his arms.

Fanchon closed her eyes for one moment while she closed her heart against the remembered ecstasy of

his kisses, the mad thrill, the sweeping fire that Bob's experienced lips could set running through her. No more of that, she vowed passionately. Not ever again! Not the tantalizing, mocking shadow of love if she could not have the substance.

She twisted away from him, her brown eyes too gay.

"Don't be stuffy!" she taunted lightly. "Kisses went out with parlor dates. Sentiment is old hat, and modern young men avoid it—if they're smart."

She was up the stairs, then, and down again, still laughing, with her fur coat flung around her shoulders. . . .

AS SHE swept into Captain Jimmy's on Bob's arm, she was the perfect picture of a good-time girl, sleek and poised and gay. A smiling, pert redhead in a glamorous yellow gown.

Yes, she made a good entrance as a girl who didn't have a care in the world. She had her cue, thanks to Jay Beverwyck, and she got off to an impressive start. But the trouble was that she couldn't keep it up. When Bob smiled at her with his blue eyes shallow and meaningless, she wanted to die. When he whispered: "Baby, I'm crazy about you," she wanted to scream.

Jose Valia's band and champagne cocktails and handsome blond Bob mingled into one, while the gay crowd surged around them. Cue and stage set. Only, somehow, Fanchon couldn't go on with the act. Fanchon had no heart for pretending or for laughing. Her heart was dead. It was a cold, hurting weight within her. •

Fanchon Mace, perennial good-time girl, was a role that she was no longer actress enough to play. Even the wackiest of good-time girls wanted to grow up someday. They wanted to grow into sweethearts.

The laughter stiffened on Fanchon's lips. Tears welled up in her

eyes, threatening to betray her anguish to Bob. She broke away from him with a choked, confused murmur about wanting to powder her nose.

In the powder room, she scribbled a note to Bob, telling him that she had a headache, but hadn't wanted to spoil his fun. She knew that that note was her good-bye to Bob. Then, she telephoned for a taxi and went home alone. . . .

There was snow falling softly in large, lazy flakes as Fanchon stepped down from the taxi in front of her home and paid the driver. She lifted her auburn head, and the snow touched her hot cheeks gently, like cool, caressing kisses. It seemed to soothe the grief and the fever that burned within her.

For a moment, blind with the tears that she could no longer hold back, Fanchon didn't notice the gray, long-nosed convertible that the taxi had pulled up behind. Then, she saw it, and recognized it as Jay Beverwyck's car!

Wonderingly, she went up the snow-covered walk to the door. What on earth was her boss doing here at this late hour? Why had he come now, of all times? Now that she had lost Bob! Now when she wanted only to be alone to weep her heart out!

Anger swept her suddenly. Jay Beverwyck was the last person in the world she wanted to see! She hated him!

Her mother evidently had shown Jay into the parlor and left him to wait for Fanchon. For he was there, established quite cozily in the big wing chair beside the fire, with one of Fanchon's favorite old books. His handsome, rugged face was profiled against the dancing flames. His black hair was a little mussed because he had been running a hand through it as he read.

He sprang to his feet as Fanchon entered.

"You should have told me you were going to move!" he greeted her

lightly. "I had an awful time finding you. The new address wasn't on file, and your phone isn't connected yet. I finally had to bully the superintendent at your old apartment into telling me where you had gone to."

"I'm sorry," Fanchon said, her voice more crisp than she had intended, because she was fighting to keep it steady. "Is it something important?"

"I've lost the survey of the New York territory, and I couldn't find where you had put the duplicate," Jay explained. "I started checking the information tonight at home and wanted to go on with it."

"I'm sorry," Fanchon said again. It seemed to be all she could say. Her throat was thick with tears. She couldn't endure much more!

She hated Jay Beverwyck because he fitted so easily into the room she had planned for Bob! The room Bob hadn't liked because it made him feel trapped—trapped by a slim, too-eager girl in a long yellow gown. A girl who had worn her heart on her sleeve and made rather a fool of herself.

"I—I was dancing at Captain Jimmy's," she faltered.

Jay quirked a dark eyebrow. "Captain Jimmy's? That noisy, smoke-filled, crowded place? When you could have been enjoying all this?" His hand indicated the fire singing softly on the hearth, the bright curtains drawn against the snowy night, the peace and warmth and quiet charm of the room.

Fanchon clutched at the back of a chair. She felt a little dizzy. She felt spent and ill and beaten. And she loathed tall, gray-eyed Jay for being here to see her like this.

HER voice sounded queer to her own ears, queer and reckless and strained.

"Yes," she said slowly. "We were at Captain Jimmy's with the crowd when we could have been here—"

alone. Because, you see, Bob didn't want this, or me." She was angry now. "Well, why don't you say: 'I told you so'?" she blazed at him with gathering fury. "Go on, say what you're thinking—that I'm a silly fool! Laugh at me! I fixed all this up for him and it scared him away. I was so smart, and so sure that he loved me, that all he was waiting for was a parlor in which to propose! But he was too wary for me. He doesn't want to get married. I'm a wacky redhead, he said, but he likes me that way. Meaning: Don't get serious, Fanchon! Don't be foolish enough to take me seriously, baby. . . ."

Jay Beverwyck's strong hands clutched her shoulders, shaking her until her hysterical laughter subsided.

"Don't hurt yourself so!" he said fiercely. "He isn't worth it! He isn't worth a single tear, Fanchon."

But her tears were spilling down her white cheeks, crystal-clear and salty and bitter.

The anger went out of Jay then. He touched her gently, stripping the fur coat from her trembling shoulders, drawing her close in his arms for a moment.

"I'm not going to laugh," he said firmly. "What you did wasn't funny. You had the right idea, you see, but the wrong man. Parlor dates are the right kind of dates, the kind that grow into love."

He caught her chin between his thumb and index finger, tilting her lovely face so that her soft brown eyes met his. He said, then, the words that Bob had failed to say, the words that were a balm to Fanchon's wounded heart:

"I like your house tremendously, Fanchon." Then he added, his voice curiously husky, "I like the things your house tells me about you, too. Things I was too blind to discover about you myself. I don't believe it's a stage-set at all, my dear. I think it's all quite real, a tribute to the real you. Your house has whispered

to me that I was a fool to think that you were only a good-time girl, Fanchon! I apologize with all my heart!"

"With all your heart. . . ." Fanchon caught herself repeating his words as if she liked the sound of them. A curious happiness was flooding through her at the admiration she saw in his eyes. She felt ridiculously shy, and a little pulse in her throat was throbbing.

Somehow, it was awfully nice to know that the barrier of dislike was down between them at long last, that tall Jay Beverwyck approved of her!

"You're sweet, Jay!" she said, trying to speak lightly. "Funny, I never knew before that you were sweet."

For a brief, shimmering moment, Jay's eyes locked with hers, and there was a question in them. Didn't you, they seemed to ask. Not even the afternoon we kissed?•

Then, the question was gone and Jay was laughing down at her.

"What you need is some coffee, lady. Strong and hot and bitter! And I'm going to make you some. You're tired and chilled."

He swept her up in his arms at that, as easily as if she had been a child, and carried her over to the sofa before the fire.

"Don't move until I come back," he ordered. "I'll find everything without any help."

He was back in a short time with steaming cups of black coffee on a tray and sandwiches made from chicken he had found in the ice box. The coffee restored Fanchon's vitality and poise. She was able to laugh with Jay, and talk with him about books and music and about sailing, his hobby.

He noticed the old rosewood piano, and ran his fingers over the mellowed keys, affectionately. He played softly for her in the firelight, a bit from Victor Herbert, something haunting and Russian, a nocturne that she had always loved.

The minutes slipped into an hour,

then two, of swelling contentment before Fanchon realized that she was having her parlor date after all Not with the man she had planned to have it with. But, she admitted to her astonished heart, she liked it this way!

JAY came back and sat beside her on the sofa. He turned to her, his gray eyes smiling. And then, suddenly, it happened. Like lightning striking across a summer night.

She was in his arms again, held ever more tightly than he had held her that first startling afternoon in his office, and his lips pressed down on her lips, hard!

Once again, his kiss set Fanchon's blood on fire. Once again, her young mouth returned his kiss ardently. And she clung to him in an unreserved, reckless ecstasy that bewildered her when she tried to analyze it.

"Fanchon, sweet, I love you!" Jay whispered without removing his mouth from hers. "I've wanted to love you, always. Only, until I came here tonight, I was afraid that you weren't the kind of a girl who would be willing to settle down. Oh, my darling, I've been fighting my love for you for so long, trying to pretend it didn't exist. But I can't go on fighting it any longer, now that I've had these wonderful hours with you!"

Fanchon's brown eyes, wide and amazed, were staring up into Jay's adoring ones.

"You always half disliked me, didn't you, Jay?" she asked thoughtfully. "Because you didn't think you

could love me with all of your heart?" She didn't wait for Jay to answer. She went on, slowly. "And I always half disliked you, Jay. You seemed so cold and reserved. I resented your coldness, perhaps because I wanted you to be less indifferent where I was concerned. Perhaps because—"

She broke off, flushing in confusion. Awe swept over her. Her heart was pounding queerly; her breath was coming fast. She was a little afraid of the words that had been trembling on her lips. They were such revealing words! They were like spotlights probing into the deep, dark private corners of her heart.

In the light from the fire, she saw that intriguing, delightful dimple of Jay's appear again.

"Things happen quickly, don't they, darling," he asked tenderly, "when you get the right man and the right girl on the right kind of a date? This parlor date of ours has shown us a thing or two, I think. It's shown me how very much I love you and want to marry you, Fanchon."

He waited, his eyes pleading, and at the same time sweetly sure.

Fanchon lifted her auburn head proudly, her brown eyes steady and certain and unafraid.

"And it's shown me that you are the man I really love, Jay," she told him. "It's shown me how crazy I was to ever imagine I cared for anyone else. Why, you're what I wanted, always! That's why I hated you so!"

The fire sang happily on the hearth, and the old parlor seemed to smile at them, as their lips met in their engagement kiss.



COMING IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

SOUTH SEA GIRL

A Novelet of Tropical Romance

By JOYCE HILTON



Listen, Girls!

by DOROTHY SANDS



INDOORS or out, a Mock Track Meet is the kind of fun to have in this care* free, informal season! Hardly any advance preparation and the simplest of equipment will make this the most talked of party of the year!

Of course, nobody knows in advance it's a *Mock Track Meet*. Invitations say in all seriousness:

I'm having a Track Meet
At my house on Saturday Night
I'm counting on you to show us a feat
Of speed or skill or might!

Insert the night of your party, add your name and address and mail the invitations. Say nothing about what to wear! Let them



come dressed for real track competition *or* in simple Summer clothes!

Each guest on arriving is given the following program of events. Type or write these, using carbon paper to make several at a time:

- 100'yard dash
- Pole vault
- Discus throwing
- Hurdle
- Lightweight contest
- Broad jump

Ask each guest to decide on one event to compete in. Don't explain the events! Much discussion while the latecomers are arriving as to who should take part in what event, the girls as well as the men! When everyone is there, pass around a box containing slips of colored paper, one for each

guest. All the slips are blanks except two which have the word "Captain" on them, two with the word, "Scorekeeper," two "Cheerleader." For a small party, omit the scorekeepers and let the captains keep score for their teams.

The captains now take turns choosing their teams, trying to pick players for prowess, of course! As soon as the teams are chosen, all is in readiness for die Meet to begin.

Only a small space, porch or lawn, is needed to stage the Meet outdoors. The grounds should be lighted and a few benches or chairs placed around for coil' testants to rest between events! Indoors, a space in the center of the living room is cleared, with chairs ranged grandstand fashion along the walls.

Spools of Fun

100-Yard Dash: The captain of each team calls for a volunteer to represent the team in this event. Men good at running will doubtless step forward. The captain chooses one. The cheer leaders then lead a cheer for their team members!

The hostess lines the two contestants tip, side by side, hands each a spool with 100 yards of thread wound on it. At the word "Go!" they're off, trying to be the first to unwind all the thread from the spool. They may hold the spool, drop it, chase it, do anything they like, cheered on—somewhat hysterically!—by their team! The one to finish first scores 5 points for his team.

Sipping Symphony

Pole Vault: Wary now, the men won't step forward so readily when the captains call for volunteers for this event. Girls will probably be chosen. Each takes her place in front of a small table. The hostess then places before each an empty glass and a glass full of water. Each contestant gets a straw sipper "pole." At the signal to

start, they vault the water from the full glass to the empty one! They sip up as much water as the straw will hold, then drop it into the empty glass.

Laughter will delay them, but the one finishing first scores 5 points for the team.

Discus Throwing: Two contestants are chosen. Each player is cheered each time by his team! A paper pie plate is the discus. Each contestant gets one. They stand side by side and throw the plate as far as they can. If they choose, they may let the plate stay where it falls. Or they may have two more chances, if they think they can throw farther the next time. The last throw is the one that counts and the one thrown farthest scores the 5 points for the team.

Hurdle: Everybody takes part in this screamingly funny race! Form a single line, the members of the opposing teams alternating. Whisper a song title to the first captain. He must lean past the other captain and whisper the title to the first member of his own team. This player leans past one player to whisper the title to the next one on his team and so on down the line, "hurdlng" a player each time.

But the other players are trying to hear the title whispered! If they do, or think they do, they hurdle it to the next player on their team and down the line to their team members it goes, too!

When the last player on either team gets the title, he runs to the head of the line and all the members on his team burst out singing the song. Score 10 points for the team getting the song started first, but 15 points off the team score if the other team start to sing the wrong song!

Repeat with a different song, giving it to the other team now and letting the first team strain their ears! Fun! They'll proleably clamor for a second chance. Let them have it with two other songs!

More Merriment!

Lightweight Contest: The weight is a lighted candle. One contestant from each team is chosen. They stand at the beginning line, must run down the room or grounds and back, holding the candle. If the light goes out, they must stop, while someone on their team lights it again. The one bringing in the lightweight first, cheered on by his team, wins the contest and another 5 points for the team.

Broad Jump: Two pieces of newspaper go to each contestant. They put one piece of paper down and broad jump onto

it. Then they put the second sheet down and jump on it.

Now they reach back and pick up the first sheet, place it in front and jump again. If they can't reach the paper, they must start again, making a smaller jump. They continue down the line, the one to finish first scoring 5 points for his team. (If the papers should slip on rug or grass, let them step from sheet to sheet instead of jumping.)

Cheerleaders get busy while scores are being totalled up. The winning team is announced and roundly cheered by themselves and the losers!

Something Hot, Something Cold!

Breathless from the cheering and fun, your guests will be glad to troupe into the dining room for refreshments now!

A table set for a real track meet will win top score. Use green crepe paper for the cloth, with a cinder track made of salt circling the table. Pipe'cleaner dolls race on the track. In the center, other dolls compete in the pole vaulting, others in the broad jump and hurdle. Two straw sippers set in marshmallow bases with a string tied between them serves for the pole vault. Place a sipper in one doll's hand for the pole. Make the hurdles in the same way, cutting down the sippers.

The pipe-cleaner dolls are easily made. Bend the cleaners to form a figure with arms and legs, Wrap pink crepe paper around them to make the body and head. Dot in features with a pencil and add crepe paper running pants. (Tiny dolls from the Five-and-ten can be dressed instead.) Stand the dolls up with bits of scotch tape across their feet. Everyone gets a doll to take home as a favor and reminder of the gay time at your Mock Track Meet!

Something hot, something cold spells menu magic for this party! Prepare in advance, rounds of bread, two for each serving. Cream butter and mix with anchovy paste to taste. Add a few drops of lemon juice. Spread mixture on the bread. Just before serving time place a slice of tomato on each piece, sprinkle with grated cheese and place under the broiler to brown. Mmmm with something new and different in cool Summer drinks: Coffee Royal!

Here's how:

1/4 cup sugar	1 cup whipped cream
1/2 cups milfc	1 1/2 cups water
1 teaspoon vanilla	cinnamon
1/2 cup 6trong black coffee	

Combine all ingredients except cinnamon and cream, shaking well together. Keep in refrigerator until serving time. Serve in tall glasses with ice or ice-cubes. Top the whipped cream and dust with cinnamon. Serves 6.

Cake won't be necessary with this menu. The Coffee Royal is sweet and filling enough. Serve Pear Shortcake if you must!

Fill sponge cake cups with half a canned pear in each. Top each pear with vanilla ice cream. Pour chocolate syrup on top. (And don't count the calories!) Delicious.

From Head-

Twice as many shampoos in hot weather time! Dust blows into the hair and settles on the scalp in this hatless season. Too, a shampoo after swimming is a must to remove salt water or chlorine if you do your



swimming in a pod. Extra shampoos also for those who go *in* for strenuous sports. Three soapings and rinsings aren't too many. Stand under the shower (or use a bath spray) for the final rinsing to make sure to remove all traces of soap.

Liquid shampoo only! To make your own shave a bar of castile soap and add enough water to cover. Melt over a slow fire and add two tablespoons eucalyptus oil. Keep in a covered jar. One bar serves for three shampoos.

When choosing a summertime hair-do in this hatless season, make sure it's becoming to your profile. You usually see your self "front face" in the mirror, but others, especially your escort, see you from the side.

I like a new, new coiffure to keep your neck cool as cool. Part the hair down the middle from forehead to nape of neck. Front hair curls toward the center part in two smooth rolls. The back hair *is* brushed up and *braided*. Pin the tiny braids behind the ears and turn the ends into die front rolls. Smart!

Want to wear your bob long in back? Draw the curls together with a ribbon and hide them **all** under a cluster of fresh-cut

or artificial daisies. Fresh as a field of daisies. For evening or to go hatless through the days.

—To Foot

Summertime makes us all foot-conscious? Hence the marvelous assortment of play shoes that come with warm weather. And disappear, more's the pity, with the first frost, just as the flowers do.

We can't be happy if our feet hurt! We can't run, play, walk or even do our work well! Take away the aches and pains that make every step a torture and you'll change your whole life. It'll be fuller and lots more fun if you don't have to weigh every step and decide nothing is worth the agony of walking and you'd rather just stay home and sit!

Here are the latest rules for happy, healthy feet. The kind you can forget, because they'll take you everywhere and let you do everything without a single pre testing pain!

First: Throw away your so-called health shoes! Yes! Unless your health shoes look exactly like a man's in all but size (we'll wager they don't!) they're doing you more harm than good! Here's the way to convince yourself of this. Barefoot or in stocking feet clasp a hand under the front part of your foot. (We've learned to call it the metatarsal.) Squeeze your foot. This is what happens when you put shoes on, health shoes included. Bones all crunched together. Foot high and puffy. And we're supposed to walk like that!

Choose any shoe you like, but make sure to get it wide enough to let the foot lie fully stretched and relaxed on the sole as a child's does. You won't need the height the health shoe gives, because your feet won't be puffed up unnaturally!

Second: Changing abruptly from high heels to flat heels won't eliminate the ache and pains. Wear a medium high or walking heel for several seasons until the fare* shortened leg muscles have a chance **to** stretch to their proper length. But the ?deal heel for foot comfort is the low heel. And we mean low, three-quarters to an mch high!

Luckily, shoe fashions have changed **so** it's entirely possible to find good-looking low-heeled walking shoes as well as play shoes. Wedgees and "flats" in bright colors and conservative tan, navy and black aren't only a Summer fashion. They were worn with suits and spectator clothes in the

Spring at the smartest places and will definitely be a carryover to Fall. Why not try a pair and see how it feels to let the heel do part of the foot's work of supporting you, instead of throwing it all forward on the sole with a high heel?

Here's the way to relieve "hot-weather" feet:

For feet that swell: Dissolve two tablespoons borax in a basin of warm water. Soak feet fifteen minutes. Rinse in water of the same temperature and dry thoroughly.

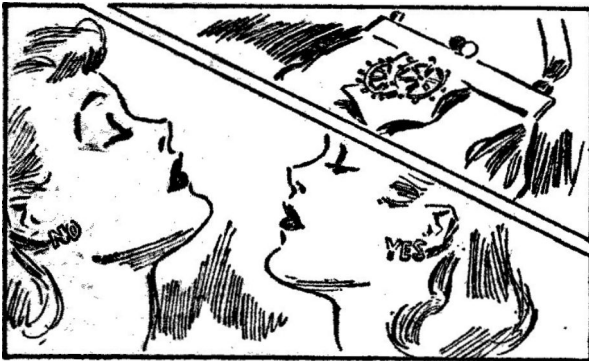
To relieve soreness: A handful of rock salt from the druggist's dissolved in a basin of warm water. Soak the feet five minutes night and morning. Do not rinse. Allow the feet to dry naturally, don't use a towel.

For callouses: Soak feet in warm, soapy water. While feet are wet, rub callous gently with well-soaped pumice stone. Rinse feet and dry well. Apply camphor cream to callous. Repeat treatment until callous disappears.

Why Don't You

Hang a whole row of charms on your purse flap? Amusing!

Make one of the newest purses for yourself out of two huge cart wheels of felt or other heavy material? Stitch both circles together, leaving a six-inch opening, with



saddle stitch in multicolored wool. Loop twenty-five strands of the wool through slits cut *in* both circles two inches from the edge, with a loop at the top for a handle. Smart!

Wear red and green enamel earrings, one inscribed "Yes," one "No!"

Go quaint with eyelet embroidery that's come to the fore again? An eyelet embroidery triangle to tie up your curls when riding to a party. A kerchief to drape front to back for an entirely new top to a plain dress. Mother's old-fashioned eyelet embroidery table centerpiece for a bridge cloth. Copy it faithfully in round doilylike napkins for an heirloom of the future!

Use buttons as trimmings as the designers do? Outline seams with marching rows of gay buttons. String flower buttons at a neckline. Use tiny, shiny buttons to form initials and monograms for play clothes and suit lapels! Fun!

Choose one perfume and let it be distinctly *you* for a year or more? A dab of perfume in the crook of your elbows when you're wearing short sleeves to give an aura of fragrance whenever you move your arms. For evening, of course. Perfume in the daytime no more than a drop on your hairbrush! At work, or for playtime!

I Like ..

A luncheon set seen on Madison Avenue, scene of the smartest decorator shops. Place mats and runner were made of cellophane straw sippers! The sippers were flattened by hand and threaded side by side with heavy thread drawn through the sippers. Six rows of thread at each end, with an inch of the sippers left extended to make a "fringe." Swank! Easy to copy.

A screen to divide dining and cooking space in a bride's one-room-and-kitchenette! The dining space side of the screen was covered in material to match room draperies. The kitchenette side in oilcloth, with cork panels inset at eye level. Menus, recipes, shopping list are pinned to the cork panel and easily removed when no longer needed.

Make a screen like this of wallboard. Cork mats from the Five-and-ten make the cork panels and everything is thumbtacked on, the tacks covered with contrasting binding. Strips of binding make the hinges.

NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

Another delightful summery issue is on the way! In the September number you'll read **THIS MUST BE LOVE**, a grand complete novel by Sylvia Parker that scintillates and sparkles with entertaining romance from the first page to the last. This novel takes place on a dude ranch—and it's colorful and glamorous. You'll enjoy the tangled affairs of Mimsi, who has to choose between Johnny and Tim.

The featured novelet is another fascinating romance—**SOUTH SEA GIRL**, by Joyce Hilton. Love blooms in the tropics while a baffling heart problem develops for the charming heroine, Kay Fletcher. You'll be interested in learning how she gets out of a distressing dilemma—and finds her way to happiness.

These and other unusual romances next month. Be sure you're on hand—and meantime, please turn to page 12 for The Charm Column, containing my personal answers to readers' queries. Thank you*

Your Heart Will Tell

By
ETHEL MURPHY

Author of "She Wanted Romance,"
"They Fell in Love" etc.

*Bill's Plans for the Honeymoon
Cottages Didn't Mean Half So
Much to Jo as His Description
of Their Future Together!*

THE minute Joanna Munson's eyes had fallen upon the item in the newspaper she knew exactly what she was going to do. This was a way to get out of it all.

A slim, straight little figure in a blue taffeta housecoat, she had stood there feeling baffled, afraid, not knowing what to do. Then she'd glanced down at the open paper that had been lying carelessly on the table, as if thrown there by fate.

The fireworks had started, as she had known they would, when she'd walked into the breakfast room.

"Dad, Moms," she said stiffly, "I thought I'd better tell you. I'm going to break my engagement to Alan."

For a moment, there was a stunned silence. If Joanna had announced that she was going to China or Africa, they wouldn't have been in the least surprised. She was always



doing crazy, unpredictable things. But to have her say that she wasn't going to marry Alan Thorne was something they hadn't expected.

"You mean you're not going to marry Alan?" her mother whispered at last.

"That's right, Mom," Jo said defiantly.

"Jo, you can't do this!" Her mother was almost hysterical. "You just can't. Think what every one will say!"

They talked a lot after that, and Jo's head began to ache in confusion.

Her parents had given her everything she could have. The best boarding schools, cars, pretty clothes, a lovely home. Vacations at the best resorts. She was their only child, and they had wanted her to have the best, always.

And Alan Thorne was as good as a girl could possibly do in the way of a husband. He had everything. He was young and handsome, and he came from a family that was one of the very oldest and best.

At first, Joanna—Jo for short—had thought Alan the most wonderful man in the world. She felt elated and thrilled at having won him from all the other girls who had wanted him. Alan and she had a lot in common. They knew the same people and went to the same places. Theirs was going to be the most talked about wedding of the season.

And then, last night at the Crawfords' party, she'd been looking for Alan when she'd heard a girl crying in the library, crying as if her whole world was lost. Jo had never heard anyone cry like that before.

"Myra, you know there isn't any use," she'd heard Alan say.

SHE had stopped abruptly then.

Myra was the girl Alan had gone around with before he had met Jo. But she had thought everything was over between them.

"I can't give you up, Alan!" Myra had sobbed. "You said you loved me!"

"That was before I met Jo," Alan said staunchly. "I'm going to marry Jo, and I'll never forgive you if you try to break us up."

"You want to marry her because she's rich," Myra accused.

"I have to marry some one with money," he explained. "The Thorne money is about gone, and Jo is a very lovely girl."

Jo couldn't listen to any more. So that was the way she'd won Alan. With her money. She knew that she couldn't marry him now. But strangely, she had felt no regret or aching pain in her heart. She realized that for a long time she had known that there was nothing right about their engagement.

She felt sorry for Myra. It must be awful to love a man like that, and to know that he isn't worth your love.

When Alan had taken her home last night, she had told him that she wanted to break their engagement. She couldn't tell him that she'd heard him and Myra. She could save herself that humiliation, at least. But Alan had been furious. He leaped at one conclusion.

"There's another man," he raged. "That's why you're trying to throw me over!"

"No, we've just made a mistake, Alan," she told him. "I want to be free."

"You won't ever be free of me, Jo," he told her. "Remember that! And if you try to break our engagement I'll make a lot of trouble for you. You know I can."

Jo knew that he could do that easily. Her people hadn't always had money, and their family wasn't one of the oldest and the best. She had felt the sting of that more than once in her crowd. The Munsons were just plain people who had come from Kansas, and who had made a fortune

with a new kind of breakfast food.

But she knew that no matter what, she couldn't marry Alan now. But this morning she knew that her parents weren't going to help her out of this mess. They had seen her change her mind so often that they thought she didn't know just what she wanted. And there wasn't any use telling them about what she had overheard Myra say last night. Alan would explain that so glibly. He would say she was just jealous of a girl who meant nothing to him, and they would believe him. Alan was a very smooth talker.

Jo felt trapped by her dilemma. If she could only just get away somewhere, away from home, Alan would find someone else and forget her. Then her eyes had fallen upon the item in the newspaper.

When she tore away from her parents' questions, she went upstairs. She sat down on the side of her bed and read the item again. It said:

Honeymoon Girl wanted for demonstration of Bill North's latest Honeymoon Cottage, Good pay. Apply at once.

"I'm going to do it," Jo said to herself. "I'm going to get that job."

A smile touched her warm curved lips then. She had a lot of courage and had done a lot of new, daring things in her life. She was supposed to be a glamour girl, and no one would think of looking for a glamour girl in a Honeymoon Cottage out in a little suburb.

JO HOPED she could look the part of the honeymoon girl. She had taken part in amateur plays and she thought she ought to put it over on this Bill North, whoever he was. She dressed very carefully in a simple dark suit with a frilly white blouse and a tweed topcoat. She brushed her sleek curls into a mass of soft ringlets that gleamed under her oddly tilted hat.

Jo packed a bag with her plainest things, then sat down at her desk. She wrote to her parents:

I'm not kidnaped, I'll be back when you see things my way. Don't worry.

Then she slipped down the back way and out of the house.

It never occurred to Jo that she wouldn't get this job as Bill North's Honeymoon girl, or that several hundred other girls had also seen that item this morning. Jo had gotten everything she had ever wanted out of life.

She left her bag at a drug-store and went up to the office. It was already crowded with smartly dressed, anxious-eyed girls. A harassed looking office girl was trying to answer their questions. Everybody would have to wait their turn, she told them despairingly.

Jo wanted to protest indignantly that she be interviewed at once. But she bit back the words on her tongue when she remembered that she wasn't Joanna Munson here in this crowded room. She was just another girl looking for a job. It gave her a strange, shaky feeling. She began to feel afraid suddenly.

"Don't look so frightened," a sleek little blonde told her. "Just keep your chin up."

Jo gave her name as Joanna Miller at the desk and sat down to wait. It seemed that she waited for hours. She thought about what she would do if she didn't get this job. She had spent most of her allowance this month, and she had less than five dollars in her purse.

She wondered what girls did who had less than five dollars in their purse. She remembered stories she had heard of girls sleeping in parks and living for days on just popcorn. It gave her a shivery feeling. But she knew she couldn't go back and marry Alan.

At last, the office girl said;

"Miss Miller, you may go in now."

Jo's knees shook as she got up and crossed the room. The inner office was very wide, and furnished with green leather upholstered furniture. There was a slim, efficient looking secretary who eyed her sharply. The desk was littered with newspapers, carbon copies, blueprints. A young man sat behind the desk, scribbling absently on a scrap of paper.

"This is Mr. North, Miss Miller," the secretary said, as if she owned the place. "Please sit down."

Jo looked at Bill North, who was silently regarding her out of searching, but very impersonal eyes. He was quite young, with a lean brown face and very blue eyes. He had an arrogant chin, Jo thought. She wasn't used to being looked at like that, and she felt even more confused. She didn't know what to say.

"I'm interviewing the applicants personally," Bill North said, finally. "These demonstrations are very important and I want to be sure we get just the right girl. I'll have to ask you a few questions. Where did you work last, Miss Miller."

For a moment, Jo felt as if she had lost her voice. She hadn't thought about being asked questions. She knew then that she didn't know very much about getting a job.

"I—I haven't worked in quite a while," she stammered at last.

BILL'S eyebrows went up as his eyes flashed over her simple little suit and the frilly blouse. She couldn't fool Bill North, Jo thought miserably. He knew the clothes she wore were very expensive.

Jo looked straight into his eyes for a moment, her own eyes wide and deep.

"But I want—I need this job terribly," she gulped out. "I'd try very hard to please."

That was the most humble speech Jo had ever spoken in her life. Her

whole future seemed to depend upon his answer.

"Oh, well," Bill said at last.

He frowned in deep thought. He scribbled on some papers he pulled toward him, and then after a moment he thrust them aside.

He told Jo they were starting a sales campaign for the Honeymoon Cottages he designed for his company. The cottages had been completely furnished by the company. There would be other demonstrations. In Chicago, Denver, St. Louis—everywhere the cottages were being built.

His keen blue eyes flashed over her again.

"About five feet three, I'd say," he mused aloud. "Russet hair, a tilted nose, brown eyes, a golden skin and tiny freckles."

His voice was thoughtful as if he were trying to place her in one of his Honeymoon Cottages, to see how she would look there. Suddenly, Jo felt something strange and heady leaping along her veins, something she'd never felt before in all her life. Her eyes were abruptly starry.

Bill North saw that look and something else took the place of the impersonal look in his own eyes. He sat down at his desk again.

"This girl seems the most suitable applicant we've had today, Ellen/" he said thoughtfully.

Ellen was the secretary. She acted as if she didn't like any of this. Her eyes were hard and suspicious, as if she thought Jo was up to something underhanded.

"I thought we'd decided on a blonde," she said.

"I've changed my mind," Bill said. "I think we'll hire this girl."

Jo's eyes danced. She knew that Ellen, Bill's blond secretary, had taken an instant dislike to her. But she didn't care. She had gotten the job. And shrewdly, she guessed that Ellen was in love with Bill and was

jealous of every girl who came near him.

An hour later, a girl Bill had sent in from the outer office showed Jo through the Honeymoon Cottage and explained what her duties were to be.

There wasn't much, really. Jo was to give the personal touch. She was to be here at nine every morning, and dress in the clothes the company provided. And then she was to do the things that a young bride was supposed to do. Arrange flowers in gay pottery bowls, or maybe sit in the sunroom with a bit of needlework. And when people came on a tour of inspection, she was supposed to show them about the house and make them feel as if they wouldn't be happy until they owned a cottage just like this one.

LATER that day, Jo collected her bag from the drug-store, and found a cheap room at a boarding house nearby.

She knew there would be a quiet search for her, but she didn't think anyone would find her here.

The first day at the Honeymoon Cottage Jo was very busy. A lot of people came to look at the model home. At first, Jo was afraid she would be recognized, but her fears quickly subsided because there was no one who came to the cottage who had ever seen the glamorous Joanna Munson except on a society page, and this slim girl in the gay printed dress wasn't much like the sleek Jo who had worn Paris creations.

She answered questions gayly and everyone seemed to like the cottage, and to like her, too. She felt a little proud of her success.

The second day was the same, and the third. There was a doorman who let people in, and looked after things. Bill North came out often. Usually with Ellen or some of the company officials.

She learned many interesting

things about Bill. Everybody who came to the cottage said something about him. He was about the cleverest man who ever lived. He had wanted to design skyscrapers and things like that, but unfortunately there had been little demand for skyscrapers. Bill had about hit bottom when he had submitted his plans for his Honeymoon Cottages to a company which specialized in building small homes.

The company had been interested immediately in the project, and Bill had gone up fast. He was the kind of man who believed in fighting for what he wanted.

Somebody was always asking Jo if she could arrange for them to meet Bill. They had always wanted to meet him. It was some girl usually. And when Ellen came out to the house with Bill, she told him what a marvelous place the cottage was, and how she liked the little breakfast room, the yellow curtains, and the rose garden. Anybody could see that Ellen had Bill wrapped around her finger.

Ellen's praise for Bill's work began to get on Jo's nerves. But nobody ever disagreed with Bill. Everybody told him he was the most wonderful man in the world.

One morning Bill found Jo alone in the sunroom. When he came in, she turned to him, her eyes cold. He probably expected her to fall down his neck, too, and tell him what a wonderful man he was.

His grin was a little awkward.

"I wanted to tell you that everything is coming along fine," he said cheerfully. "A lot of people are talking about these cottages."

She looked at him coolly.

"Don't you think they're rather small?" she asked.

Bill looked astonished.

"Small?"

"They certainly aren't very large," she said.

His brow darkened. She could see that he had a quick temper.

"Well, what did you expect them to be, anyway?" he demanded. "There are thousands of people who live in houses like these! I haven't heard any complaints yet about them being small. People like living in them. They work and plan and save nickels and dimes to pay for them."

"It certainly doesn't sound very exciting to me," Jo said coldly.

BILL looked as if the whole world had fallen on top of his head, but before he could say anything else Ellen came in.

"Oh, Bill, I didn't know where you'd gone," she said. When she saw Jo her eyes went cold. "Don't you think we'd better get back to the office?"

Bill agreed that they probably should. He said good-by to Jo stiffly as he went out with Ellen.

Jo stood very still for a moment. Bill certainly hadn't liked what she said about his Honeymoon Cottages. He was used to people telling him how wonderful they were, and her words were something of a shock to him.

The next day, Bill came back to the model cottage. This time he was alone. He waited until Jo was through showing a new bride about.

"Look here," he said then, "about what you said yesterday about this place being small—"

Her eyes were clear and cool.

"There are exactly thirteen steps from the pantry to the dining-room, and ten steps back to the kitchen," she pointed out. "I've counted them."

He ran his fingers through his hair.

"But we have to build these houses **30** that people can pay for them, and we can make a profit." His voice hardened. "Maybe you want to live in a house with twenty rooms and half a dozen servants."

"I think it would be nice," Jo said angrily. He had no right to say anything like that to her. Let him think what he wanted to about her.

His eyes blazed. They were both angry now.

"Maybe you think you'll marry some man who will give you a house like that?" he said icily.

"Maybe I will!" she stormed.

His eyes held a hard bitter light.

"So you're just like all other girls! You want everything you can get. But that day you came into my office you looked so exactly right, as if you belonged in a place like this. I thought you'd be happy here. Well, its fortunate you just work here."

"Isn't it?" Jo said, but her heart caught strangely.

Bill looked as if he couldn't trust himself to speak again, and without another word he stormed out of the room.

Jo felt strangely upset for the rest of the day. She shouldn't have lost her temper like that, she knew. Bill was young and he had accomplished a lot and had a right to be proud of his success. But she wouldn't have said anything about his Honeymoon Cottages if she hadn't felt so annoyed when she'd seen Ellen falling all over his neck. She just couldn't think about them together.

She didn't see Bill for several days after that. Then, one afternoon, he came in quite late.

"I shouldn't have lost my temper the other day," he said rather stiffly, "just because you don't like small houses."

"Oh, it's all right," Jo said lightly. "There are about half a million people who do like them, and I'm trying to do my job well."

JO MOVED a bowl of flowers slowly. She was wearing a blue dress today, and the sunlight caught in her bright hair, and in the warm curves of her throat.

Bill was so quiet that she looked up at him quickly, surprised that it was a look in his eyes that made her feel dizzy.

"You are doing your job well," Bill said slowly. "It wouldn't be hard to believe that you actually lived here."

That night, before she went to sleep, Jo thought about Bill for a long time. She liked to think about him. He was so different from any one she knew. With a sigh, she went to sleep with a warm little smile on her lips.

Ellen was usually with Bill when he came out to the model cottage after that. Her manner toward Jo grew colder by the day. She always tried to make Jo feel at a disadvantage, but Jo always shook off her barbed thrusts lightly.

If Bill came out alone, he would just sit around scribbling absently on a scrap of paper. Jo supposed he was getting new ideas for his new Honeymoon Cottage. He didn't look at all surprised when Jo said that she didn't like the rugs in the living-room, or roses growing on the porch. He was getting used to surprises, and his eyes began to hold a harassed look. Once he said darkly:

"Is there anything you really do like?"

"Oh, yes," Jo said, her eyes suddenly dreamy. "I like the way the beach looks at sunset and going up in a plane. I like new angora sweaters and purple violets and kittens—"

Bill stood very close to her, and the top of her bright head just touched his shoulder.

"I see," he said slowly. "You just don't like my house, or the things I do."

His eyes were dark and speculative. Jo's heart began to pound wildly and something told her that she'd better get away from here. But she couldn't move a muscle.

"I wonder if you'd like my kisses," he said grimly.

Then his arms were about her, hard and fierce and young. His lips came down on hers in a kiss that seemed charged with electric power. It wakened a wild ecstasy in her heart, sent the blood pounding in her veins and made bells crash in her ears. It made her feel so wildly happy that she wanted to die right there in Bill's arms.

He released her at last. Neither of them spoke for a long moment. Then some one said from the doorway:

"The office is calling, Mr. North. It's important."

"Excuse me," Bill said, and went out.

After Bill had gone Jo touched her fingers to the lips he had kissed. There was a look of wonder in her eyes. She felt as light as a feather.

Why, she was in love with Bill! That was the answer to the strange unrest he had stirred in her heart from the first. That was why she had felt so annoyed to see him with Ellen. She had only pretended not to like his Honeymoon Cottage so that he would notice her. This was what she had been looking for. She was actually in love with him. A girl would always know when she found it. Her heart would tell.

Jo went over to the window with its red and white curtains. There were a lot of people who lived in houses like this, as Bill had once said. They were people who didn't have very much, who had to save their nickels and dimes to pay for them. They'd never been to Vienna or London, or worn Paris clothes.

IN THE summer they would sit on the small terrace and look at the stars, or watched the moon coming up. And in the winter, when the snow lay thick on the lawns, there would be a fire burning and books to read. And in the spring they would plant flowers.

Those people had something. They knew happiness and grief and disappointment and success in houses like this. They really lived.

Suddenly, to Jo, this house seemed to be her very own. She wanted to live in a house like this with Bill for the rest of her days. She wanted a house that she had saved nickels and dimes to pay for.

Jo stayed in the room for a long time. She thought Bill would come back. He would have to say something to her after that kiss. But he didn't come back.

She felt cold with doubt and uncertainty. Bill had kissed her, but it didn't have to mean that he was in love with her.

Jo saw that it was raining outside, a slow gray rain that seemed to drench the whole world. The doorman said that they might as well go home for the day.

When Jo got back to the boarding house, her room looked small and desolate. She pulled off her hat and sat down wearily in a chair and pressed her fingers against her eyes.

She was sitting there for a long time when there was a sharp knock on her door. She didn't know who could be wanting to see her. Then she went cold with fright. Maybe Alan or her parents had found her at last.

"Jo!" Bill called.

Her heart leaped wildly as she opened the door. Bill's grin was twisted. He wore a gray raincoat and he carried a roll of blueprints in his hand.

"I told the landlady I was your boss, so she let me come up," he explained. "Do you mind?"

"Why, no," she said. "Come in."

Bill looked a little awkward, as if for the first time in his life he didn't know what to do with his hands.

"I'm building a new Honeymoon Cottage," he said. "I've been working on the plans for days, and I

thought you might like to see them." He paused and took a deep breath. "Oh, this one will be larger, and I think you'll like it better," he added hastily. "We'll have a larger sun-room and a library and lots of windows. There'll be a room for games, and just shrubs—"

"Oh, Bill," Jo whispered softly.

"And I'll buy you an angora sweater for Christmas," Bill said swiftly.

Jo's eyes were damp now.

"A pink one, Bill," she said shakily.

"I want you to have all the things you like, Jo," he said huskily. "I guess you know I'm pretty crazy about you."

"I am about you too, Bill."

For one breathless moment she thought he was going to take her into his arms again.

"I thought you might like to go out somewhere," he said then.

"Yes, I would, Bill," she said, and got her hat and coat.

They found a small restaurant, and Bill showed her the plans for his new cottage. Jo said they sounded all right. He said that the Honeymoon Cottages were going over big. They were getting some good publicity, and if everything worked out the way he planned, this campaign would be the biggest one he'd put over. He thought it had been a good idea to have a Honeymoon girl in the model cottage.

BILL kissed her again when he took her home. He held her for a long time with his face pressed softly against her hair, and somehow there had been no need for words.

When he left, Jo raced up the stairs on winged feet. Her heart was singing. She was in love, and the world was a wonderful place to live in. But when she opened the door, she stopped abruptly. Ellen got up

from a chair. The two girls stared at each other coldly.

"The landlady said I could wait up here when I told her you were a friend of mine," Ellen said.

"What do you want?" Jo demanded.

Ellen's lips twisted.

"I suppose you've been out with Bill," she said.

Joanna's head went up proudly.

"Why, yes, I have."

"And I supposed he kissed you—made love to you."

Jo's face flamed in anger.

"I don't have to listen to this," she said coldly. "You can't come into my room—"

"You'd better listen!" Ellen said sharply. "There's something you should know. Bill is very clever. I've been with him a long time and I know him. He was afraid you'd get bored with being his Honeymoon girl and walk out on him, so he quarreled with you at first to keep you interested. Then he made love to you."

"What are you getting at?" Jo asked.

"Why did you think Bill hired you that day above all those other girls? He knew you were Joanna Munson, Glamour Girl Number One. You could be a lot of use to him. He'd do anything for publicity, and your name is always in headlines. He meant to use you for publicity."

"I don't believe you!" Jo almost shouted.

Ellen smiled slightly. She opened her purse.

"I found this in Bill's desk," she said coyly.

It was a rotogravure section from a Sunday edition. Jo looked at her own face smiling back at her, and across the page was written:

Russet hair, small tilted nose, brown eyes—
a girl like that came walking right into my office. This is a chance sent straight from Heaven, and am I going to use it!

It was Bill's tall, awkward hand-

writing. No mistake about that. Those were the words he had spoken to her that day in his office. Then she remembered that he had said last night that if things worked out the way he planned this would be the biggest thing he had ever put over. All at once, everything seemed to die in Jo's heart.

"I didn't think you'd want to be used for publicity," Ellen said sympathetically.

But Jo wasn't mistaken about Ellen's motive in telling her. She was jealous of her and wanted Jo out of the way.

"Will you go now?" Jo said, almost in a whisper.

When Ellen had gone, Jo looked at the paper in her hand. Bill had known all along who she was! He had quarreled with her at first, then made love to her to keep her interested so she wouldn't walk out on him until he was ready to use her for publicity.

Bill didn't care anything about her! None of it had meant anything. But she had given her heart to him, and she couldn't take it back now. Now she knew how Myra had felt that night she had heard her crying.

AFTER a long time, something hard and stony grew in her heart. Bill wanted his publicity and she would see that he got it. She went down to the little telephone booth in the hall.

Next morning it was all in the newspapers.

"Glamour Girl poses as Bill North's Honeymoon Girl!" "Joanna Munson finds new thrill as Honeymoon Girl!" Headlines like that. She hoped Bill would like it.

Jo had slept very little and her eyes were darkly shadowed, but she went to the Honeymoon Cottage early. Reporters and cameramen were already there. A lot of people Jo knew came to the cottage to see her in her newest escapade. A lot came

who were just curious. The doorman had a hard time keeping the cottage from being overrun.

The morning was half gone when Bill burst in, tall and hard-eyed. He looked at Jo as if he could kill her. She had never seen a man look so angry before, and it made her feel shaky inside.

"What a mess!" he groaned. "What an awful mess!"

Ellen was with him, and she looked very smug and triumphant. Somehow they got all the people out, and Bill told them the cottage was closed permanently.

Then he went back to the living room where Jo waited, very white and still. She had her hat and coat in hand.

"I suppose that means you're through with me, too," she said.

"It certainly does!" Bill said harshly. His eyes blazed into hers. "Glamour girl! What you've done is cheap and tricky! Maybe it was a new thrill to you, but you've about ruined everything for me!"

"Wasn't this the kind of publicity you wanted?" Jo asked uncertainly.

"It certainly was not," Bill raged. "You've made everything look ridiculous. The boss is furious."

"Bill, don't get excited," Ellen soothed. "We've closed the place, and everyone will soon forget. There's no need to discuss it with JoRmiR "

"All "right, Ellen," Bill said.

Jo's heart burned with pain. Dear little Ellen, so sweet and helpful and solicitous. Telling Bill that everything was all right, and he would believe her. He had probably loved her all along.

"Bill, this man says he's looking for his fiancee," the doorman said. "I can't keep him out."

A big man pushed his way into the room. He looked about him in distaste.

"Jo!" he exclaimed,

"Hello, Alan," Jo said quietly.

"I came at once when I saw that story in the papers," he went on.

"I expected you."

His face grew heavy and dark. His eyes flashed over Bill.

"So I was right that night when you wanted to break your engagement to me! There was another man, and you came straight to him! You've been posing as his Honeymoon girl, making a cheap spectacle of yourself!"

"I ran away because you threatened to make trouble if I broke my engagement to you," Jo said angrily. "My parents wouldn't let me call off the engagement. But I couldn't marry you, so I came here."

"But you're coming back with me right now," Alan said flatly. "You can't get away from me now. Remember, I told you that."

"What's this all about?" Bill frowned. His face had changed.

"Oh, let's go, Bill," Ellen said, and tugged at his arm. "Can't you see this is a lover's quarrel. Let them settle it."

BUT Bill shook her off. He glared at Alan as if he wanted to break him into little pieces.

"Jo doesn't have to go anywhere if she doesn't want to," Bill said ominously.

"Oh, doesn't she!" Alan sneered. "When I read that story in the papers I knew there must be something between you two, or she wouldn't have come to you. When she ran away, I persuaded her parents to let me handle the whole thing. We said that Jo was visiting friends. After the story I'll tell, everybody will wonder why she came down here to be your Honeymoon girl instead! I'll ruin you both! Bill North's cottages won't be quite so famous when I get through!"

"Jo is just working for me," Bill said defensively.

"A girl with a million dollars in her own right?" Alan said tauntingly. "Who will believe that?"

Jo knew now how really ruthless Alan could be. He had seen his chance to make her come back to him. He would take away the success Bill had worked so hard for.

"I've got a good mind to throw you out on your ear," Bill said.

"Let him alone, Bill," Jo said. "He'll do what he says. He's cruel and ruthless. He wanted to marry me for my money. He threw another girl over for me."

"How did you know that?" Alan demanded.

"I heard Myra crying that night in the garden."

Alan tried to take her hand.

"We just had a little flirtation that she tried to take too seriously," he soothed. "I wanted you because you were so lovely."

Jo did have a lot of money, but it didn't make any difference. She would never live in a Honeymoon Cottage now, or plant a garden in the spring. Her flowers would always come in a box, not out of the ground. She picked up her purse and gloves, but Bill blocked her way.

"If you didn't want this fellow to find you why did you give that story to the papers?" he asked.

She took the rotogravure section Ellen had given her last night from her purse and gave it to him.

"You knew that first day who I was," she told him, "and you hired me to be your Honeymoon girl so that you could use me for publicity."

"Where did you get this?" Bill demanded. "Out of my wastebasket probably."

"Isn't it yours?" Jo asked breathlessly.

"I don't know! I suppose so. That newspaper was probably on my desk that day, and I always write on things when I've got something on my mind. Everybody knows that.

It's a habit of mine. You swept me off my feet that day so I couldn't have seen anything else, anyway!"

"Then you didn't hire me because I was a glamour girl?" Jo said.

"No!"

Jo looked at Ellen's face, and it seemed to crumple before her eyes. Then she knew that Bill hadn't known who she was. Ellen was the one who had found that scrap of paper in Bill's wastebasket and recognized her, and she had kept it as a weapon to use against her. She hadn't known things would work out like this. She thought Jo would go away.

"I knew that day you were the girl I'd always dreamed about," Bill said. "And you walked right into my office, as if Heaven had sent you. I hired you so that you wouldn't get away from me. And then, right off, you didn't like me or my house. I didn't know what to do. I was half crazy."

"Oh, Bill!"

He came close to her.

"Jo, you don't have to marry anybody you don't want to," he said softly.

THEY forgot the other two in the room. Alan looked at them for a moment, baffled, furious. Then he turned and left the room. He knew there was nothing he could do. And Ellen followed him, defeat clearly written on her face.

Bill touched Jo's arm with shaking fingers. His face looked boyish.

"Jo, you know how it is with me, but I didn't know you had everything you wanted."

"I don't have anything that counts but your love," she whispered.

Bill looked deep into her eyes, and then he didn't say anything else. They had always known how it was with each other. He took her into his arms, and when he kissed her their whole world seemed perfect.

FASHIONS FOR

By ROWENA
R. FARRAR

Author of
"Just for a Week-End,"
"Front Page Widow," etc.

"She's trying to morry year fa-
ther because he holds the purse
strings," Jacquelyn said



Loneliness Shrouds Joan's Heart—Until a

LOVE

CHAPTER I

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

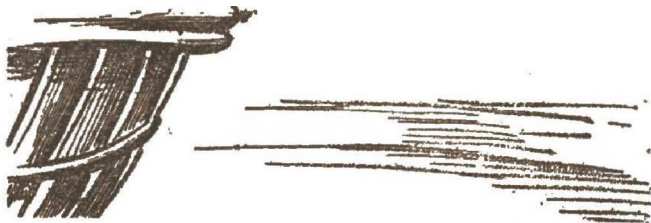
NO ONE who knew her, or had seen her modeling clothes in a fashionable Fifth Avenue shop, would ever have pictured Joan Donally dining in brooding aloneness that Friday night, when all of New York was beginning its gay winter whirl.

Hers was the type of beauty—wide violet eyes, dusky lashes, husky voice, lustrous blond hair, slim willowy figure—that women raved about and tried to copy, and all men adored. Hers was the type of disposition—sunny and affectionate—that people of both sexes admired and enjoyed.

But tonight her smile had lost its golden radiance. Tonight her superb sense of humor had hidden itself away behind solemn eyes and a grim mouth. Ordinarily she stepped over obstacles as she encountered them. But this one she faced now had aroused her cold fury and bitter indignation. She would never forgive Cynthia Hudson. Never!

She propped her elbows on the

A Complete Novelet
of
Scandal's Toils



Mantle of Ecstasy Wraps Itself About Her!

table, cupped her chin in her hands, and stared at the food which she had just prepared.

The modernistic apartment on Central Park South, which she and Cynthia had shared for two years, was done in blue leather on blond woodwork, blue satin draperies, deep wine rugs. She had loved it until recently, but now she was blind to its charm.

For a long time she did not move. Not until the receptionist rang her up from the lobby, to announce an unexpected guest.

"Mr. Sommers calling on Miss Donally," the girl sang out crisply.

"Who?" Joan gasped.

"Mr. Stephen Sommers."

Her troubled eyes widened with astonishment, then slowly narrowed. She had never met Mr. Stephen Sommers, but he was the man responsible for besmirching her name. He and Cynthia. Why should he be calling on her? To explain? To apologize? To intercede for Cynthia?

"Send him right up," she said quickly.

When she opened the door to him, she expected to see a tall, distinguished-looking business man with iron-gray hair and a friendly middle-aged smile. That was the way Cynthia had described him to her when she had announced, rather defiantly, that she was "stepping out with a married man."

But this man who marched belligerently inside her apartment did not fit Cynthia's description at all. Instead of middle-aged, he could not be a day over twenty-seven. He was quite tall, and his hair was raven black and curly. His dark eyes were young and stormy. His features were rugged and grim, instead of friendly, and his skin was deeply tanned.

HE HAD that outdoor-millionaire-sportsman look about him that is not attained by clothes alone. The type that looked bored and lost when lured into a dress salon, and always

sneaked away at the first opportunity.

"Are you Joan Donally?" he inquired bluntly.

"Yes, I am." She braced herself against his deliberate inspection. He looked her over from head to foot in silence. She was wearing a bright red house coat, with a wide white belt at her narrow waist. Her hair fell in soft, shining waves to her shoulders. White satin mules peeped from beneath the folds of her skirt. She read flashes of admiration sprinkled generously with contempt in his stare.

All of the things she had meant to say to him had hit a snag when she saw his youth. What could have been Cynthia's motive in such a deliberate wrong description?

"You're lovely enough," he said finally in a stern, cold voice, "to concentrate your ambition on a younger man. My father is just twice your age."

So that was it! This raging young giant was Stephen Sommers, *Junior*. Cynthia hadn't mentioned him. More than likely she hadn't even known there was a younger, more attractive Stephen Sommers charging around. Otherwise—

"I've come to ask you to leave my father alone," he plunged on tersely. "I don't intend to sit back and let any young gold-digger break my mother's heart. Name your price!" He whipped out his check-book and pen, and fumbled with them impatiently.

Joan stared at him in speechless surprise. Twin spots of anger flared up in her cheeks.

"Put your check-book away," she said furiously. "You're making a mistake."

"Am I?" He tossed the check-book over on a table, and searched his pockets swiftly. Joan knew, before he produced it, what he was looking for. That awful newspaper clipping from yesterday's paper. A two

column picture of her with the following caption:

Lovely Joan Donally, model, named as correspondent in divorce action filed today by the socialite, Mrs. Stephen Sommers, against her husband, a prominent Wall Street broker.

Every word of that condemning newspaper story had been dancing crazily before her startled mind for hours. Last night when she had first seen it, she had jumped to her feet and had stood facing Cynthia.

"Look at this!" she had screamed.

WHEN Cynthia had looked, her cheeks had promptly turned the color of wood ashes.

"I—I'm sorry," she had stammered swiftly, guiltily. "How could I know his wife would actually sue him for divorce?"

"But how did they get *my* name mixed up in *your* affairs?" Joan had demanded.

"The—the first night I had dinner with him," Cynthia had explained, "I—I told him my name was Joan Donally. Just for a lark," she had added quickly.

"You mean just for a cover-up! What a mean thing to do to your best friend. What have I ever done to you?"

"I'll tell you what you've done," Cynthia had retorted. "You've taken Ted away from me. He was three-fourths in love with me until you turned your fatal charm on him. Now he doesn't know I'm alive."

"Why, Cynthia! That isn't true! Ted Goodall means no more to me than a dozen other casual friends. You ought to know that. If you wanted exclusive rights to him, why didn't you say so?"

"I'm in love with him," Cynthia had blurted out. "So now you know. And now we're even. You robbed me of Ted. I've robbed you of your reputation!"

With this revengeful statement, Cynthia had jammed her hat on

her head and had left the apartment in door-slamming triumph. She had not come back at all. This morning she had sent for her things, having moved elsewhere. Joan didn't know just where, or care. Although they had passed each other several times during the day at the store, neither had broken the angry, accusing silence.

Now the dreadful clipping was being waved in her face.

"What about this?" Stephen Sommers, Jr., was saying darkly. "Is *this* a mistake?"

"It most certainly is!" Joan retorted heatedly. "I've never met your father. A girl I know has been dining with him occasionally and using my name."

He laughed outright. "You'll have to think up a better one than that!"

"Listen, you." She was mad now. "I don't care whether you believe me or not. You have no right to come charging into my apartment like this. I can prove what I've said at the proper time and the proper place. Now get out, and take your check-book with you!" She crushed the clipping with trembling fingers.

He tore her hands apart and took the crumpled ball of paper away from her. Carefully he smoothed it out, folded it and put it back in his inside coat pocket. Then, with a mocking bow, he turned to leave.

"I'll have to hand it to the Governor in one respect," he said. "He can certainly pick 'em for beauty and fire."

The color leapt to Joan's cheeks. That kind of compliment was an insult, and yet it stirred her strangely. She was glad that he found her beautiful, and furious at him for saying so. She was also furious at herself for being glad.

"You've said just about enough," she said coldly.

"I hope I have. I'd like to impress upon you the fact that my mother loves my father. She doesn't really want a divorce. She wants him back."

"Please get out of my apartment before I—before I throw something at you!" she choked out.

"I'm going/" he said, his eyes sweeping over her again, "but if I ever catch you with my father—"

She picked up the first thing handy, which happened to be a book, and threw it at him. She was reaching for something else, a vase, when his hands closed over her wrists. His grip was strong and merciless. She could do nothing but stand there in helpless fury, hating him.

Presently, when she ceased struggling altogether, he let go of her and strode quickly to the door. He did not say another word, nor did he look back. But he remembered to pocket his check-book, and also to slam the door.

For a long time she stood there trembling, and rubbing her aching wrists, and brushing the tears from her eyes.

CHAPTER II

COMPLICATIONS SET IN



OVER the week-end, Joan stayed home most of the time, fuming and raging at the injustice of it all. Several of her friends who had seen the picture in the papers, called her up to tease her about her new boy friend. When she tried to explain that it was all a mistake, that she was innocent, they laughed good naturedly, and said:

"Aren't we all?"

Her rage at Cynthia was stirred anew by the realization that her erstwhile friend was doing nothing to clarify her untenable situation. It hurt deeply to have a person you had loved almost like a sister strike at you in such an undeserving manner. She had known Cynthia was thoughtless, but she had never suspected her of being vengeful.

she thou ^ ^

Som-

mers, Jr., who had scoffed at her simple* truthful explanation. In all her life no man had ever looked at her in just the way he had, with his dark eyes fixed upon her in such a sardonic, yet compelling manner, or said such biting things to her.

She tried to shut this Stephen person out of her thoughts. She told herself that it didn't matter in the slightest whether he believed her or not. The fact that she herself knew that she was innocent should be enough. Her conscience was clear. Her friends *and* her enemies—there were at least two now—could think what they pleased. They would all know the truth eventually. -

Late Sunday night the telephone jangled for the fiftieth time. Somebody else calling to tell her they had seen her "advertisement" in the papers.

It was the receptionist announcing in her sing-song voice:

"Mr. Stephen Sommers calling on Miss Donally."

Joan's heart began to throb angrily. "I—I don't want to see him," she exclaimed sharply. "Tell him I'm out. Send him away!"

"Just a moment." Then, "He says it is a matter of grave importance, Miss Donally, and that he simply must see you tonight."

Joan hesitated. Perhaps he had learned the truth from his father and had come to apologize. In that case—

"All right. Tell him to come up."

She racked the telephone and stood up, trembling. She felt frightened and eager. Her heavy-heartedness lifted. But when she opened the door her brightened spirits whisked down again like an express elevator.

A tall, distinguished-looking business man with iron-gray hair and a friendly middle-aged smile stood without. This, she knew before he spoke, was Mr. Stephen Sommers, Senior.

"May I come in?" he asked politely, "I'm sorry to disturb you at this late hour, but I've just returned from a

long business trip to find myself—and you—the center of an unpleasant divorce suit. You *are* Miss Joan Donally, are you not?"

SHE nodded.

"Of course you are," he said. "I've been looking at your picture. But please tell me, if *you* are Joan Donally, who is the girl / know?"

"Her name is Cynthia Hudson," Joan informed him shortly. "We—we lived together in this apartment until the day before yesterday. Of course, I had no idea she was using my name."

"I see." He frowned. "When I first saw your picture, I thought perhaps the papers were mistaken, or that it might be some sort of scheme. May I sit down? This business has been a bit of a shock."

He sank into a chair and rubbed a hand across his worried forehead.

"Does it shock you to be sued for divorce when you know you've been untrue to your wife?" Joan inquired with slowly rising indignation.

"Now wait a minute, my dear. You young people are quick to judge and condemn. Just because my wife apparently thinks I've been untrue to her, doesn't necessarily make it so."

"No one would expect you to admit that you had," she pointed out. "All that I'm interested in is to get my name out of this mess as quickly as possible. Surely you can appreciate my position."

"Of course I can." He sighed deeply. "My wife won't see me. My son won't speak to me. And as for the girl, Cynthia what's-her-name, who told me she was Joan Donally, I'm afraid it would only complicate matters further to bring her into it. Naturally, I'll do everything I can to straighten this out. That's why I'm here. You could sue my wife, you know, for slandering you. As a matter of fact, she ought to be made to pay dearly for dragging a young girl's name into her divorce case

against me without more definite proof than she has. Sue her!"

"Suing your wife for slander," Joan reminded him icily, "wouldn't help clear my name. Besides, I don't want her money."

"Then take some of mine," he suggested eagerly, producing his checkbook. "A little money banked away may help you to forgive me—and Cynthia."

"You wealthy men are all alike!" she said scornfully. "You seem to think a check will fix anything and everything. I don't want your money, Mr. Sommers. I make enough to take care of my needs."

"I'm sorry," he apologized. "I should not have offered you money. However, you *are* an exceptional person. Most girls—"

"I don't agree with you," she broke in quickly. "Most girls would feel exactly as I do about it. Evidently you have just met the other kind."

"Perhaps so. At any rate, let's be friends, Miss Donally. And don't worry about this another moment. I'll do my best to have your name stricken from the court records. I'm sure my lawyer can do that, and more. I'll even humble myself before my wife, if necessary, to persuade her to drop this suit."

Somewhat mollified, Joan shook hands with him at the door. He seemed to be rather a nice person, and she found herself liking him in spite of his part in her present predicament.

It was too bad, she thought, that his son did not have his gentle, friendly manner. And it was too bad that his wife could not realize that he was starved for affection. And it was too bad that Cynthia had used him so flagrantly.

It was a long time that night before she slept. . . .

SOON after the salon opened next morning, Madame Ritner called Joan into her private office and spoke

sharply to her about the unfortunate publicity.

"Mrs. Stephen Sommers," she said crisply, "is one of our best customers. AM I understand her son is going to marry Miss Jacquelyn Welles. We had expected to do her trousseau. If we lose her order because of you, we can't keep you on. You're one of our best models, Joan, or at least you were. I must forbid you to continue seeing Mr. Sommers. Otherwise—"

"But, Madame Ritner," Joan exclaimed hotly, "I only met the man last night. Why don't you ask Cynthia Hudson about him?"

"I don't care to hear about your quarrel with Cynthia Hudson. I know you girls are not speaking, but you shouldn't bring your jealousies into the shop. And remember, if you must go out with married men, be sure that their wives are buying their clothes down in the next block."

"Why is everyone so quick to doubt me?" Joan asked herself this question often, as she kept an eye out for Jacquelyn Welles. If this haughty young debutante should come into the shop trousseau hunting, Joan would know definitely that she was engaged to young Stephen. But if she didn't come into the shop, Joan might lose her job.

Her two years' experience modeling, her natural ability, her beauty, her careful training to keep in perfect physical condition, her good record—all would count for less than nothing against a bit of malicious gossip. It was unfair!

One or two of the other models had seen Cynthia with Mr. Sommers. And they thought Joan had taken him over, and that the two girls had quarreled about it.

"Let them think what they please," the harassed girl decided grimly. "I won't waste another moment trying to explain."

She was modeling a lovely creation Of flame lace that lay i^pinst hefc curving figure as if it were painted

there, on the day Jacquelyn Welles came into the shop on the arm of Stephen Sommers.

Joan felt a pair of stormy eyes focused upon her. Something warned her to look up, and there he was. He was sitting beside the girl he was going to marry, dressed in careless tweeds, looking uncomfortably out of place in a woman's world. He belonged in the sun, on a polo pony, riding against the wind. He belonged anywhere but here, in these tufted pastel satin surroundings, staring at her with a dark scowl on his rugged face.

His eyes followed her as she circled the woman-infested room, mocked her as she stopped to turn about slowly, or answer a customer's questions. When next she dared look at him, he flashed her a brief, taunting smile.

"Darling," she heard Jacquelyn say, "do you like that flame dress?"

"It's stunning," he replied, but his eyes were not on the dress.

"Would you like it on me?"

"Isn't it a little too daring for you?"

"Perhaps it is," Jacquelyn said. "Show me something else, please. I'm shopping for my trousseau. We haven't announced our engagement yet, but. . . ."

Joan did not hear the rest. When she left the room, her hands were shaking and her heart was tossing around in a queer, uncontrollable manner.

CHAPTER III

CELEBRATION !



WHEN next she stepped before the eyes of the trousseau-shopper, she was wearing a lovely bridal gown of shimmering white satin. On her shining hair rested a quaint veil of pii lace fashioned like a halo.

Jacquelyn went into ecstasies, her

gray eyes dancing as she visualized herself in such bridal splendor.

"What do you think of it, Stephen?" she asked breathlessly.

"It's just about perfect," he said. "But look, darling, I'm getting out of here. Suppose you meet me at the St. Regis at one."

"But I wanted your advice, Stephen," Jacquelyn protested.

"I'd rather you use your own judgment."

He squeezed her hand, gave Joan another dark look, and strode out the door and away.

Joan's feelings hit a new low en route to her apartment that night. She faced another evening without her friends about her. Another lonely dinner. She missed Cynthia, in spite of everything. She missed Ted Goodall, and the other men who usually clamored for dates. No doubt they were thinking she was all dated up with Mr. Sommers, and she was too proud to call any of them up to invite them to drop in.

A long, expensive automobile stood waiting at the entrance of her apartment building, when she got there. And a tall, faultlessly groomed gentleman stood waiting in the lobby, his eyes fixed hopefully on the door. He came up to her quickly, and extended his hand.

"Hello, Miss Donally."

"Why, Mr. Sommers." She shook hands with him uncertainly.

"I've been waiting for you," he said. "I have good news for you. My wife has dropped her divorce suit here and has gone to Reno. In spite of all her money," he added bitterly, "a check fixed her up."

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"You needn't be."

"Then I'm glad."

"I—I was just thinking," he said slowly, "that this really calls for a bit of celebrating. I can't very well do it alone. Are you game for a gala evening? Everybody thinks we are seeing each other. I figure we might

as well do it openly and stop their whispering."

Joan hesitated. There were a dozen good reasons why she should not be seen with Mr. Sommers. But she was in desperate need of a good time. And after all, why not with Mr. Sommers?

The man was lonely. He obviously needed companionship as much as she did. He was deeply hurt and bewildered. And so was she. And why should she care what anyone thought, when they were all so eager to believe the worst? All of her anger and resentment welled up afresh, and she lifted her young head in defiance.

"I certainly am game!" she said clearly. "Just wait right here while I make myself beautiful!"

MR. SOMMERS took her to the champagne and orchid opening of an elegant new night club on the roof of a famous hotel. He demanded a table on the edge of the dance floor, and got it by the usual method of tipping outrageously.

He ordered recklessly and spent a lot of thought on making up appropriate toasts.

Joan knew he was trying to keep his courage up. But even she began to feel light and gay. She was easily the best looking woman in the glittering room. Her gown was a striking creation of violet velvet, just the color of her eyes.

It was an expensive model, but she had bought it at a discount, as well as the heavy gold bracelets and necklace to match. She pinned the deep purple orchid, a gift of the management, in her lovely hair. People turned to stare at her, but she was used to that. And tonight she didn't care what they were thinking. She could look the whole world in the face and smile.

Toward the end of the evening Mr. Sommers boldly arose from his chair and waved across the room.

"Hello, son," he shouted. "Bring

Jacquelyn over and have a drink with us."

Joan looked up sharply in quivering dismay. Stephen Sommers, Jr., and his Jacquelyn were sitting at a corner table. She held her breath while they consulted briefly, then stood up and threaded their way toward where they were sitting.

Joan had known she would run into Stephen again, but never under circumstances such as this.

"I want you to meet my son," Mr. Sommers said to her, "and his fiancée. He can't refuse to speak to me tonight." He chuckled grimly, and said something that sounded like "the stubborn brat," under his breath.

"Please, I—I don't want to meet them," Joan stammered. "I'd rather not."

"Don't be like that," he ordered gallantly. "You haven't done anything. If they try to embarrass you, I'll—I'll—"

"Father!" Stephen rushed up to the table and spoke in a fierce whisper. "If you *must* see this woman, why can't you take her to some out-of-the-way restaurant where you won't meet your family, or your friends?"

Mr. Sommers pretended not to hear.

"Miss Donally," he said, "this is my son, Stephen, and his fiancée, Miss Jacquelyn Welles."

"How do you do?" Joan managed a faint smile.

Jacquelyn nodded coldly. Stephen did not even look at her.

"Sit down. Sit down everybody," Mr. Sommers went on. "I've ordered more champagne. Waiter! Chairs, please!"

They could not refuse to sit down without attracting more attention to this strangely assorted group. Mr. Sommers was in a glowing mood, although Joan knew it was only surface deep. He was suffering beneath his gayety. Presently, they were sipping champagne in stilted silence.

"Have you heard from Mother yet?" Stephen asked pointedly.

"No," Mr. Sommers replied. "Have you?"

"Yes. I had a letter this morning. Would you like to read it?"

"Not now. Later, perhaps. Would you care to dance with your future father-in-law, Jackie? I've already stepped on Joan's toes."

JACQUELYN hesitated and looked at Stephen. He was devoting his attention to his glass.

"Come along," Mr. Sommers insisted, pulling her to her feet. "This is a rumba."

Against her wishes, Jacquelyn danced away in his arms, leaving Stephen and Joan sitting opposite each other, both tense and guarded.

"I warned you to leave my father alone," he said finally, glaring at her.

"That's right, you did," she retorted defiantly. "But perhaps I've forgotten. Shall we dance? Otherwise we might start throwing champagne glasses at each other."

They got up at once and walked out onto the dance floor. Stephen held her stiffly in his arms as he swung into the dance. The rumba music died away and the orchestra began a medley of waltzes.

They danced in bitter silence, Stephen falling unwillingly into the rhythm of the hypnotic melodies. His arm tightened about her shoulder as he guided her about the crowded floor, and Joan felt it there against her bare flesh. An odd elation possessed her.

A fierce temptation to make him bend his lips to hers swept over her suddenly. She knew she could do it, although she had never tried to win a man's attention by such tactics. But she did nothing as rash as that.

When the music finally ended, they found themselves near the roof terrace door. Stephen grabbed her hand and pulled her outside. It was cold out there, and she shivered as he stood facing her angrily. Overhead, a star

bright sky covered them. The music started up again and wafted about them.

"My mother is in Reno," he said hoarsely, "getting a quick divorce. Because of you. But if you marry my father, Til—I'll—" His hands closed about her white throat. "I'll strangle you!"

She did not fight against him. Her body was trembling with fright and something else. She met his sudden rage with wide, blazing eyes.

"Go ahead," she breathed. "Strangle me."

His hands tightened about her throat, sending waves of chill and sharp ecstasy over her. And suddenly, as if he could not fight against



it another moment, his mouth came down on hers in a bruising, tormented kiss. He held her there against him, a prisoner of wild, sweet, overwhelming emotions.

The skyscrapers swayed beneath her feet. The stars above ran helter-skelter across the blue-black heavens. She would never feel quite the same after this, because she knew now, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that she loved this angry young Stephen with all her heart!

Such a kiss could not go on forever. It had to end the moment he thought of Jacquelyn. At last he drew in a sharp, incredulous breath and let go of her.

"I beg your pardon," he said hoarsely, "I have no intention of cutting in on my father, or betraying my father."

"Let me explain, Stephen—" she began, but he turned his back on her abruptly and hurried away*

She stood alone trying to calm her turbulent heart. She spent a half

hour in the powder room smoothing her wind-tossed hair, remaking her flushed face. When at last she returned to their table, to her great relief, Stephen and Jacquelyn were gone.

"I've been wanting another dance* Joan," Mr. Sommers said. "Shall we?"

"Of course."

The evening fled quickly after that. At her door, quite late, he said a brief, grateful good night.

"I hope you enjoyed the evening," he said.

"It was—unforgettable," she said. "Thank you very much."

"You'll let me take you to dinner again? Friday night perhaps?"

She shook her head. "Afraid I'd better not."

"I'll call you Friday, just in case,"

He shook her extended hand, and was gone. . . .

The very next morning the papers carried the announcement of the engagement of Miss Jacquelyn Welles to Mr. Stephen Sommers, Jr. The wedding date was set six weeks ahead.

Joan read it as she sipped her breakfast coffee. Stephen must have urged this upon Jacquelyn after that moment on the roof. He wanted to build his fences high, no doubt, against the memory of their kiss.

She experienced a fierce wave of triumph at the realization that he had found her desirable. But it was short-lived. She wanted so much more than that from him—or nothing. And nothing it would have to be.

Jacquelyn was in the shop almost every day that week for fittings, always coolly polite to Joan, but chiefly too engrossed in her own romance to bother with anything else. Stephen did not come with her, but Jacquelyn called him often on their customer's telephone. Joan could hear her cooing to him, and it stirred her heart with its first sharp pangs of jealousy.

On Friday, Mr. Sommers called and begged her to have dinner with him. Again she asked herself "Why not?" She wanted to see him. She wanted him to talk about his son.

They dined at a French restaurant and afterwards saw the show at the Music Hall. In a cab, cruising through Central Park, Mr. Sommers placed his hand over hers.

"I'll be free in a few weeks, Joan," he said solemnly. "When I am free, I'm going to ask you to marry me. I'm warning you now so you can think it over carefully. I'm pretty old, but I feel young when I'm with you. I—I can give you all of the things you so richly deserve. You're lovely and sweet, and any man would be proud to call you his wife."

"You've paid me a very high compliment," Joan told him softly. "I admire you and respect you, but I—I don't love you. I couldn't marry without love, Mr. Sommers. I don't have to think it over. I know now."

"Are you in love with someone else?"

"Yes."

"May I ask who?"

"I'd rather not say. You see, he's going to marry the other girl."

"Well, all I have to say is, he's a stupid fool. And you're right, of course, not to marry without love. But I'm not sorry I asked you. At least we understand each other. You'll let me see you occasionally? I'm pretty lonely these days."

JOAN did not answer. He was silent, too, until at her request, he gave the driver her address. She thought it best not to see him again, but still she did not want to hurt him. He was lonely.

Suddenly she hated Cynthia and that wife of his. Both of them had run out on him just when he needed someone. And his son, too.

She dined with him once or twice in the next few weeks, but gradually her old friends were absorbing her time,

so that she was able to decline most of his invitations by truthfully saying that she had a previous engagement.

One afternoon he called her at the shop.

"I'm having a party tonight," he told her, "in celebration of my unwedded state. I'm a free man, Joan. I want you to come. The party won't be a success unless you are there."

"I—I have an engagement," she fibbed.

"Then break it!" he urged. "Or bring your date along with you. Promise?"

Against her better judgment, she promised. At least she would not run into Stephen at his father's divorce party.

But in that she was mistaken.

The affair took place in Mr. Sommers' penthouse, a luxurious sky home on Lexington Avenue. There were a dozen or so guests, none of whom Joan had met before. There were cocktails, an elaborate dinner, and afterwards music for dancing. Mr. Sommers was in fine spirits, seemingly, but it was only a mask, Joan knew.

Stephen and Jacquelyn appeared soon after dinner. Joan was dancing with Mr. Sommers when they entered the room and looked about them in astonishment.

"Hello!" Mr. Sommers greeted them gaily.

Stephen scowled at his father disapprovingly.

"We came to see you tonight because of Mother," he said coldly. "She urged me in a letter I received this morning, to look in on you. She thought you would be lonely. Especially tonight. But I see that she was mistaken."

"Nice of her to think of me tonight," the father said bitterly. "Have a drink. Perhaps it will remove that unbecoming frown off your face."

"We'd better go," Jacquelyn said coolly. "I promised some friends we'd drop by." -

"You can see them tomorrow night," Mr. Sommers said. "Now that you're here, I insist that you join us. I assure you, Jackie, that this is a perfectly respectable party."

"Oh, I didn't think otherwise," she said quickly.

"Come with me, my dear. Some of my friends still haven't met my future daughter. I'll be back in a moment, Joan."

To get away from Stephen's disapproving eyes, Joan turned and walked into another room. He followed her. She kept straight ahead, almost running, stopping finally when she reached the sun room, a large glass-enclosed terrace banked with a variety of flowers.

He hemmed her into a corner. She looked about wildly for an avenue of escape, but there was none.

"You thought I would follow you," he said with a grim smile, "and I did. Are you satisfied?"

"I came in here to be alone!" she flared. "Please go!"

"I want to say one thing to you," Stephen persisted. "I've tried to think of a way to stop my father from making an idiot of himself, but I've failed. You see, in spite of what he may have said to you, I'm sure he still loves Mother. And I know she still loves him."

"If she still loves him, why did she runaway?"

"You should ask that!"

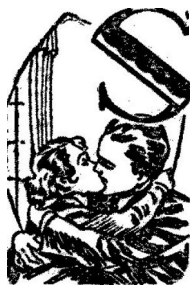
Joan's head went up defiantly. "Why shouldn't I ask it?" She was trembling with fury. She longed to hurt him as he had hurt her. But all she could think of to say was, "Why don't you stick to your own romance and let other people attend to theirs?"

"That's exactly what I should do," Stephen said tensely, "but—Joan, look at me."

She did not dare obey him. She knew that with one look she could pull M m ^ her^ could be in his n again. But she did not want a stolen kiss.

CHAPTER IV

MARRIAGE AND REMARRIAGE



IE turned her back on him and clenched her hands at her sides. He stood just behind her, talking. She could feel his breath on her neck, "You can't marry him," he whispered. "Because it would drive me crazy to see you belonging to him. When I want you myself. What kind of girl are you, anyway? You get in a man's blood. Destroy his sleep. Upset all his careful plans—"

"I'll tell you what kind of girl she is!" Jacquelyn broke in from the darkened doorway. "She's trying to marry your father, because he holds the purse strings, and carry on a flirtation with you, because you're young and willing. I suppose I ought to fling my engagement ring in your face, darling, but I don't intend to play into her hands so easily. I'm ready to go now, Stephen. Are you coming with me?"

"Yes, of course," Stephen said quickly.

Joan had taken just about enough. She whirled on them with blazing eyes.

"Both of you have accused me of trying to marry Mr. Sommers," she flared, "and it's a lie! Please get this straight. I wouldn't marry a man unless I loved him with all my heart. That's more than you can say, Miss Welles. You're out to make a good match with or without love!"

"How dare you say that to me?"

"You advertised, didn't you?" Joan rushed on. "Or at least your mother did. She put you on the market, gave you an elaborate coming-out party, so that the eligible men would come around and look you over. You took your choice of the lot. Perhaps you love Stephen. I certainly hope you do."

"What goes on out here?" Mr. Som-

mers came rushing through the door, drawn by their angry voices. He looked anxiously from one to the other.

Joan waited in silence for them to explain. Stephen was stubbornly silent. Jacquelyn was too mad to speak.

"Will you please tell your son and his precious fiancée that I'm not trying to marry you for your money?" Joan asked, trying to keep her voice steady.

"I asked Joan to marry me weeks ago," Mr. Sommers announced, "and she declined. Does that clear up anything? If so, let's all shake hands and be friends."

"You can't expect me to be friends with *her*!" Jacquelyn snapped angrily. "I caught her out here turning her charm on Stephen."

"For Pete's sake, Jacquelyn," rasped Stephen, "don't egg this thing on!"

"If I wanted to turn my charm on Stephen, as you put it," Joan said. "I'd choose a more appropriate place than this. I'm leaving now, Mr. Sommers. Thank you for asking me to your party."

"Please don't go, Joan," he begged. "These kids are hot-headed."

"So am I," Joan replied.

"I'd like to apologize," Stephen began, but she had turned and made her way blindly out the door.

NEXT morning at the store, Cynthia broke the long silence that had prevailed between the two girls.

"Guess what, Joan?" she said, without further preamble. "Ted and I have made up! He asked me to marry him last night, and we're going to be married right away! I'm the happiest girl in the world, or will be if you will forgive me for what I did to you."

"Of course I forgive you," Joan said.

"I was a heel," Cynthia rushed on.

"It was a mean, spiteful trick. Afterwards I wanted to apologize, and— and go to Mr. Sommers' wife, if necessary, and tell her that I was the one, not you. But I just didn't have the nerve. I was afraid Ted would never forgive that. I was afraid he wouldn't believe that Mr. Sommers and I were just sort of friends, nothing more. That's all there was between us, believe me."

"Same here," Joan agreed. "I didn't see any harm in dining with Mr. Sommers after his wife dropped the suit here and went to Reno. But it's done me a lot of harm."

"What happened?"

"I—I've fallen in love with his son. And he's going to marry Jacquelyn Welles. You know, we're doing her trousseau."

"Oh, that little snob? That's tough, Joan. But if you're in love with the guy, why don't you take him away from her? It wouldn't break her heart. She hasn't got one."

"But how shall I go about it?" Joan fought for composure. "He thinks I broke up his mother and father. Until last night he thought I was trying to be his step-mother." Suddenly, she snapped her fingers. "I have it! If I could bring his mother and father back together, perhaps he'd change his opinion of me!"

"Atta girl!" Cynthia applauded. "Stick in there and fight 'em! That's the way I got Ted back. But you've got to work fast."

They were silent for a moment.

"I'm glad we're friends again," Joan said then, sincerely.

"You really forgive me?"

"Of course."

With Cynthia rooting for her, Joan watched the papers for an announcement of Mrs. Sommers' return to New York. She knew that Stephen's mother would come back in time for the wedding. And sure enough, she found the item in the society column just three days before the wedding date:

Mrs. F. Mason Sommers, recently divorced from Mr. Stephen Sommers, Sr., returned from Reno last night to attend the wedding of her son, Stephen, Jr., to Miss Jacquelyn Welles.

She is staying at the Towers. After the wedding, Mrs. Sommers plans to spend the season at her winter home in Coral Gables, Florida.

AN HOUR after reading this item, Joan was standing outside of Mrs. Sommers' Towers apartment, pressing her finger against the doorbell.

A maid opened the door to her, and

She did not look glamorous or dangerous. Just a young girl bent upon a certain important mission.

"I've come to talk to you about—Mr. Sommers," she began carefully. "You see, I didn't know your husband until after you sued him for divorce. A girl used my name.. ."

"I know about that," the woman said. "And I'm sorry. He—Mr. Sommers—explained about you."

"So you dropped your case here and went to Reno."

"Yes."

*Mimsi Must Choose
Between Two Kinds
of Romance in*

THIS MUST BE
LOVE

A FASCINATING NOVEL
OF DUDE RANCH HEARTS

By SYLVIA PARKER

Featured in Next Month's Issue



Joan presented her card. She had written a brief note on the back that could not fail to win her an audience with Mrs. Sommers—if the woman still cared for her husband. She was admitted at once into a small, luxurious parlor.

Mrs. Sommers stood at the window in a trailing negligee. She was a beautiful woman with graying hair, warm brown eyes, and a still-slender figure. There were worry wrinkles about her eyes and mouth. She looked at Joan questioningly.

Joan had dressed carefully for this interview in a simple business suit of black wool with matching accessories.

"After you went away, your husband was very lonely," Joan said. "I had dinner with him a few times because I felt sorry for him. He—he asked me to marry him the other day. Not because he loved *me*, you understand, but because he was hungry for love. *Your* love. He misses you terribly."

"Why are you telling me all this?"

"I thought perhaps you felt the same way. If you still love him...."

"Perhaps I do." Mrs. Sommers sounded tired. "Rut I have my pride. All I'm interested in now is seeing that my son is happily married. Then I'm going away permanently."

"Would you be willing to see him?"¹ Joan persisted.

"He knows where I am."

"But he has his pride, too. Don't you see? Would you come to my apartment for dinner tomorrow night? Would you?"

Mrs. Sommers hesitated, but her eyes had brightened with sudden hope.

"I—I don't understand you," she faltered, "but I believe you really are sincere. Why are you doing this?"

"I have a very good reason. But—but I can't tell you—yet."

Mrs. Sommers extended her hand to Joan. "I may be a foolish, sentimental woman, but I'll come."

"Oh, thank you, Mrs. Sommers," Joan cried happily.

Later that night she called Mr. Sommers to extend a dinner invitation to him.

"It's my turn," she told him, "and I won't take no for an answer."

"Of course I'll come," he said. "Thank you for remembering me."

MR. SOMMERS arrived first. She looked lovely in a black velvet dinner gown with matched pearls at her throat. She roamed over Joan's apartment nervously, glancing at the door from time to time.

"You're a dear to bother about our happiness like this," she told Joan, "Perhaps he won't show up. Perhaps he knows I'm here."

"Sit down and drink your cocktail," Joan advised. She grinned, but she was nervous, too.

Mr. Sommers arrived a few moments later. He came in smilingly, then stopped short at sight of his wife sitting on the blue sofa.

"Why, Florence!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "How did you get here?"

"Joan invited me," Mrs. Sommers replied weakly.

"Here's a cocktail for you, Mr. Sommers," said Joan quickly. "Now please sit down and make yourself comfortable while I finish up the din-

ner. I—I'm cooking it myself." She turned and fled into the kitchen.

It seemed hours that she sat there on the kitchen stool, waiting and hoping. She could hear the drone of their voices in the other room. At least they were talking things out. That would help. Her dinner was in the oven slowly drying up, but that did not matter. If they made up, neither one of them would care what they were eating. And if their conversation ended in a quarrel, they would not want anything to eat.

At long last they came bursting through the kitchen door, their faces radiant, their arms about each other.

"We're going to re-marry tomorrow, Joan!" announced Mrs. Sommers happily.

"Thank you, my dear, for bringing two proud fools together," Mr. Sommers added.

"I'm so glad for you both!" Joan exclaimed. "My dinner is burnt to a crisp, but what do we care? Let's light the candles!"

"We must tell Stephen at once!" Stephen's mother said suddenly. "He'll be so happy about it. He took our divorce pretty hard."

"Call him up right now," Mr. Sommers suggested. "You'll find him at Jackie's, no doubt."

Mrs. Sommers rushed to the telephone. In a moment she had Stephen on the telephone. Joan held her breath and waited.

"Darling," Mrs. Sommers said happily, "I have the most wonderful news. Your father and I are together. We're going to be married again right away. I thought you'd want to know."

"Where are you, Mother?" Stephen shouted excitedly, so that Mr. Sommers and Joan could both hear. "Where are you two? Jackie and I are coming right over to join you!"

"We're in Joan Donally's apartment. She brought us together. She's the girl—"

"Never mind," Stephen interrupted. "I know who she is. I'm

bringing a bottle of champagne. This calls for a celebration! Hold everything!"

IT WAS fully an hour before he arrived, a bottle of champagne under each arm. Joan admitted him with a smile of welcome. He was alone! He gave her a swift glance, then rushed over to his parents. He kissed his mother, shook hands with his father, and then devoted himself to the task of opening a bottle.

"It's the most wonderful news I've heard in months!" he said. "How did it happen?"

"Ask Joan," said Mrs. Sommers, beaming. "She figured I was too proud to ask your father to take me back, and he was too proud to ask me to come back. So she invited us both here tonight. . . ."

Stephen was looking at Joan now, as if he had never really seen her before. He put the bottle of champagne aside. She met his wide gaze with level eyes.

"Forgive me, Joan," he said humbly, "for all the brutal things I've said and thought about you."

Mrs. Sommers took one look at Joan's radiant face, and took her husband by the hand.

"It's our time," she said unsteadily, "to retire to the kitchen. Come along darling."

Mr. Sommers looked back at Joan. A smile of understanding broke over

his face. He knew now that it was his son whom she loved. She was glad that he knew, that they both knew. They closed the door quietly, and Stephen and Joan were alone.

"I've fought against loving you," Stephen said huskily, "with every weapon I could find. But now I don't want to fight any more. I want to love you, Joan. And I want you to love me. That kiss, on the roof that night, did you mean it?"

"Yes," she whispered softly. "When you kissed me, I knew that I loved you. But, oh, Stephen, what about Jacquelyn? You're not free. Your wedding is only two days off. I don't want second-best love."

"Neither do I. That's why I'm going to marry you in a couple of days, or sooner, if you're willing. Jackie broke our engagement tonight I asked her to come here with me to see my mother and father. She flatly refused. She said if I so much as put my foot inside your door, our engagement was off. So, I put my foot inside your door—"

He broke off with a strange, challenging smile, and Joan walked swiftly into his arms. He crushed her trembling body close against his heart, set his mouth against hers in a kiss that swept any lingering doubts of second-best love from her mind. Swept everything from her thoughts except this magic oneness, this golden promise.



Pepsi-Cola is made only by Pepsi-Cola Company, Long Island City, N. Y. Bottled locally by authorized bottlers.

HAWAIIAN PARADISE

By POLLY SWEET

Author of "Lady of the Moonlight" "Navy Baby," etc.



Pat felt rough hands on her

P A T GORDON was bored. Even in beautiful Hawaii, everything had become routine. It was the same as every other naval station. The usual round of parties and dances. All nice enough, but so much alike.

She slipped the lovely sheer evening gown over her head and busied herself with the fasteners, but her dark,

*A Loyal Navy Gal, Pat
Doesn't Lack Courage—
But What a Job it is to
Battle Her Own Heart/*

blue-gray eyes restlessly sought the window. After a final pat to her hair, pushing the burnished golden curls back a little more from her forehead, she snapped out the light and moved noiselessly to that window. Outside was moonlight, with that white brilliance peculiar to the tropics. The faint odor of jasmine swept in to her from the garden and she breathed deeply.

"What a night!" she whispered. Her eyes shone with suppressed excitement. "I wonder if he'll be there tonight."

It had been nearly a week since the night she had collided with a tall, strange young man and had looked for a moment into the darkest eyes she had ever seen. She had been entering the Royal Hawaiian Hotel to attend the usual Saturday evening dance when a man had come hurrying through the door and had run straight into her.

She could still feel the touch of the strong, sun-tanned fingers as they had steadied her. Deep in her heart was the sound of his low, husky voice as he had apologized. She had muttered something in reply and he had smiled swiftly with a flash of white, even teeth. Then he had hurried on toward a car parked at the curb.

She had stood for a moment, half waiting, but he had not turned back. She wondered if it were mere coincidence that he had addressed the driver in tones loud enough for her to hear him say, "Take me to Nia-nia—and step on it."

"Nia-nia! She had heard about the place, a well known night-club of questionable reputation. All the mischief and lawlessness of the island seemed to spring from there. Yet ever since that night she had wanted to go there. She had hinted to first one and then another, but to no avail. No young naval officer was going to take his commanding officer's daughter to a place of questionable reputation.

Finally, she had had an inspiration.

Don Devereaux. He would take her. He was not navy and he was crazy about her. He would do anything she asked. She felt a little guilty in using him like that—making him think she wanted to be with him, when in reality she only wanted him as a means of getting to Nia-nia, and perhaps again seeing the dark-eyed young man.

But it hadn't taken her long to ease the pangs of conscience. She had called Don and given him the date he had been begging for weeks.

THE sound of the doorbell roused

her. Don had come for her. She went to meet him with a smile that dazzled him, making him move eagerly toward her and catch her hand.

"You are gorgeous," he whispered. "Tonight will be one you will always remember. Darling, we're going to do the town."

"Yes, of course," she replied. "Well have a grand time."

She slipped into a light wrap and they started toward the car. Outside, in the moonlight, she turned to Don.

"Don, let's go to Nia-nia. They say the native music there is marvelous."

"Nia-nia!" Even Don was surprised. "You wouldn't like it," he quickly objected. "It—it's—er—not the place for you."

Pat pouted prettily. She was not giving up so easily.

"You've been there, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I want to go—to see what it's like. Please, Don. We needn't stay long. Just one cocktail and one dance."

It was a rare occasion when Pat Gordon pleaded for anything, and Don Devereaux was not one to refuse her whatever was in his power to give.

"Okay." He shrugged a little. "You asked for it. Don't blame me if your dad throws a fit."

"He won't know," she said and gave Don's arm a little squeeze.

They climbed into the car and in a moment were swinging down the

wide, moon-drenched road past Wai-kiki shimmering in the moonlight.

"Oh, Don, I'm so thrilled!" Pat's blue eyes shone with excitement. "I've heard so much about Nia-nia. I'm dying to see it."

She knew that all she really cared about was the chance of seeing a certain dark-haired man whose brief touch had so thrilled her. Don was not so enthusiastic.

"I hope no trouble starts while we are there," he said a bit uncomfortably.

"I'm not afraid," she assured him lightly.

Once inside Nia-nia, Pat wondered why everyone had talked so much about the place. It wasn't so different from several other places she had often visited. Of course there were mostly natives present, but everything seemed quiet and orderly.

The next table to the one Don chose was occupied by five men, all well dressed Hawaiians. A sixth chair was vacant and from the frequent and furtive glances toward the door it was evident that the men were waiting for another member of their party. They conversed in low tones in English. Now and then a sentence reached Pat's ears, something about the navy.

"Don," whispered Pat, "what are they talking about?"

"Probably some new government regulation they don't like."

"But what about the navy?"

"Now don't get upset about your old navy."

Pat's eyes flashed, but she dropped the subject.

"They seem to be waiting for someone," she said.

"Their leader probably. Some fellow educated on the mainland to find fault with the way the United States handles her possessions."

"Oh!" cried Pat. "The ungrateful—"

"Sh!" warned Don. "They're looking at you."

"I don't care. I—"

Just then the door swung open. A young man came in and without glancing to right or left strode to the neighboring table. The guests made way for him respectfully. Apparently he was a man of some importance.

Pat gasped. In her resentment at what she had been listening to, she had almost forgotten why she had come to Nia-nia. But now he was before her, the man with the same bronzed skin, dark eyes and flashing smile that she remembered so well. There he was, joining the group of dissatisfied men, men antagonistic to the government. They were probably outlaws.

The men at the table rose as he approached and then, at a word of greeting from him, they all sat down together.

One spoke hurriedly in an undertone to the new arrival. Immediately, he turned his dark, searching eyes upon Pat. A swift smile curled his lips and she was almost sure that he bowed ever so slightly.

The hot color flooded Pat's cheeks and her heart beat wildly. But her disappointment was so great that she could not resist saying to Don:

"The idea of an American hobnobbing with a band of lawbreakers!"

"Hush," warned Don. "You don't know anything about them. Be careful or you'll start something."

"Pat's small nose turned up disdainfully.

"Afraid?"

"No, of course not. Only let's get out of here."

The little incident had not been lost on the man at the adjoining table. He had evidently heard every word of it. His eyes met Pat's in a sort of challenge.

She rose. Her lovely head was lifted a little higher. The soft, golden curls fell back from her flushed face. Her blue eyes, darker and bluer than ever with suppressed excitement, met the challenge.

"Let's dance," she said to Don quite

distinctly, and before he could remonstrate slipped into his arms.

Pat was aware that the dark eyes of the strange young man followed her admiringly. Now and then, across Don's shoulder, she involuntarily sought out the group at the table and invariably she met that searching gaze.

Then the dance was over. The men at the table were talking rapidly to the dark-eyed young American who seemed to be calmly weighing the words they so excitedly hurled at him.

"The governor—" said one loudly, and was interrupted by another who exclaimed:

"Admiral Beacher and Captain Gordon, too!"

"The whole damn navy!" cried a third.

Pat's face went white. She couldn't stand it any longer. She was on her feet facing them before Don was aware of her intention.

"What's the matter with the navy and Admiral Beacher?" she demanded. "And Captain Gordon? He's my father."

A deathlike stillness reigned in the place. Don, after one imploring gesture, sank back in his chair, livid with fear.

"So you're navy?"

The dark-eyed young man rose from his chair and came toward her. The other men rose, too, and closed in behind him.

"Yes, I'm navy," Pat answered defiantly, "and I'm proud of it."

Don managed to get out of his chair and tried to take Pat by the arm.

"I'm all right," she said, irritably shaking off his touch. She'd rather have no support than his half-hearted efforts.

"She's all right," growled a man's voice, and a heavy hand forced Don back into his chair.

PAT felt hands on her, rough hands and taunting voices mocked her. Then a command rang out.

"Take your hands off her!"

The tall, strong form of the young American covered the space between them in a single spring. His arm was around her and the fist of his other hand was clenched. Pat thought she had never seen such white-hot fury as flashed from his eyes.

"If you want me to do what you ask, leave this girl alone. I'll look after her."

The crowd fell back. One, a little more daring than the others called from the shadows:

"You want her for yourself?"

Even under the strain of the excitement Pat's heart leaped strangely. She felt the arm that had been thrown protectingly around her tighten ever so slightly.

"Yes, I want her for myself," the dark-eyed man said distinctly.

Firmly, he piloted her through the crowd. Pat turned to look for Don. He was gone, probably out the back way. In another minute she was outside with her protector. He took his arm from around her, but held tightly to her arm.

"I'll take you home," he announced, leading her to a small dark blue coupe parked near the entrance.

"That won't be necessary," Pat replied haughtily. "I can go home alone perfectly well."

"Not from here," her companion announced with finality. "Get in."

Pat was about to retort angrily when she remembered just how dangerous it would be for her to be alone in this particular section of the city. She got into the car and seated herself stiffly in the corner as far as possible from the driver's seat.

Without another word the young man climbed in and started the motor.

"You know where I live?" Pat asked in amazement.

"I know where Captain Gordon lives."

There was for a few minutes silence before Pat spoke again. It wasn't that

she had anything important to say. She just wanted to hear his deep thrilling voice reply.

"I suppose I should thank you, Mr.—" She hesitated with a little uplift of her voice that indicated very definitely her desire to know his name.

A smile curved his fine, strongly molded lips as he answered: "Call me 'Jack'." He glanced down at her and his warm, shining glance sent the blood rushing up into her cheeks. "Jack Curtis is the name, and there is nothing to thank me for. Naturally, I'd look out for a countrywoman of mine. I only hope you will have sense enough to stay away from places like Nia-nia."

"I'll do as I please, thank you."

"Then watch out for trouble. I might not always be around to save you."

"Conceited, aren't you?"

"A little, no doubt," he agreed, smiling.

Pat felt an unreasoning anger fill her.

"I should think that even you could find something better to do than to hang around Nia-nia."

"I could—but I like it."

"Then you ought to be ashamed," she flashed. "Everyone knows that practically all the smuggling, banditry, lawlessness of every kind on the island starts there."

"Then why doesn't the government stop it?"

"I don't know. Probably can't get the evidence or something, but I'll bet that if they put the navy on the job—"

Jack Curtis laughed. "True blue, aren't you?"

"I'm navy," she reminded him.

"Yes, I remember."

THEY had reached the big house where Pat lived. Jack stopped the car. Turning, he looked soberly down at Pat's lovely upturned face.

"Keep up your loyalty, little Pat,"

he said softly, "and try to have a little faith in me."

"How can I?" she asked quickly before she was aware that it was an admission.

Jack smiled tenderly.

"Love is like that," he said.

"Why, you—" cried Pat, but Jack went on speaking quietly.

"Listen, Pat. You stand for everything I've always wanted in a girl—my girl. I've always dreamed of someone like you. And you, Pat, you're in love with me a little."

Pat's heart almost stopped beating. She tried hard to be angry. His conceit was unbearable.

"You mustn't say things like that," she protested. "I do not love you. I—I think I despise you."

"Do you despise me?" he said softly.

His lips were close to hers as he suddenly drew her into his arms. And in that instant only one thing mattered to Pat Gordon. She wanted to feel the touch of those lips on hers.

"Do you?" he insisted. The dark eyes were smiling tenderly.

"No—no," she whispered, and swayed toward him.

She knew he was going to kiss her then, and her whole soul surged up to meet that kiss. . . .

A few minutes later, Pat came back to earth. She wrenched herself free from Jack's detaining arms, opened the car door with a jerk.

"I—I hope I never see you again!" she flared.

The man's dark eyes smiled down at her.

"You know you will," he told her.

And she did know it, too. Whatever else this man might be, she felt that he was a man of his word—and absolutely fearless.

She didn't say anything to her friends about visiting Nia-nia, and as Don didn't come around to talk about it, it was almost as though it hadn't happened. Like a dream. Only the excited beating of her heart and the tense expectancy with which she en-

tered every gathering, always waiting, hoping to find *him* looking down at her with those reckless, laughing eyes, the tender smiling lips.

She shook herself irritably whenever this happened. To see him would only be torture, knowing she must not want to see him again, must not care, yet caring terribly. And always there was the memory of that kiss.

A week passed and he did not come. He was probably spending his evenings at *Nia-nia*, and his days—no knowing where. She shuddered at the thought, but the dull pain in her heart was the only answer to her longing. . . .

The usual Saturday night party at the Royal Hawaiian was in full swing when she arrived with Bradley Thompson, the newest and gayest young officer on the post. As usual, Pat was charged on by the whole stag line. She gave each one her radiant smile. She chatted gaily, danced in her usual perfect manner but her eyes were restless, searching for a tall, straight form, for a handsome face, for dark eyes that would be seeking her.

THE evening was nearly over. The Orchestra, muted and haunting was playing its best loved and most popular piece.

Hawaiian paradise—Hawaiian heaven,
Land of make believe come true—

Paradise indeed! Tears of disappointment sprang into her eyes. It would be paradise if she could be with him again, but this aching loneliness—

She turned blindly to leave the room, and found a pair of strong arms around her. A low-voiced whisper, "Our dance," and she knew she was in heaven.

"Oh!" It was a cry of joy. For one blissful moment she was being held close, her heart beating madly against his. Then her slight body stiffened.

"I don't care to dance," she said.

"All right" That low, husky tone made her heart quiver with happiness. "Let's go somewhere—in the garden, for a ride, down to the beach. Wherever you say."

"No—no," she protested. Then suddenly, "because she couldn't help it she asked, "Where have you been?"

The man gave a low, joyous laugh and the arm he still had around her tightened. As he led her from the terrace he whispered:

"Miss me?"

"Of course not I just wondered."

"Come with me and I'll tell you."

"I can't go," she lied.

"Afraid?"

How well he knew she would answer that challenge.

"Certainly not. Where shall we go? To *Nia-nia*?"

Her red lips curled in scorn. She wanted to hurt him, to taunt him into saying or doing something that would show his true self, something to make her despise him. She had to despise him, or forever be lost in her consuming love for him. She trembled in his arms.

"No," he said firmly. "I wouldn't take you there."

"Afraid?" she challenged in her turn.

Why did she have to hurt him? Why not, for just one evening, give herself up to the ecstasy of his love?

"For you, yes," he replied quietly.

Pat didn't answer. She couldn't. Her heart was full, her throat closed on the words she might have uttered. Without another word, he guided her out to his car and helped her in.

"Well," he said, after a few minutes of driving, "shall we begin where we left off?"

Pat had a vivid remembrance of their last meeting and how one kiss had changed the entire meaning of life to her. With an effort to sound casual, she said:

"You've been busy?"

"Yes, very. I wanted to come to you before. I knew you'd be waiting."

She wanted desperately to deny that, but his nearness, the fragrance of the night, the moonlight, forced the words from her lips.

"How did you know?" she whispered softly.

"Because you love me," Jack Curtis answered simply.

He swung his car off the road into a secluded spot and stopped. Gently he drew her into his arms.

"You do love me, darling Pat, as I love you. Tell me you do!" He spoke pleadingly.

FOR one long moment she looked deep into his eyes as if to satisfy an eternity of longing. Then her own eyes closed. Her long lashes lay against cheeks that were warm and flushed.

"Yes," she breathed.

With an exultant cry he caught her to him. His lips closed down on hers. She gave him kiss for kiss, her arms locked tight behind his neck. Nothing else mattered but that he loved her and she was held close in his arms. Afterward, in a little while, she would tell him that he must find something to do, something honorable, that he must give up his associates at Nia-nia, but now— She nestled closer in his arms.

"Oh, darling," he whispered, "I want you so! It's going to be hard to wait until we can be married. You see I've got to finish my job at Nia-nia first."

Slowly, as though rousing herself from a dream, Pat withdrew from his arms a little.

"If you love me you won't go back to Nia-nia," she whispered. "You won't have anything more to do with those men."

"Pat, darling, I can't do that. You don't understand."

"I could never marry a man who wasn't true to himself, who associated with a lot of lawless—"

"But I don't! I—" He stopped short, his own face had gone white.

"You see?" she reminded him.

"I can explain," he said.

"I'm waiting to hear what you have to say."

"I told you it was something I couldn't get away from—for awhile, at any rate."

"I think I understand," she said dully.

"Perhaps you do—perhaps you do not. You'll have to trust me."

Pat laughed a brittle, heartrending laugh.

"Then you won't give up your friends at Nia-nia?"

He spoke deliberately.

"I can't do that, Pat. Not yet, anyway."

Slowly, as though she were signing her own death warrant she shook her head.

"And I can't marry you," she told him.

"You mean you *won't* marry me?" Jack cried incredulously.

"You called me navy. In the navy, we have certain rules, a certain standard, and you wouldn't fit in it at all." With an effort Pat forced a brightness that she was far from feeling. "And now, that's over. Please take me back to the Royal Hawaiian. I've still got a date with Lieutenant Thompson. He's navy, too. He knows I don't love him, but he wants me to marry him. I—I'm going to do just that."

"Pat, you're mad!" cried Jack.

"I *was* mad," Pat corrected him.

Jack Curtis didn't speak for a moment.

"You could wait, Pat," he said then, imploringly.

"You would never change," she told him bitterly.

Jack Curtis' eyes flashed. "No, I'll never change. I was wrong in thinking you were the kind of girl who had courage enough to trust her own heart."

Pat's face was starkly white. She was suffering as she had never believed it possible to suffer. It seemed unbelievable she could suffer so. But

it also was unbelievable, this thing that had suddenly risen between them.

"Yes, you were wrong," she said with deathly calm and went on, her lips twisted in a tortured smile, "Fortunately, you realized your mistake before it was too late."

Jack Curtis didn't speak again until he was leaving her.

"Thanks, Pat, for a lovely evening," was all he said then.

Pat lifted her head proudly.

"It *was* fun." She laughed lightly, but as Jack drove away her laugh broke on a dry sob.

Pat found that Lieutenant Bradley Thompson had been looking everywhere for her.

"Good Lord, Pat!" he exclaimed. "I thought perhaps you had gone riding with that fool, Don Devereaux."

"Didn't even know he was here," Pat answered. "Sorry to run out on you, old dear. Had a little unfinished business to attend to."

"Serious?" asked Bradley, scrutinizing her white, tense face.

"Not any more," she answered. "Come on, Brad, I want to dance. I've got to dance." She laughed shortly. To herself she added, "Or go mad."

She slept from sheer exhaustion that night and was thankful that it was late in the morning before she awoke. She dressed listlessly and went downstairs. Her mother had already gone out, but she found her father pacing the living room.

"Good morning, Dad," she greeted. "What has happened to the usual Sunday morning golf game?" She put her arm affectionately around her father.

"I'll play later perhaps," he answered. "I was waiting to talk to you."

He looked worried, Pat thought, and jumpy, as though expecting something to happen momentarily.

"Why, Dad, I'm sorry I kept you waiting. I guess I overslept."

"That's all right, dear. It's just that I want to talk to you."

"Yes, Dad."

"It's about the places you and your friends go evenings. You see there is a band of munition smugglers at work on the Island and the Intelligence Department has found out that they use one of the less reputable night-clubs on the island for their headquarters. For awhile you had better be careful where you go."

Pat had grown cold as she listened.

"Have you any idea which one it is?" she asked.

"Everything we've learned is strictly confidential," he told her. "You see, the officials are about to make the arrests and they don't want to lose a single one of the gang."

"I see."

Her stiff lips barely formed the words. She was thinking of Jack Curtis, gay, reckless, mad Jack Curtis—a smuggler, wanted by the Federal authorities.

"You will be careful?" urged her father.

"Yes, Dad," she replied, "I'll be careful."

AND she meant it. The maddening thought of Jack about to be arrested, sent to prison for years perhaps, made her restless, but she told herself that if he were a smuggler and had defied the law he deserved it. Even though it broke her heart to think of it, he deserved it.

She was glad when Bradley Thompson came after her to take her driving. She liked Bradley. She was going to marry him. They would have a lot of grand times together. Life would be pleasant—not the exciting adventure it could be with Jack, but satisfactory, and proper. She leaned back in the car and sighed.

"Brad," she said, "do you mind if we just ride? I don't feel like stopping anywhere."

"Whatever you say, Pat. Sorry you feel sunk."

They rode on. The soft breeze fanned her cheeks. Pat appreciated

Brad's companionship. She tried desperately to convince herself that in the end she'd be happier with him.

They were not far from Nia-nia when a car flashed past, swung recklessly around a curve and was lost to view. Pat gave a little cry. Jack's car! He was speeding to Nia-nia. Perhaps he had learned about the raids and was going to warn his friends.

Brad glanced sideward at Pat.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothing," Pat managed. "It's just that I've got the jitters, I guess."

There was silence for a moment, then Bradley said:

"Tell me about it, Pat, when you feel like it. It might help."

"Thanks, Brad. You're grand. But there's nothing to tell."

"Okay, honey." And that was all.

Jack's car was parked in front of Nia-nia when they passed and was still there an hour later when they returned. Apparently Jack had not gone to warn the others. He must still feel safe in meeting them there. He would be there when the arrests were made.

Pat tried to forget it a little by talking to Bradley, but it was no use and she was glad when at last she was at home and alone in her room. Her mother and father were entertaining, so it was easy for her to escape unnoticed. Just as she reached the top of the stairs she heard her father's voice.

"I hope we get them this time," he was saying.

"I think we will."

Pat recognized the voice of Captain Brown, who was in charge of Naval Intelligence in Hawaii. They were talking about the band of munition smugglers.

"Tonight's the night," said her father.

"Yes," came the reply,

Pat went into her room then and quietly closed the door. In a little while it would be over and she would

forget about Jack Curtis and the brief moments in his arms. Or would she? She paced the floor, arguing with herself until at last she threw herself across her bed with a little sob. She did not cry, really, just lay there still and quiet except for an occasional shiver that ran through her body.

Jack Curtis' words came back to her. "I was wrong in thinking you were the kind of girl who had courage enough to trust her own heart."

PERHAPS if she had had a little faith in him, he might not now be in danger of being sent to jail. She eat up quickly. Perhaps it wasn't too late even now. She would go to Nia-nia and get him away by some excuse. Of course, she would not tell him the truth. Not for the world would she betray her knowledge, but there must be some way to save him.

She hurried out of the house without attracting any attention. If she drove her own car it might be recognized, so she walked rapidly until she saw a vacant taxi. Hailing it, she got quickly inside, closed the door and sank back in the corner.

"To Nia-nia, quickly," she said.

Her heart beat fast as she approached the door. Jack's car was in its usual place. She didn't know just what she was going to say, but somehow she must get Jack away from the place without arousing his suspicions, so that he could warn the others.

She stepped inside and drew a quick breath that was a prayer. To a waiter who came up to her she spoke quickly.

"Will you ask Mr. Curtis, Jack Curtis, to come here for a moment, please?"

The man gave her a sweeping glance of appraisal and without a word left her. A few minutes later, Jack came striding toward her. For just a moment his eyes lighted up, then he exclaimed angrily:

"What are you doing here?"

"I want to talk to you. Can't you leave for a little while?"

"No, I'm busy," he answered brusquely. He certainly was not glad to see her.

Before he could say more, a soft, feminine voice interrupted:

"He cannot go now. We need him here."

Pat looked into the black, flashing eyes of an exotically beautiful girl. So that was why he came here!

"Remember your promise, darling." The girl turned to Jack.

"Of course, I remember, and I'm staying," Jack said, smiling down into those dark eyes. "I said I wouldn't leave as long as you needed me."

"I SHALL always need you," she said softly, and then angrily, "Tell your friend to go. Tell her you don't want to see her again. Tell her!"

Pat's face turned deathly white and for a moment her eyes sought Jack's incredulously. Her heart seemed to stand still as she waited,

"Yes, go," he said to her.

The dark-haired girl smiled triumphantly.

"And tell her you do not ever want to see her again."

Jack shrugged. "She should know that now," he said.

Then something in Pat's brain seemed to snap.

"Don't worry! I don't ever want to see him either." Her disdainful glance swept coldly over the girl. "I can see that he belongs here—with you."

She turned to Jack and spoke slowly, each word dropping from her lips, clear cut and edged with hate.

"You will never know the real reason I came tonight." Her voice broke suddenly. "And I'm glad—glad."

Jack's eyes held hers. For a moment she imagined they were suddenly warm, tender, but the words hurled at her made her wonder how she could have thought it.

"For Heaven's sake, why don't you go? I've got work to do."

His eyes were cold again. Yes, she had imagined the change in them.

Without even another word, and with her head held high, she turned and left Nia-nia. Her heart was breaking, but she walked proudly.

All the way home she maintained the frigid calm. Her mother and father were in the living room. The guests had left. Pat called "Good night" from the hallway and hurried straight to her own room.

As in a daze she undressed and climbed into bed. Tomorrow she would tell Bradley she would marry him. Tomorrow, she would forget Jack Curtis. Tomorrow and all the tomorrows she would have to fight against that ache in her heart, the longing to feel another man's arms around her.

She heard the telephone ring downstairs. She listened to her father's voice answer. Not that it mattered what was said. Not that anything mattered any more. It was just another bit of time in her life, meaningless, unimportant.

Suddenly her body became tense, every nerve snapped taut in rigid attention.

"Splendid, Brown, splendid. Glad you let me know. You say they got them all?"

A moment's pause while Pat scarcely breathed.

"We won't have any more trouble from them then," came her father's voice.

Pat fought back the cry that rose to her lips. A long shudder ran through her body, but no sound passed her lips. She lay for a long time before sleep came. Now and then a long, tremulous sigh swept across her lips. Even in sleep she suffered. . . .

Morning came and a white-faced Pat went downstairs to begin her game of pretense.

Her father called to her.

"Come here, Sleepyhead. We've been waiting for you."

Pat forced a smile. "You have a very lazy daughter, I'm afraid."

"Serves me right for spoiling you."

"I love being spoiled."

"That makes us even," said her father, smiling tenderly. "I enjoy spoiling you, but this time I think something has to be done about your going to Nia-nia last night."

Pat's eyes opened wide in amazement. "How did you know?"

"The young man you went to see told me."

Pat's lips curled scornfully.

"So he's that kind of a cad, too."

Captain Gordon's eyes twinkled.

"Well, you see he wanted to apologize for the way he treated you, and to explain how things stand because he wants my permission to marry you."

"How dare he!" Pat cried. "I wouldn't marry him—"

"Perhaps you'd better tell him about it," said her father, interrupting her outburst. "Lieutenant Drew!" he called.

A tall, familiar figure, straight and handsome in white navy uniform came out of the adjoining room.

Pat's eyes were shining like twin stars as she looked at Jack.

"You're navy?" she breathed,

scarcely daring to break the spell for fear she'd wake up and find it a cruel dream.

"Yes, Pat." His voice was low and infinitely tender. "And now I can explain—about Nia-nia, and that girl, and everything."

"You aren't angry with me," begged Pat as she slipped into his outstretched arms, "for not having faith in you?"

"No, dear. I knew you had faith when you came to warn me. It was in your eyes then, darling, and I hated so to kill it but I was desperately afraid we'd be discovered by the gang, and all the work I'd done to catch them would go for nothing."

Pat shivered in his arms.

"Something might have happened to you."

Jack laughed. "I told you I am never in so great danger as when I am with you."

"Afraid?" she whispered.

"Not so long as I know you love me."

"I'll love you forever." Her lips trembled.

"Forever." Swiftly Jack bent his head and kissed her.

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Conducted by Mrs. ELIZABETH ELDER

THE FRIENDLY SET (formerly the Get-Acquainted Club) is growing by leaps and bounds! Hundreds of readers are finding new friends who are sincere and worthwhile. You, too, may have correspondents with whom to share your experiences, joys and emotions!

THRILLING LOVE wants to banish loneliness among its readers—enriching lives with the charm of affectionate comradeship.

Join the Friendly Set. Receive interesting letters—no longer will the postman pass your door and leave you with that empty, dissatisfied feeling that comes when nobody writes you for a long time. Here's how to join:

Write to Mrs. Elder, care of **THRILLING LOVE**, 10 East 40th Street, New York City. Introduce yourself. Write your letter in such a way that others will be eager to know more about you. Be sure to sign your full name and address for our files. Give us a nickname under which you want your letters to be published. It will be only under

FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a boy of fifteen and would love to hear from boys oversea. Living in South Africa I will exchange postcards of my country to anyone oversea. So boys, just write to me for quick answers.

ROBERT. No. 5290.

LIVES IN THE COUNTRY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of fourteen with dark brown hair and hazel eyes. I live in the country and like to take long hikes. Also like movies, reading, singing and drawing. Would love to have many pen pals.

WILMA. No. 5300.

VERY LONELY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of thirteen with brown eyes and brown hair. I have many hobbies, but I am still very lonely. I will exchange photos and postcards.

POLLY. No. 5301.

WANTS REAL FRIENDS

Dear Mrs. Elder: Calling all pen pals with an earnest desire for real friendship with a young man twenty-seven years old, six feet, 200 pounds, whose interests are theater, art, literature, and everything that is beauty.

HARRY ^ ^

ALL OUTDOOR SPORTS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of twenty-three, and would love to have many pen pals. I love outdoor sports of all kinds. WilHONEY^No^a 5303

A TRUE AND WORTHWHILE FRIEND

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young man of twenty-four. I am not what you would call handsome.

this name that other readers will know you.

They will write to you in care of us—and we will forward their letters.

No letter will be forwarded unless a stamped envelope is enclosed. *Women and girls may write only to women and girls, and men only to men.* After the first letters, direct correspondence between you and your new friends will have been established.

IMPORTANT: In writing to Mrs. Elder, or in asking her to forward your letter, do not neglect to give the following particulars:—name, address, age, sex and supply at least one reference.

In asking that letters be forwarded clearly print the number assigned to your chosen friend on the stamped envelope which you enclose. All letters should be written neatly in ink. Do not seal the letter that you wish forwarded.

If any unwelcome letters are received by readers, we would appreciate having them forwarded to us.

but a person can overcome that handicap by being a true and worthwhile friend. I'm sure. I'd be so happy to hear from lots of fellow pen pals.

FRANK. No. 5304.

AN ORPHAN

Dear Mrs. Elder: Sometime ago I lost my mother and dad. I really need some friends and pals. Am a fellow of thirty-six, tall and slender, dark brown wavy hair and blue eyes. Like reading, music and sports. I hope to find many true pals.

BUDDY. No. 5305.

MARRIED GIRL OF EIGHTEEN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a married girl of eighteen and very lonely. My husband is in the Coast Guard and is at sea most of the time. I like all sports. I'd like to hear from other Coast Guard wives, but all girls are welcome.

ANN. No. 5306.

YOUNG BRIDE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young bride of seven months who finds lots of time on her hands. My hobbies are collecting statues, cooking recipes and movie star photos. Everyone who's interested in these things and would care to exchange some patterns with me, please write.

DOROTHY. No. 5307.

A MOTHER

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a married woman of twenty-five with a five-year-old (laughter. My hobbies are writing letters, listening to the radio, theater, knitting and trying out new recipes. Won't all you women take pity on me and drop me a line? My husband works nights and I have plenty of time to write long, interesting letters.

MRS. LEONARD. No. 5308.

[Turn page]

GOOD CLEAN FUN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am seventeen, brown hair and blue-gray eyes. I like to sew and anything that is good, clean fun. So come one and all, and write me a line or two.

YELMA No. 5300.

TRAINING TO BECOME A NURSE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl of seventeen, have dark brown hair and brown eyes. I am in training in the hospital to become a nurse. I have many sports and my hobby is taking pictures of my friends. I will exchange snapshots.

MARIE. No. 5310.

WANTS FRIENDS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am turning to your "Friendly Set" with the earnest hope of gaining new and worthwhile friends. Won't you please drop me a line?

HARRY. No. 5311.

TEXAS GIRL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a Texas girl, thirteen years old, and have blondish hair. Love all sports. Will exchange snapshots. Won't every one please write me?

MAISIE. No. 5312.

A WIDOW

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a widow and a nurse. I'm 43 years old. Enjoy helping others to be happy. Like music, travel, shows, but don't like wild parties. Would like to hear from all those looking for a real pal.

JOAN. No. 5313.

A SCOTCH LASS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a Scotch lass of eighteen and would like very much to receive American mail. Have red hair and blue eyes, and proud of being Scotch. I would like a lot of American friends.

JEAN. No. 5314.

GOES TO SHOWS OFTEN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of fifteen with brownish hair and brown eyes. Would like to write to girls of my own age. I live in a small town and go to the shows often. I would like to exchange pictures.

MILDRED. No. 5315.

INTERESTED IN RADIO WORK

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl of eighteen and am very interested in radio work. Have quite a large collection of autographed photographs of radio personalities. I would like to correspond with girls of my own age and I promise to be a true pen pal and friend.

BONNIE LEE. No. 5316.

THE FINER THINGS IN LIFE

Dear Mrs. Elder: Paging all young fellows interested in music, art, physical culture and the finer things in life. I am thirty-two, five feet seven inches tall and promise to answer all letters.

BOB. No. 5317.

TECHNICAL SERGEANT

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young man of twenty-four. Am a technical sergeant in the United States Army. My work deals with radio and telegraph. I'm sure I could find a lot of interesting things to talk about. I am interested in music and civil life. May I hear from someone?

DICK. No. 5318.

ENLISTED IN THE R.C.A.F.

Dear Mrs. Elder: I would like very much to correspond with pen pals of any age. Myself, I

am enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force now serving in Canada. Before enlisting I was occupied at teaching school. I am twenty years of age, and fond of practically everything. A snapshot of myself in uniform to all.

HERBERT. No. 5319.

UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

Dear Mrs. Elder: As a university graduate, I am anxious to obtain friends in Latin America and elsewhere. I enjoy sports, music, good reading, traveling. Correspondents may write in French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and German. Will exchange snapshots.

JIM. No. 5320.

WIDOW

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a widow, 34 years old, and I should be glad to hear from anyone of any age, for I love to write to people and get letters. I am a trained nurse, and I like my work very much. My hobbies are writing short stories and poetry, swimming and golf. I also like to travel and have seen most of the United States. I will answer all letters received.

NANCT. No. 5321.

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

Dear Mrs. Elder: I do like to write and receive letters, especially from foreign countries. I already have a large foreign correspondence, but do wish more. My interests are varied and many, but collecting stamps, postcards, souvenirs, etc., is my favorite one. I shall try to make my letters as interesting as possible.

HAROLD. No. 5322.

NOT LONELY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am not lonely, but just wish to increase my friendship. I am a girl of fifteen and quite popular. I have light brown hair and blue eyes. I like swimming and dancing, and most of all bowling, I promise to answer all letters.

MILDRED. No. 5323.

A GIRL FROM DEAR OLD TEXAS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am thirteen years old and love to be in bands at football games. I want you to remember me as a girl from dear old Texas, the biggest state in the Union. I would like to have many pen pals.

YONNIE LEE. No. 5324.

LOVE TO WRITE LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I hope lots of girls between 18 and 21 will write to a pal 19 who lives in Northwest Ohio and enjoys most everything especially skating, movies and collecting dogs, postcards and souvenirs. Come on, girls, help fill my mail box. I love to write letters.

EMMA. No. 5325.

CANADIAN GIRL

Dear Mrs. Elder: May I join your Friendly Club? I am a Canadian girl of twenty, and have brown hair and blue eyes. My hobbies are dancing, skating and movies. I would love to hear from girls everywhere and I have plenty of time to answer all.

MART. No. 5326.

A TRUE BLUE FELLOW

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a fellow of thirty-four, have very dark brown hair and hazel eyes. I live alone with my dog and enjoy my apartment very much. I make friends very easily and pride myself on saying I am a true blue fellow. One makes friends along life's way that come and go with the wind, but I am in search of friends who are still on call when I'm old and gray.

HEROLD. No. 5327.

What do YOU know about LOVE?



1 WHY IS JUNE PREFERRED BY SO MANY AS THE IDEAL WEDDING MONTH?



2 WHEN SHOULD AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN ENGAGEMENT BE MADE?



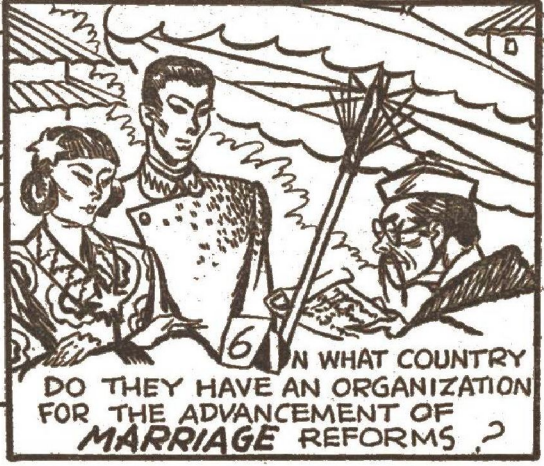
3 WHAT FAMOUS RUSSIAN CZAR SPENT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS COLLECTING PEARLS TO MAKE HIS BELOVED CZARINA A PERFECT NECKLACE?



4 WHERE IS IT THE CUSTOM FOR MEN TO WEAR A WEDDING RING ON THE THIRD FINGER OF THE RIGHT HAND?



5 NAME TEN OF THE MOST FAMOUS BACHELORS IN HISTORY?



6 IN WHAT COUNTRY DO THEY HAVE AN ORGANIZATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF MARRIAGE REFORMS?

Just For Tonight

By MARCIA SANGUIN

Author of "Boy Meets Girl," "I Like You Because—" etc.



Marya found heaven dancing in Garry's arms

When Marya and Garry Are in the Same Boat, and Sympathy Takes the Oars, It's a Surprise to Find Love at the Helm!

MARYA BLAKE sniffed forlornly and started to dab at drenched blue eyes, but her absurd scrap of a handkerchief was halted in mid-air by a deep voice from behind.

"So this is the Fixit Shoppe—'All

Your Problems Solved By An Expert!' Are you the—er—ahem!—expert?"

Marya whirled to face a black-haired young giant in well tailored

tweeds. Something faintly ironical in his tone, and in the keen gray eyes that raked her from head to foot, caused her to flush.

"I am Marya Blake, the manager of this service bureau," she retorted crisply, and quickly added, with professional briskness, "Have you a problem I can help you with?"

The X-ray eyes lingered on crystal drops that still trembled on Marya's golden, upcurled lashes.

"You don't look as if you'd been too successful at solving your own," the giant observed coolly.

Marya felt her flush creeping right up to the roots of her fluffy red pompadour. He was right, of course. She was disgustingly helpless when it came to her own problems. The one concerning Rob Corwin at any rate. She had known and loved Rob for nearly a year, and still she had not been able to make him propose. He had been curiously changed and evasive of late, too. Today he had even broken a luncheon date without bothering to call or explain. But this impertinent stranger couldn't possibly know that, for all his penetrating stare.

"We will leave my personal affairs entirely out of it," she stated with tart finality. "My business is to find a solution to your problems."

HIS gray eyes continued to study her with an intentness that threatened to make her flush a permanent fixture.

"I've already decided on the solution," he declared unexpectedly. "But I'm afraid you'll find it a little—er—complicated."

"No problem is too difficult or too complicated for the Fixit Shoppe," Marya informed him firmly. "We supply everything from belated birthday presents to a fourth at bridge."

"Can I depend on that?" he challenged.

"Absolutely!" she assured him with professional heartiness.

"Good!" the young giant approved tersely. "Then I'll call for you tomorrow night. Dance at the Officers' Club, Fort Bliss, in honor of newly arrived officers, their wives and fiancées. By the way, I'm Garry Fulton, captain in the Illinois Two Hundred and Second Field Artillery, here for a year's training. And you're to pose as my fiancée tomorrow night."

"Your fiancée!" Marya interrupted, aghast, her bright smile fading. "That's a little—unusual, isn't it? Besides, I'm the manager here and seldom go out on calls. But I—I'll try to find you another girl."

"Another girl won't do!" he rapped out sharply. "I saw your photograph and the writeup about your business success in the *Times*, and was struck at once with your resemblance to my fiancée—or my ex-fiancée, I should say. Come, come, Miss Blake! Surely you're not going back on your own motto—'no problem too difficult or too complicated—' "

"Sorry, but it's quite impossible," she broke in regretfully. "I have a date for tomorrow night." Her blue eyes went misty as she added softly, "A very important date."

It was Rob's birthday, and the first anniversary of their meeting. She was planning to make it an occasion of such gaiety, such supreme tenderness, as to move shy, scholarly Rob to declare the love he must surely feel by this time.

She raised her eyes to look dreamily beyond Garry Fulton. As she did, she glimpsed a tall, endearingly familiar figure in the doorway.

"Rob!" She uttered a glad little cry and ran to meet him.

But Rob's serious dark eyes and lean face wore the troubled, evasive look she had come to dread.

"Sorry about lunch, Marya," he faltered. "I—I guess I just forgot."

"You're forgiven." She laughed in the sheer happiness of his presence. "Providing you don't forget your own birthday dinner tomorrow night!"

Rob reddened uncomfortably. "That's another thing I wanted to tell you. I—I just can't make it tomorrow night, Marya, A difficult law case—I have to study up on it. And I—I must dash back to the office right now."

"Oh, Rob!" Disappointment was so keen that she caught her breath sharply, like a hurt child, and all the bright expectancy drained from her face.

Rob looked more and more unhappy. "I'm awfully sorry, but—"

Pride rushed to her rescue then. "It's quite all right, Rob. As a matter of fact, I was just, just—" She groped helplessly for words to save both their faces.

"As a matter of fact," a deep masculine voice took her up, "I owe you a vote of thanks, young man. Now maybe Marya will give me that date I've just been asking for."

MARYA turned her pain-misted eyes on Garry Fulton, whom she had completely forgotten. She opened her lips, then closed them again, as he went on authoritatively:

"First, we'll have a bite to eat, since it's nearly five and you've had no lunch. Then we'll talk it all over."

Rob seemed to consider that all right, too. He said good-by, murmuring something more about his law case, and drifted away. Marya silently allowed Garry to help her into her light topcoat. Her heart was too full for words.

A little later, from across the table in an intimate booth in a nearby cafe, she spoke slowly, painfully.

"That was a—a kind thing to do. Thank you. You were gallant."

Strong brown hands closed over hers.

"I'd like to be gallant," Garry Fulton told her warmly, "and I like you, Marya Blake. I'm not even going to ask you to take that assignment tomorrow night—unless you really want to. I know so well how you're feeling, you see."

Marya tried to free her hands, but he held them quite firmly, and after a moment she let them lie in his, conscious of a curious sense of serene comfort.

He looked full at her suddenly, his gray eyes bleak.

"I know what it is to be let down, too. My fiancée was to have arrived by plane today. Like a sap, I've gone around showing her picture to everyone and promising she'd be here for the dance tomorrow night. Then, just this morning, she wired that she couldn't bear the idea of living way out in the crude West for a whole year, and was breaking our engagement."

Deep lines had tightened the corners of an ordinarily full, devil-may-care mouth, and Marya forgot her own misery in a swift surge of pity.

"How awful!" she exclaimed quickly. "But please—don't feel too badly. She really can't be worth it."

"I'm beginning to realize that," he admitted bitterly, "but no man relishes being thrown over quite so brutally. I had thought it would be easier, more natural, if you'd let me introduce you as Annice—that's her name—tonight. Later you could sort of fade out of the picture. I'd say we both realized we'd made a mistake, and had decided to call it off. But now that I know about your own unhappiness, I'm not even going to ask you again."

Garry Fulton's eyes had grown wistful, however, so that Marya was reminded irresistibly, for all his great height, of a very small and very hungry boy, pleading for a cookie.

In some consternation she heard her own words, spoken softly, impulsively:

"I'll do it!"

"Gee, that—that's marvelous!"

The gray eyes lit up, and the strong hands crushed hers still closer. He looked almost as if he were going to kiss her out of sheer gratitude, and Marya drew back hastily, flushing a

little once more, and hating herself for it.

"The Fixit Shoppe *never* let its clients down," she declared, trying to sound crisply businesslike.

MARYA dreamed of a changed Rob that night, one who embraced her with thrilling ardor, only to turn, with disconcerting swiftness, into Garry Fulton. And the next day, instead of busying herself with shrewd schemes to overcome Rob's indifference, her unruly thoughts kept straying back to Garry—his kindness when she had needed kindness, the way he had looked at her when she agreed to help him.

"But it's just that I'm so terribly, terribly sorry for him," she assured herself then, as she did again that night as she hurried to answer Garry's ring.

She caught a fleeting glimpse of her reflection in the hall mirror, and was startled and annoyed at what she saw. Not at the creamy perfection of her shoulders, rising in spectacular contrast to her shimmering black gown; not at the masses of coppery-gold hair, floating in unconfined glory. But, rather, at the excitement that mantled her cheeks with flame, and made sapphire beacons of her eyes.

"Silly!" she scolded herself severely. "As if you'd never been to a dance before! What will Garry think?" Her flush deepened as she recalled the penetrating, X-ray quality of those all-observing gray eyes. "And besides," she reminded herself somewhat cryptically, "you're in love with Rob."

She hugged this thought close as she opened the door.

Garry Fulton stood there, bigger than ever, and extraordinarily handsome in the resplendent blue-and-gold of his dress uniform. He said nothing, just stood there staring, and the look in his eyes brought a still deeper crimson to Marya's cheeks, and seemed to thrust the image of Rob

farther and farther away. Her heart started pumping overtime.

He took an involuntary step toward her, and she began to tremble. Even before he took her in his arms, she knew he was going to kiss her, but she seemed queerly unable to move. He held her gently, but she could feel the uneven pounding of his heart as his lips approached hers. The room spun about crazily until her long lashes fluttered shut.

But Garry didn't kiss her. He thrust her from him so suddenly that she had to clutch at the open door for support.

"Sorry," he exclaimed jerkily. "You looked so lovely I—I almost lost my head."

They went down the walk to his roadster in silence, and in silence they drove to the Officers' Club. Marya knew she should be angry, but somehow she was conscious only of a baffled, let-down feeling. She kept thinking of Garry's apology, kept twisting his words into their real meaning.

"You looked so lovely—" "So much like Annice" was what he had really meant. No wonder he had wanted to kiss her! How much he must have loved the glamorous Annice—must still love her. And what a little fool the girl must be to jilt a man like Garry!

Life seemed such a mixup anyway, Marya thought wearily. Garry loved Annice, and Annice loved her own comfort and good times. Marya herself still loved Rob, in spite of all, while Rob loved—who did Rob love?

Marya's spirits lifted somewhat, however, as they entered the long, rambling building of the Officers' Club, and Garry beamingly introduced her right and left as "Annice Earle, my fiancée." There was something soothing to her hurt pride in his very possessiveness, in the boyish elation with which he noted the many admiring glances directed at her. She determined to forget her own

troubles and fling herself wholeheartedly into her role. After all, that was what she had been hired for!

THE music struck up with a flourish, and she snuggled into Garry's arms as if she belonged there. For all his size, he was marvelously smooth and light on his feet. They glided around the long room, wordlessly content, welded into a sort of rhythmic oneness that held them spellbound and silent. They were cut in on repeatedly, but Garry always shook his head and said good-humoredly:

"Sorry, old man. She's all mine for tonight."

"Just for tonight," Marya realized, and a queer pang shot through her at the thought. Would she never see him again? Must it end like this? It was such fun dancing with Garry, being held in his arms as if she were something precious.

"Goop!" She shook herself mentally as she realized where her traitorous thoughts were leading. "You're simply sorry for Garry, as any girl with half a heart would be. And you're just thrilled with the glamour of the situation, with the music, the colorful uniforms, the gaiety. It's been so long since you've had any real fun. But all this has nothing to do with reality.—nothing to do with your love for Rob. Poor Rob, sitting alone in his hall bedroom, poring over musty law-books!"

She gave a little sigh, and Garry glanced down at her.

"Having any fun?" he asked with tender raillery.

"Oh, yes," she breathed quickly, "but I was just thinking—"

She broke off abruptly, and her eyes widened to enormous pools of unbelief. Here, within a few feet of her, dancing absorbedly with an exquisite, doll-like blonde, was the object of her unnecessary sympathy—Rob! Rob, whom she had loved and mothered for a whole year. Rob, who didn't like parties and dances, who had actually

broken a date for tonight on the plea of extra work! He and his lovely companion must have come in late, for she hadn't seen either of them before.

Garry followed the direction of her stricken eyes, and stiffened imperceptibly.

"Brace up," he commanded after a moment. "That sap's not worth a single one of your tears."

"He's not a sap," she defended weakly.

"Any guy who would ditch a flame-haired goddess like you for an animated doll like that, is nothing else but!" he retorted.

She didn't reply. For the moment she had completely forgotten Garry. She was remembering the close, precious companionship with Rob, the countless hours she had spent in encouraging him, lecturing him, excitedly outlining a brilliant future for him—and all the time longing secretly for the moment when he would say he loved her!

Now that moment would never come. Rob had deliberately lied to her, and had turned to another girl—an empty-headed baby doll, judging from the looks of her. Marya was so numbed at the discovery that she didn't realize Garry was still speaking until stung to attention by his last biting words.

"Haven't you any pride at all? Do you want the chump to see you looking like the chief mourner at your own funeral?"

That stiffened her spine. Swift anger darkened her blue eyes and painted martial flags in her cheeks. But strangely her resentment was directed entirely at Garry. When the music ended an instant later and she came face to face with a startled, abashed Rob, she was conscious only of heart-piercing tenderness and a poignant desire to shield him from all hurt.

"Oh, hello, Marya," Rob stammered awkwardly, red-faced with shame, but managed a nod to Garry, too.

"Oh, I saw you in Marya's office yesterday, didn't I?" And then, not meeting Marya's eyes: "This—this is Beth Marsden, Colonel Marsden's daughter, you know. I—I have something to tell you, Marya. We're planning, Beth and I—er—that is—" He stopped floundering hopelessly.

MARYA forced a brilliant smile and took Garry's arm.

"And I have something to tell you, Rob," she said kindly, with all the enthusiasm she could muster. "This is Garry Fulton, the—the man I'm going to marry."

The overwhelming relief that flooded Rob's boyish features at this announcement more than repaid her for the barefaced fib. It was the last thing, she thought wistfully, that she would ever be able to do for him.

Beth Marsden was gazing up at Rob with frightened, adoring eyes. Glancing down at her, he squared his shoulders manfully and put a reassuring arm around her slight waist. The other girl's very helplessness, Marya realized suddenly, was the secret of her appeal.

The four of them had paused behind some tall palms, which afforded a screen from the other dancers. In the sheer exuberance of his relief, Rob bent and kissed shy little Beth.

Marya's heart turned over, but before she could avert her eyes from the painful sight, she felt her shoulders seized firmly, heard Garry's voice in her ear. "Mustn't ignore an example like that, darling!"

Then she was in Garry's arms, crushed so close she could almost count his pounding heartbeats, and again, as she had earlier, she felt strangely unable to move or protest. Her eyelids fluttered down as his lips possessed hers deeply, until Rob and Beth seemed to fade from sight and consciousness like dim, unreal figures in a dream.

Rob had never kissed her like this; no one had. She clung to Garry word-

lessly, not attempting to analyze her feelings, just reveling in his lips and nearness, that had brought such glorious surcease from pain.

They didn't hear Rob and Beth steal softly away. And they were still standing there, lip to lip, the world forgotten, when a cool feminine voice shattered the spell.

"So this is what I've traveled two thousand miles to find!"

Garry's arms dropped from around her, and Marya turned fearfully.

It was Annice Earle, of course—coolly sure of herself, yet obviously furious, for all of her poise. Marya knew her by the resemblance to herself. The same coppery-gold hair and willowy grace, the same heart-shaped face. But there the likeness ended. Marya's eyes were intensely blue, her mouth generous and deeply dimpled at the corners. Annice had eyes as jade-green as her slinky Paris gown, lips like a sulky, crimson rosebud.

"You wired you weren't coming," Garry was reminding Annice in a tone as cool as her own.

"I'm a woman," Annice flared, losing some of her poise, "and I exercised a woman's prerogative. But I'm changing my mind again now! I never dreamed you'd find consolation so soon." Her green eyes slanted toward Marya with a subtly disparaging expression.

"I haven't," Garry retorted swiftly, and his denial was a two-edged sword that pierced Marya to the quick. "As a matter of fact, I've—"

The orchestra struck up just then, drowning out his words. A passing officer spied Marya, standing stricken and neglected to one side while Annice and Garry talked, and whisked her off to dance.

Marya never knew how she got through that dance. It was as if she were a lifeless marionette, while the music provided invisible strings which her partner manipulated to coax her trembling limbs into motion.

"Yes, it's a splendid orchestra,

isn't it?" she heard her own dim, far-away voice making conversation. "No, I've never been here before. Yes, I'm sure I'll like army life."

And all the time her heart was crying soundlessly, "Oh, Garry, Garry, how could you? How could you kiss me like that, and not mean it? Out of pity, compassion? But I don't want your pity, I want—"

Pride wouldn't permit her to put it in thought words even, but all the same she knew at last what she wanted. Not her old sisterly relationship with Rob, which paled into insignificance beside this new demanding hunger that had flamed into being. Not a businesslike agreement with Garry "just for tonight." Only a forever-and-ever contract could satisfy her now—signed by Garry's lips, sealed by his arms, and witnessed by the beating of his heart against hers.

But it was not to be, of course. Each time she circled the long room with her partner she caught a brief, stabbing glimpse of Garry and Annice. Still standing by the palms, still arguing and gesticulating angrily.

Marya knew then what she must do. She loved Garry too dearly not to desire his happiness, even though that love had come so suddenly, so unexpectedly. Besides, she had pledged her professional word to help him, and reliability was the watchword of the Fixit Shoppe. She must patch up this misunderstanding—literally hand Garry to Annice on a silver platter.

When the music stopped she excused herself and marched back to the absorbed pair, head high, a gallant smile on her lips. They were seated now on a bench behind the palms, but they were still arguing.

"Don't get up," Marya exclaimed. "I just came to present my bill."

Annice's green eyes glinted dangerously at the interruption, but Garry sat bolt upright.

"Bill?" he repeated incredulously.

"Yes. For two hundred and fifty dollars." Fixing her eyes on Annice as

she named the excessive amount "And I'd like the check now, if you please. You see"—she spoke chummily to the other girl—"after receiving your wire Garry hired me to impersonate you, but my work is over, now that you've shown up after all. A break for me, for I'm all in from too many late hours." She yawned delicately.

"You contemptible little gold-digger!" Garry gritted out slowly, each word like the lash of a loaded whip.

But Marya stared boldly at the obviously relieved Annice, and continued to smile her bright, fixed smile. She dared not look at Garry, for fear her eyes would give her away.

AFTER a long moment, Garry tore a checkbook from his pocket. Marya heard the rasp of his pen, presently felt the check thrust roughly into her hand.

"Thanks," she said carelessly, still looking only at Annice. Then she turned and walked swiftly away. The music had started up again, and no one noticed her as she slipped quietly through the crowded rooms, collected her wrap and phoned for a taxi.

Only the moon witnessed her misery as she waited outside. It shone crystal-bright on the tears that slid down her cheeks and splashed on the black frock. She glanced at the check, still clenched in one hand, and in a sudden passion of revulsion she tore it into bits and scattered the fragments at her feet.

Her taxi honked impatiently. She dashed the tears from her eyes and walked slowly out to the waiting car.

Marya opened the Fixit Shoppe bright and early the next morning. It had been an endless night and she longed to plunge into her work again, to find release from her own pain in the Shoppe's strenuous daily efforts to help others.

The phone rang, and she hastened to pick up the receiver.

"Yes, Mrs. Tucker, we'll arrange a
{Continued on page 112}

A Little Bird Whispers

HOLLYWOOD NEWS AND NOTES



IN THE two years Joan Fontaine and Brian Aherne have been married they've danced only three times with each other. "He's so tall," Joan confides, "that when I put my arm around his shoulder, my feet are off the floor." . . . The Draft has blown between Katharine Hepburn and Director Garson Kanin. . . . Brenda Marshall and Bill Holden are now holdin' hands via the Army post office. . . . Jimmy Stewart's busy shining the brass buttons on his Army uniform. . . .



PAULETTE GODDARD

Bing Crosby disc sales last year hit an all-time high of 8,500,000 — highest in history for any platter artist. . . . Betty Grable's feet can't rhumba as fast as her heart—when she's dancing with George Raft. Rita Hayworth, whose figure draws photography shutterbugs like a special bonus at Christmastime, actually lets her husband select her clothes. . . . However, Paulette Goddard has what the experts call the most beautiful form in the Camera Capital. . . .

Brian Donlevy, who went from the flying corps to collar ad model, once posed as Cleopatra when the regular model failed to appear! . . . Linda Darnell sets her studio back \$12,000 in lost time whenever she makes a picture. State law makes her take four hours of schooling a day until she's eighteen. . . .

Judy Garland and MGM have agreed that the present *Andy Hardy* will be her last in the series.... Competition is getting heavy among British Ambulance drivers—not for customers but for dates with Ann

Dvorak, auto mechanic.... When you have the boy-friend to dinner, serve him boiled rice soaked in honey and cream. Look what it did to Henry Fonda, who attributes his movie stardom to that diet. . . . Glenn Ford says he's still old-fashioned enough to prefer the simple-small-town type of girl. That's the first cheering news we've heard since Don, our handsome office boy, joined the Navy. * . .

Don Ameche sounds like an African drum when he calls his sons—Ron, Don, Lon and Tom. . . . Bob Stack would be the ideal boy-friend. Besides owning a racing car and polo ponies, he inherited a cool two million dollars on his 21st birthday. Deanna Durbin got her first screen kiss from him in "Nice Girl?" . . . But if you want the Tarzan kind,



BRIAN DONLEVY

Errol Flynn's the one you need. A dozen years ago he was in the Olympics as the best boxer England had, and when Hollywood found him he was, of all things, the chief of a savage tribe in the South

Sea Islands. . . .

The night before Ann Sheridan's birthday, George Brent gave her an exquisite lipstick crusted with amethysts. Next morning, George's steno called Ann very early, asked her to look in the garage and see if he had dropped his pipe there. Yawning profusely, Ann hustled into a negligee, headed for the garage. Wrapped in cellophane was a brand-new Cadillac coupe! . . . Well, until Robert Taylor makes us a similar present, we'll be riding down Hollywood Boulevard in the bus with you. —Sally.



ALL the beauty and allure of love are under powerful planetary influence.

Affection is being reciprocated, and happiness shared by all who experience the thrill of love since Venus and Pluto are in the Sign Leo which rules romance, and Mars is in the Sign Leo which rules impetuosity. The transit of Jupiter through the Sign Gemini which rules the social amenities and the intellect, sextile these Planets, is also of great benefit to sweet hearts and married lovers.

For every Sign group these magnetic planetary trine and sextile vibrations convey a special message. Read what the aspects reveal in your own solar horoscope.

A Romantic Cycle



ARIES LOVE—for those whose birth days fall between March 21st and April 20th. You are in a cycle to be enthusiastic about everything, particularly romance. Your emotions are warm and glowing. Love seems entrancing and exciting. You feel like a new person, so to say, due to the transit of Mars in your Sign. This is a most animating influence, and because it is so powerful you feel that you can overcome almost any obstacles. You are more interested in the future than in the past. Your beloved is indeed fortunate to be able to share the energizing Mars cycle with you.

However, don't risk an argument with a relative or you will come out second best. Also, don't spend too much time worrying

about money. Buy what you need, prudently, and don't splurge on a good time. You will be appreciated more if you are economical this month than you would be if you attempted to throw away money on nonessentials while Saturn and Uranus in your Second House, which rules your income, are square Venus in your Fifth House which rules love.

The 2nd and 8th of July are exceptionally favorable for romance.

Emotional Lures



TAURUS LOVE—for birthdays between April 21st and May 20th. Devote your time to existing love than seek new romance. In other words, do not discard affection that has been tested and found true for

an emotional lure that may prove temporary. Your feeling of uncertainty may cause a mood of constraint between you and your lifemate, though you are as tender and faithful, aspiring and resolute as ever. A slight defection can make you belligerent even toward the one you love best in all the world. Say nothing that can be construed as criticism or faultfinding.

By the end of the month you are likely to feel more like yourself, but even then the love vibrations for your solar group are not harmonious. However, since the Planet Jupiter, known as "The Greater Fortune" is in your Second House which rules your income, you doubtless have enough money to spend for luxuries, and by so doing can keep the cup of romance full. Freedom from financial worries often

How do you KNOW you can't WRITE?



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"Since reporting the sale of my first attempt at a magazine article, I have sold three others, also four feature stories were accepted by the local newspaper. The credit is all yours. When you consider that I'm a driver for the local bus company, you can readily see my time is well taken up."

—Herman R. Bach,
Box 118, Pacific Grove, Calif.

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It is seldom that anyone becomes a writer until he (or she) has been writing for some time. That is why so many authors and writers spring up out of the newspaper business. The day-to-day necessity of writing—of gathering material about which to write—develops their talent, their insight, their background and their confidence as nothing else could.

That is why the Newspaper Institute of America bases its writing instruction on journalism—continuous writing—the training that has produced so many successful authors.

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Many people who *should* be writing become awe-struck by fabulous stories about millionaire authors and give little thought to the \$25, \$50 and \$100 or more that can often be earned for material that takes little time to write—stories, articles on business, fads, travels, sports, recipes—things that can easily be turned out in leisure hours, and often on the impulse of the moment.

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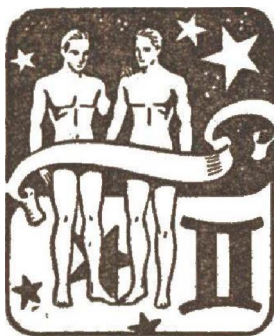
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The 10th and 23rd of July are favorable for love.

A Source of Inspiration



GEMINI LOVE—
for birthdays from May 21st to June 20th. You are being compensated, astro' logically, for a long period of planetary restrictions—includ' ing love, perhaps. With the Planet Jupiter now in your

Sign, shedding its harmonious rays across your path, and in favorable aspect to all the Planets, romance should move along agreeably for you. A friend may come to you with pleasant news, or a relative may invite you for a trip where you will have a chance to relax and enjoy the associa' tion of a congenial companion. What you say is inspiring to almost everyone who listens to you, no matter what topic of conversation you touch. You know how to turn words into gold.

You don't need money to make you

popular since your personal presence is enough to make the atmosphere more cheerful when you enter a room. You carry an aura of happiness with you so that many who are worried or depressed turn to you for comfort. This is stimu' lating to the emotions, and knowing that you are on such excellent terms with friends and neighbors, your beloved is re' sponsive to you also.

The 4th and 16th of July are favorable for love.

Intellectual Romance



CANCER LOVE
—for birthdays between June 21st and July 22nd. You are more interested in intellectual love right now than in emotional phases. You want to talk about romance, to

write about it, and to hear about it. You give good advice to the lovelorn, and you are quick at repartee. Your nimble help can get the emotionally teetering back on

[Turn page]

a firm stance. Your ideas are like a gushing fountain, and your suggestions exhilarating. However, you are under a strong compulsion to dominate everybody, and this may draw some criticism.

You are in a cycle to profit from love either as a participant in romance—or as a matchmaker! Someone for whom you engineered a happy marriage may want to reciprocate with a gift. Or perhaps you are celebrating your own happiness.

The 5th and 30th are favorable for love.

Dan Cupid's Messenger



LEO LOVE—for birthdays between July 23rd and August 22nd. You are selected by the Planets to be the bearer of good news for Dan Cupid. Love is enthroned in your Sign this month through the

transit of Venus. You are the messenger of hope, and you can see the future with clear vision because Mars is your way-shower. You are going ahead with confidence, strengthened by the knowledge that love born under these vibrations is destined to continue indefinitely for the good of sweethearts everywhere. You have abiding faith in your rights, and this makes you resolute in love. With Venus and Pluto in your Sign to vivify your personality, your friends are more susceptible than ever to your emotional appeal.

But you must be careful not to expose yourself to gossip or someone who is malicious may circulate a derogatory story about you

The 22nd and 27th of July are favorable for romance.

Planning for the Future



VIRGO LOVE—for birthdays between August 23rd and September 22nd. You always take love seriously, now more so than ever. In fact, you are so busy with plans for the future that you haven't

much time for romance. Intuitively per-

haps you believe that an emotional episode would detract from your success, and that it would not be advantageous to get entangled with someone who is more interested in your financial assets than in your worth as an individual,

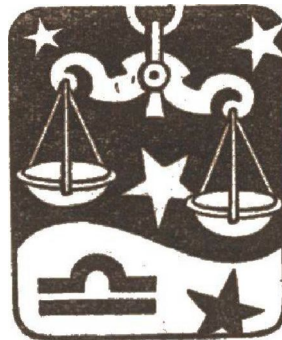
This skepticism helps you to differentiate between genuine admiration and mere flattery. Nevertheless, you might be susceptible to an invidious influence toward the end of the month when Neptune in your Sign is eclipsed by the Moon. Something foggy and elusive may arise, stirring up doubt that should not exist.

At the same time you are following a well-defined course in your own mind so you are prepared for almost any emergency, tabulating everything and everybody in your mind so as to know whom to keep in your personal circle and whom to discard.

During the next few months let sincere words and deeds be your bond with those you love.

The 12th and 19th of July are favorable for love.

Emotional Stress



LIBRA LOVE—for birthdays between September 23rd and October 22nd. The fairy godfather of the skies, the Planet Jupiter, has come to your assistance after a long period of opposition and obstruction. Excellent

though these vibrations are, you are likely in an emotional stress since the fiery Planet Mars is in your Seventh House which rules your life mate. It may mean an oral blitzkrieg also, because the Planet Mercury, which symbolizes words, is at the zenith of your horoscope. You want to dramatize every happening—and this stage effect, though gratifying to your ego, is scarcely suitable to emotional harmony,

Furthermore, you are inclined to confuse issues and deceive yourself with illusions. It may be difficult for you to stick to reality, or to hold on to facts regarding love. Whether you are single or married, do not be precipitate about romance this month.

The 1st and 21st of July are favorable for love.

Intuitive Perception



SCORPIO LOVE
—for birthdays between October 23rd and November 21st. The most beneficent vibrations for your solar group this month are generated by Mercury and the Sun, so you feel self' assertive and

mentally alert. You have a strong grasp of occult matters, and it would be well if you were to use this intuitive perception to solve some of your love problems.

It is possible that one or two situations have arisen between you and your life mate that have caused friction, due to the presence of Saturn and Uranus in your Seventh House which rules marriage. With Venus, which rules love, square these Planets, there are additional adverse vibrations for the emotions. Fortunately Mars is in a neutral zone now, so it is possible to settle most of the conflict, if any, through arbitration. Try to be reasonable.

It is also possible that you have to decide about the settlement of several estate matters that are for the mutual benefit of your self and your lifemate. Expedite these now, without leaving any loose ends around.

The aspects are almost too strenuous now for romance.

Harmonious Vibrations



SAGITTARIUS LOVE—for birthdays between November 22nd and December 21st. Kind Fate has come out of celestial space with harmonious vibrations for your lovelife. With your temperament for ex'

uberance, you are probably having a glorious time.

The Planet Jupiter in your Seventh House which rules marriage is stimulating for affection and marital success. You are content to be with your beloved, doing the same things, going to the same places, and eating the same type of food. Perhaps you are off on a long vacation, with no one around to disturb you.

[Turn page]

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COLLEGE HUMOR

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Either you enjoy playing a musical instrument yourself, or you are both finding pleasure in listening to concerts or going to song festivals. Almost everything surrounding you this month is conducive to emotional delight.

However, due to the Saturn transit in your Sixth House which rules your job, you may have to work strenuously.

The 6th, 14th, and 25th of July are favorable for romance.

Cross Purposes



CAPRICORN LOVE—for birth-days between December 22nd and January 19th. With the Planet Mercury in your Seventh House which rules marriage to make you articulate, you may be having a

talk marathon with your lifemate! If it were not for the square of Mars to your Sign and Mercury, all would be pleasant.

As it is, there can be too many cross purposes in what is being said; so instead of the conversation being agreeable, some one in your household may take umbrage.

The undertones of your existence, however, are like radiant sunlight on a green meadow—without a shadow to mar its brilliance. You have profound ideas and extraordinary perception of abstract philosophies. If instead of discussing trivial household matters you can get your nearest and dearest or someone else to listen to you while you reveal your innermost thoughts, you would reach the pinnacle of spiritual bliss.

The 9th and 17th are favorable for love.

An Interlude of Popularity



AQUARIUS LOVE—for birth-days between January 20th and February 18th. You are like a whirling dervish, whisked hither and yon by romance. At one moment you are swinging high, and the

next low while the rays of Pluto and Venus are beckoning across the zodiacal

horizon from the Seventh House which rules your life associates.

But you may not have time to enjoy the thrill of romance since the Planet Saturn at the nadir of your horoscope is giving you many arduous duties to perform. There is no way to shed these cosmic responsibilities. However, you have an interlude of glorious popularity, due to the vibrations of Jupiter in your Fifth House which rules social contacts.

You are busy writing letters, perhaps to friends abroad. Or someone who lives at a distance may arrive quite unexpectedly for a visit. Much of your time may be spent reading important documents.

The 13th and the 21st are harmonious for love.

The Undercurrent of Illusion



PISCES LOVE— You are cruising on pleasant waters, emotionally, but sometimes you wonder if your happiness is real since there is an undercurrent of illusion to the aspects. This month, particularly,

there is a dual influence, and you may want to take a holiday to get things under control.

Your relatives are loyal and willing to help, however, so you are perhaps able to arrange a vacation with your lifemate. Due to the transit of Mars in your Second House which rules money, you are probably able to raise the money for your trip.

If you could arrange to spend several weeks in a secluded spot where there is good food, ample reading facilities, and comfortable arm chairs—you would find yourself getting rid of your imaginary cobwebs, and romance would again become glamorous.

The 14th and 23rd are harmonious for love.

The most actively adverse aspects for romance during July are the 24th and 26th—requiring supreme diplomacy.

Address Your Questions to ASTROLOGER, Thrilling Lore, 10 East 40th Street, New York. Please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for a personal reply.

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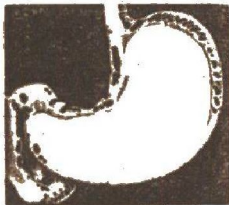
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**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS
ON PAGE 97**

1. Since ancient times in mythological legend, JUNO, the wife of Jupiter, was the patroness of happy marriages. May, named for the goddess Maia, was considered unpropitious. Then, March was named for Mars, the god of war, and would therefore not be a happy time to marry, since trouble and disputes might develop.
2. The announcement of an engagement should be made upon the day that the bride-elect chooses to wear her engagement ring for the first time publicly, or to show it to friends.
3. Alexander III.
4. In countries of southern Europe it has long been the custom for the males who wear wedding rings to have them on the third finger of the right hand.
5. Some of the world's famous bachelors are Michelangelo, Petrarch, Voltaire, Sir Isaac Newton, Schopenhauer, Liszt, Macaulay, Charles Lamb, John Greenleaf Whittier, Lord Kitchener and Cecil Rhodes.
6. In China they have an organization that calls itself the Association for Marriage Reforms, and one of the principal plans is to bring the costs of wedding gifts within a specified limit.

JUST FOR TONIGHT

(Continued from page 104)

tour of El Paso and Juarez that will be sure to delight your guests. . . . What's that? Can we help you prepare your annual report to the Woman's Club? Oh, yes, indeed, Mrs. Tucker! Please remember our motto —'nothing too large or too small for the Fixit Shoppe to handle with speed and finesse'."

The receiver clicked into place again, then Marya's heart stood still as a familiar voice inquired impudently: "How good are you at arranging impromptu honeymoons?"

She swiveled her chair slowly about to face Garry, a smiling, debonair Garry, who looked as if he owned the world. So he had fixed it up with Annice, she thought dully, and was no longer angry at her own excessive bill. Perhaps he realized that her very commercialism had exonerated him in Annice's eyes. Probably he was so grateful that he had decided to let her earn another fat commission.

"Where do you wish to go on your —your honeymoon?" She tried desperately to sound professionally cheerful, but the attempt failed.

"Wherever you like, darling."

She stared up at him unbelievably. "What—what did you say?" she faltered.

Long arms reached down and lifted her gently to her feet.

"What do I care where I go," he demanded unsteadily, "as long as you're with me?"

He hugged her so tightly that it seemed her ribs must surely crack, but she closed her eyes as his lips met hers, and decided recklessly that it was a glorious way to suffer.

"Aren't you afraid that I'll overcharge you for my services?" she asked, when she got her breath back.

"Not if you always tear up my checks as promptly as you did last night I" retorted Garry. "Oh, darling," —he brushed his lean dark face

against her soft one—"you'll never know how sunk I was last night, thinking that you hadn't meant those kisses, that you were just a mercenary little flirt! But when I went outside the Club to smoke I found those yellow bits of paper, scattered just beyond the door. Then came the dawn! I realized that you'd presented that bill for my sake—because you thought I still loved Annice. But I didn't. From the moment I received that wire of hers, I was definitely through. Annice is just a spoiled brat, forever changing her mind."

"But you told her last night," Marya remembered tremulously, "that you had not found consolation. You denied that—"

"Certainly I denied it," he interrupted forcefully, "since she was obviously inferring something cheap and temporary. If you'd listened a bit longer, my pet, you'd have heard me inform Annice that, although I'd not found 'consolation,' that I had found something much lovelier."

A long brown finger gently explored the deepening dimple at the corner of her red mouth.

"From the moment I came into your ridiculous little Shoppe and gazed down into those troubled, direct blue eyes," he said, "I knew it was going to take the rest of your life—and all the resources of the Fixit Shoppe—to fix my heart up again. Say that it's the same with you, dear." His voice sank to a whisper. "Say you've forgotten that unappreciative sap you were crying about."

Blue eyes met gray, bravely, steadily. "My feeling for Rob," she told him softly, "was like a dream—a, dream that is already beginning to fade. This is a glorious reality. I never knew what love really was until—until you kissed me last night."

He kissed her again for that, deeply yet tenderly, and his lips possessed the same magic. More, too, for this time she knew that his love was hers for keeps.

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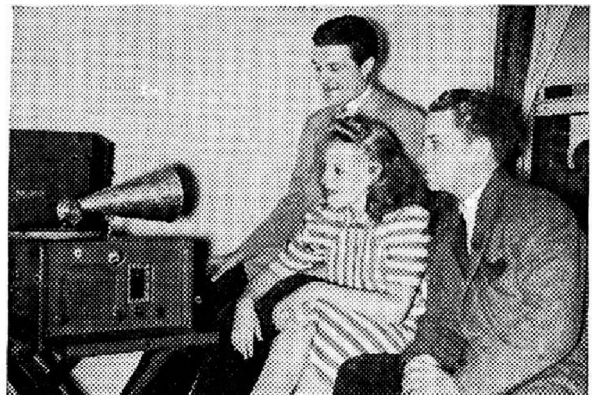
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