

# THRILLING Love

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A THRILLING  
PUBLICATION

*Beginning:*

## *Never to be Forgotten*

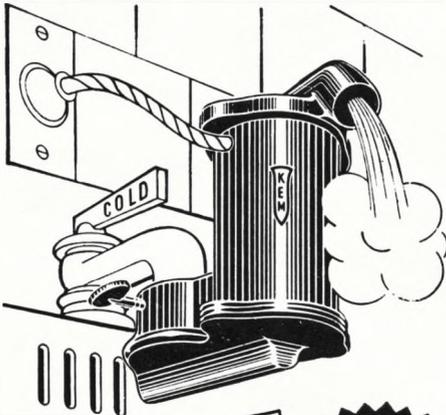
*A Romantic Novel by* PEGGY GADDIS

**CLEAR THE COURSE FOR LOVE** *by* ANN ARDEN

**THE SENATOR'S DAUGHTER** *by* JEANNE LEGGITT

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# Thrilling LOVE

VOL. LXVII, No. 2

A THRILLING PUBLICATION

October, 1948

## TWO COMPLETE NOVELETS

- CLEAR THE COURSE FOR LOVE**.....*Ann Arden* 13  
What's a girl like Millie Blake to do when the man she adores with all her heart doesn't seem to care about anything but motorboats?
- THE SENATOR'S DAUGHTER**.....*Jeanne Leggitt* 46  
Clid Ravenswood was the favorite of all Washington society, but all she ever really wanted to be was just one man's own devoted darling!

## A SERIAL NOVEL

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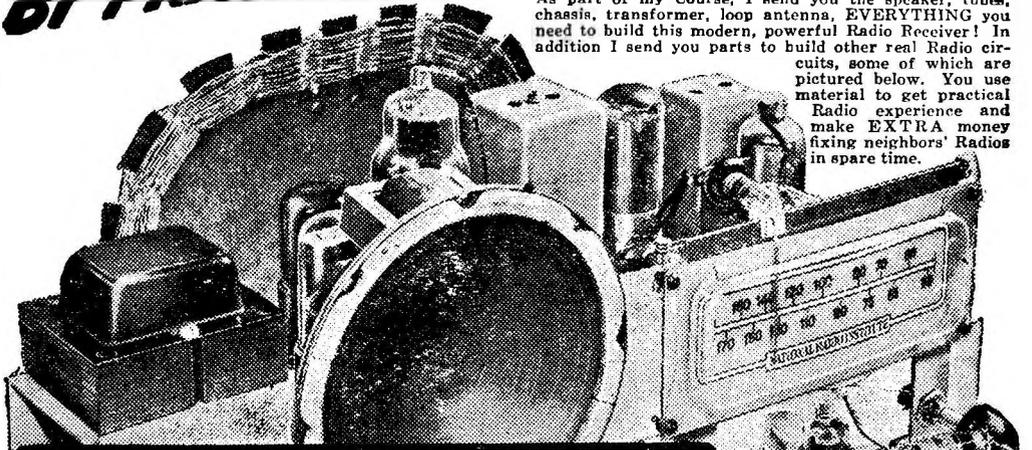
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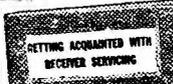
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# WHAT YOUR STARS REVEAL

by Victoria Gray

**T**HE thrill of a new start! How often have you wanted to forget the past—and to have the sensation of being able to begin a new series of delightful experiences! This unique impression may come to you suddenly almost at any time, now that

Uranus is starting a new seven years' cycle in your horoscope.

The enchantment of inspired hopes, the anticipation of happiness, the zest of personal freedom, are indicated by this new influence in your birth chart, because the Planet Uranus symbolizes the future and the ideals of human liberty.

Memories of the past, however, are strong and useful as a means for self-discipline, because the Planet Saturn, which symbolizes restraint, is also starting a new transit in your horoscope.

Astrology reveals the influences that likely will be produced by these two Planets during their current transits in relation to your Sun Sign. The interpretive messages which follow are based on the usual twelve zodiacal intervals which start with the solar spring ingress. Therefore, all you need to know is the position of the Sun on the day of your birth as a key to the accompanying revealing astrological explanations.

## YOUR SOLAR HOROSCOPE

*Sun in the Sign Aries—birthdays between March 21st and April 20th:* Starting this year the Planet Uranus will be in your solar Fourth House which rules your home. This Planet stimulates sudden and unexpected influences. Therefore, you may expect unanticipated domestic changes. You may renovate your home, buy new furniture, or move to another locality.

A member of your family may decide, on the spur of the moment, to take a long cruise;

or a relative whom you have not seen for a long time may pay you an unanticipated visit.

Avoid speculation in real estate because neither the sale nor purchase of property might turn out as anticipated.

Since you have an impetuous temperament, it is not easy for you to be patient. The tendency toward sudden excitement about household matters may become more and more apparent during the next few years due to the stimulation that will be generated by Uranus in square aspect with your Sun Sign.

Fortunately the element of self-discipline will be present as the result of the harmonious influences created by Uranus in sextile aspect with Saturn in your solar Sixth House, which rules work and health matters. Whenever the impulse is aroused to start a scene, or to participate in one, the restraining vibrations of Saturn can prove salutary.

Instead of arguing about inconsequential trifles, you may realize the importance of attending to your job. Do not complain about having to work hard. Worthwhile compensation or promotion may result from steady occupational routines. Exert your will power to remain calm, and success can come of its own accord.



*Sun in the Sign Taurus—birthday between April 21st and May 20th:* For seven years the Planet Uranus will occupy your solar Third House which rules ideas and travel. As the result of this transit the entire tempo of your life may become accelerated through increased mental and manual activity. You may be kept as busy doing things with your hands as you are in solving intellectual problems.

(Continued on page 8)

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\*G. M.  
Berlin, N. H.

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"I enjoyed taking this course and I get a lot of pleasure out of it. I have made much progress and have many invitations to play at parties. I owe you much for making this possible."

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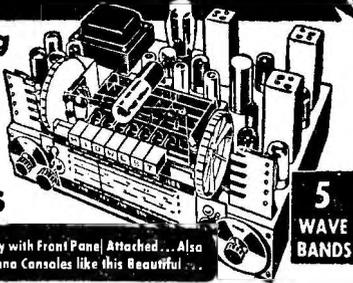
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**WHAT YOUR STARS REVEAL**

(Continued from page 6)

Frequent trips are indicated, for business as well as pleasure; and the exchange of written letters or telephone communications can become a full time occupation. Advertising and publishing tasks are associated with this transit of the Planet Uranus, particularly in connection with liquids and household equipment.

Beneficial vibrations are being generated in your birth chart by Uranus inasmuch as it is harmonious sextile aspect with your Sun Sign. This brings a favorable supportive influence in connection with neighbors and kinsfolk. Brothers, sisters, and people living in your immediate vicinity, may become your allies in a patriotic plan project.

Another favorable influence in your birth chart is indicated by the transit of Saturn through your solar Fifth House which rules romance and social matters. This part of your horoscope is in harmonious trine aspect with the Ascendant of your solar horoscope. Therefore, you may have reason to rejoice at your personal popularity. This transit also favors courtship for a young relative.

Satisfying pleasures are likely to come to you through well-spaced intervals during the next two years while these two Planets occupy favorable position in your birth chart. You may have to assume some extra obligations regarding the care or supervision of a child, but in the aggregate the influences for happiness are predominant.



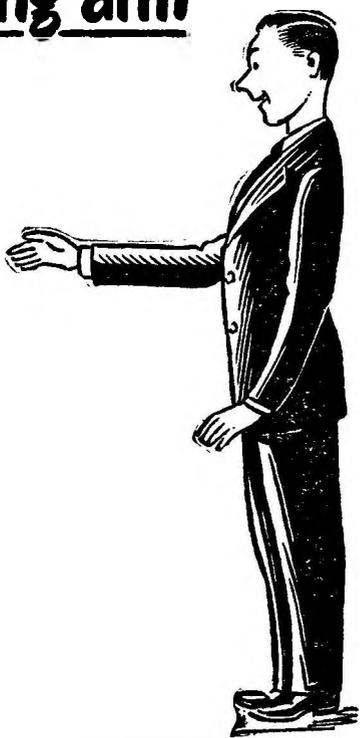
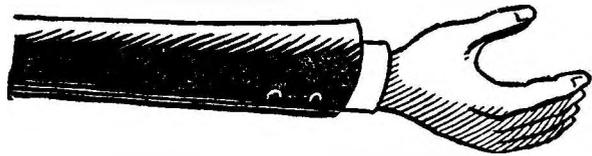
*Sun in the Sign Gemini—birthdays between May 21st and June 20th:* Surprising events in connection with money are likely to occur on several occasions due to the new transit of Uranus through your solar Second House which rules your income. This influence is exceedingly stimulating, so the wish to earn more and to spend your cash as fast as you receive it may become your strongest urge.

Almost everything you plan will become contingent on the financial results involved. Intuitively you will know what is best to be done, but the temptation to follow another course may be almost irresistible because during the next few months Uranus will be opposed by Jupiter, the symbol of wealth.

(Continued on page 10)

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**WHAT YOUR STARS REVEAL**

(Continued from page 8)

Trying to increase your income might cause you to take chances that you would not consider at other times. These risks might reduce your savings due to the opposition of Uranus to Jupiter in your solar Eighth House which rules security. You need to be especially careful to keep your capital intact.

Caution also is necessary in home matters because Saturn, while in your solar Fourth House which rules domesticity, will be in square aspect with your Sun Sign. You will have to be watchful that household duties do not become burdensome, and you also will have to be on guard that your household possessions are kept in good repair.

Sometimes you might feel that you are being tied down by family obligations. This can cause you to be pessimistic. On the other hand, you might become so attached to your home that you disinclined to leave it. These strong reclusive tendencies will be of comparatively temporary duration, however, inasmuch as Saturn will change its occupancy in your horoscope at the outset of the new decade.



*Sun in the Sign Cancer—birthdays between June 21st and July 22nd.* You may feel as if life in its entirety were being revolutionized for you during the next seven years while the Planet Uranus transits through your Sun Sign. The power of Uranus is electrifying. Therefore, you may be the spark that lights the flame of ambition in others.

Gradually you may begin to realize that you have an important mission in life as a leader and reformer. This can prove a most important phase of your existence by arousing your desire to inspire and to guide others. Your ideals can be far ahead of ordinary concepts, enabling you to be an interpreter of enlightened beliefs.

Altruism may become your most important objective because Uranus is the symbol of humanitarian principles. Since the Sign Cancer rules home and family, you may do some of your best work with the help of those whom you love best. A new cycle of

(Continued on page 105)



# What Strange Powers Did The Ancients Possess?

**E**VERY important discovery relating to mind power, sound thinking and cause and effect, as applied to self-advancement, was known centuries ago, before the masses could read and write.

Much has been written about the wise men of old. A popular fallacy has it that their secrets of personal power and successful living were lost to the world. Knowledge of nature's laws, accumulated through the ages, is never lost. At times the great truths possessed by the sages were hidden from unscrupulous men in high places, but never destroyed.

## Why Were Their Secrets Closely Guarded?

Only recently, as time is measured; not more than twenty generations ago, less than 1/100th of 1% of the earth's people were thought capable of receiving basic knowledge about the laws of life, for it is an elementary truism that knowledge is power and that power cannot be entrusted to the ignorant and the unworthy. Wisdom is not readily attainable by the general public; nor recognized when right within reach. The average person absorbs a multitude of details about things, but goes through life without ever knowing where and how to acquire mastery of the fundamentals of the inner mind—that mysterious silent something which “whispers” to you from within.

## Fundamental Laws of Nature

Your habits, accomplishments and weaknesses are the effects of causes. Your thoughts and actions are governed by fundamental laws. Example: The law of compensation is as funda-

mental as the laws of breathing, eating and sleeping. All fixed laws of nature are as fascinating to study as they are vital to understand for success in life.

You can learn to find and follow every basic law of life. You can begin at any time to discover a whole new world of interesting truths. You can start at once to awaken your inner powers of self-understanding and self-advancement. You can learn from one of the world's oldest institutions, first known in America in 1694. Enjoying the high regard of hundreds of leaders, thinkers and teachers, the order is known as the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. Its complete name is the “Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis,” abbreviated by the initials “AMORC.” The teachings of the Order are not sold, for it is not a commercial organization, nor is it a religious sect. It is a non-profit fraternity, a brotherhood in the true sense.

## Not For General Distribution

Sincere men and women, in search of the truth—those who wish to fit in with the ways of the world—are invited to write for a complimentary copy of the sealed booklet, “The Mastery of Life.” It tells how to contact the librarian of the archives of AMORC for this rare knowledge. This booklet is not intended for general distribution; nor is it sent without request. It is therefore suggested that you write for your copy to Scribe H. Q. V.

**The ROSICRUCIANS**

**[AMORC]**

San Jose

California

# THINGS BROKE RIGHT FOR PAT WHEN...



TIED AND DISHEARTENED AFTER A LONG DAY OF ATTEMPTING TO SELL HIS FIRST PLAY, YOUNG PAT MARTIN HAD JUST DROPPED IN TO WATCH A RADIO QUIZ SHOW. BUT THEN...



PLEASE...IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. I'M PENNILESS. I'VE BEEN SICK AND OUT OF WORK



YOU BROKE IT! PAY ME TEN DOLLARS OR I'LL CALL A COP!

I'LL HELP HER OUT!



YES, IT WAS ALL A PUT-UP JOB TO TEST YOUR CHARITY. NOW LET'S GET BACK TO THE STUDIO, YOU'RE NOT THROUGH YET!

YOU MEAN...?



WE HAVE DINNER CLOTHES FOR YOU BACKSTAGE. AFTER YOU CHANGE, TAKE THE LADY OUT AND DO THE TOWN ON US

WOW!



A RAZOR? RIGHT HERE, SIR



WHAT A SLICK-SHAVING BLADE! MY FACE FEELS GREAT!

IT LOOKS GREAT, TOO. THIN GILLETTES ARE PLENTY KEEN



TELL OUR AUDIENCE YOUR PLANS, PAT

WELL, DINNER, THEN A GOOD SHOW AND THEN A NIGHT CLUB, IF THE LADY'S WILLING

WHAT A CHANGE! HE'S HANDSOME!



IF MY BROTHER LIKES YOUR PLAY, IT'S AS GOOD AS SOLD. HE'S THE BEST AGENT IN TOWN

GREAT, THEN I'LL CALL FOR YOU TOMORROW AT THE STUDIO

SHE'S TERRIFIC!

AFTER THE SHOW

YOU ALWAYS GET SMOOTH, PLEASANT SHAVES THAT MAKE YOU LOOK AND FEEL SWELL WITH **THIN GILLETTES**...THE KEENEST, LONGEST-LASTING BLADES IN THE LOW-PRICE FIELD. ALSO YOU AVOID THE SCRAPE AND IRRITATION OF MISFIT BLADES WHEN YOU USE **THIN GILLETTES** IN YOUR GILLETTE RAZOR. THEY ARE PRECISION-MADE TO FIT EXACTLY. ENJOY TRUE SHAVING COMFORT WITH **THIN GILLETTES**

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New ten-blade package has compartment for used blades.

# Clear the Course for Love

*What's a girl like Millie Blake to do when the man she adores doesn't care about anything but motorboats?*



a novelet by  
**ANN ARDEN**

## CHAPTER I JUST ONE LOOK

**M**ILLIE BLAKE felt as though she had just been hit over the head with an outboard motor. As she stood on the front porch of her house and watched the ancient automobile wheeze out of sight around the next corner, she drew in some breath and said: "Wow!"

Her father looked at her, and there was a twinkle of amusement in his gray eyes. "Windy" Peters looked at her, too, only he didn't seem quite so amused. But Millie wasn't paying any

attention to either of them. Her gaze was still riveted on the now empty corner half a block away, a corner which had just become famous in Red Bank history because Steve Randall had just driven a car around it.

"I take it," Pop said, "that you approve of my business partner?"

"I didn't say that," Millie replied, realizing at last that you just aren't supposed to plank your heart on your sleeve twelve minutes after you've met someone for the first time.

"You didn't say that," Pop repeated, winking at Windy. "For my money, you don't have to. In fact, you don't have to say anything at all. We get the general idea."

Millie shook her head violently, to clear out the tinkling bells that were playing beautiful music there.

"You should talk," she accused her father. "Here you've known the lad for four months, and all you've told me about him was that he was a good motorboat racer."

"And a good inventor," Pop corrected. "Don't forget, he contributed just as much as I did to this new engine of ours."

"Same difference," Millie said impatiently. "I still want to know why you never mentioned that red hair of his? And that grin. And those radioactive eyes."

"Better slow down, Millie," Windy broke in. "Steve is in Red Bank for one purpose and one purpose only. That's to win the Gold Cup Races. For the next three weeks he's going to be eating, sleeping and breathing boats. I'll bet even a snub nose like yours won't get in his way. And," he added ruefully, "that's quite a statement to make. That particular snub nose has been filling all of my dreams for an awfully long time."

**M**ILLIE softened. She hadn't meant to go so haywire over Steve Randall this way, especially with Windy there. Windy was a grand kid, and he had had a crush on her for years, ever since they had attended Red Bank High together. Nice as Windy was, however, he had never made much of an impres-

sion on Millie beyond the friendship stage.

But this Randall character—there was something else again. One look from those eyes, one dose of that grin, one brief greeting that went, "Hi, Millie, your pop's told me a lot about you . . ."

Millie was definitely interested. In fact, Millie was overwhelmed!

But her father's next remark brought her back to earth with a thud.

"May I also remind you," he said, "that a certain Mr. Claude Chalmers will be by for you in less than an hour? And that he doesn't enjoy being kept waiting, even by you?"

"Ouch!" Millie said, glancing at her watch. "I almost forgot. 'Scuse me, you two. I've got to make tracks."

Pop and Windy smiled at each other as Millie dashed into the house and up to her room. She ran herself a steaming hot bath, and sank into it gratefully. She could always think better in the bathtub. And tonight she had plenty to think about.

So much had happened these past few months! The most important item, of course, had been Pop's wonderful news when he returned from one of the early season regattas. Pop didn't have much money for traveling around the country to boat races, goodness knows, but motorboats were his one pleasure in life, and Millie had insisted that he make that trip.

It was a good thing she had. For when Pop returned, he had plenty to tell her.

"I've found out what was wrong with that new motor I'm designing," he had announced jubilantly. "Now I know just where I was off the track, Millie! By the time the Gold Cup Races roll around, we'll be able to try it out, right here in Red Bank!"

"Wait a minute," Millie had cut in. "Hold the phone. Who's this 'we' you're talking about?"

"Oh," Pop had said. "Guess I got a little excited. I've been up against a wall for so long with that darned motor, and then all of a sudden Steve Randall shows me where I was making my mistake, and things are all right again."



"What's that boat thing got that I haven't got?" Millie demanded

"So his name is Steve Randall." Millie had smiled. "Now we're getting somewhere. Who is he?"

"A boy who was racing one of the boats," Pop had said impatiently.

"Did he win?"

"No, but that wasn't his fault. He hasn't any more money than you and I have, and he couldn't afford one of those big expensive motors." Pop's eyes had begun to shine again. "But that's going to be different before long. Now that he and I are working together, he'll wind up driving the fastest boat in the East. You'll see."

Little by little, Millie had pulled the story out from under Pop's enthusiastic babblings. It seemed that Pop had watched Steve Randall race, and had realized that he was one of the best drivers on the river, even though his boat had been hopelessly outclassed by larger, more expensive craft. He had met Steve and found him to be a kid who loved motors just as much—and knew almost as much about them—as Pop himself.

For years, Pop had been employed at the Duchesne Yacht Works in Red Bank. During his spare time, he had developed a new theory for the construction of a racing motor, and he had been struggling for years to build an engine that was based on that theory. So far, he had failed.

But he had talked his plans over with Steve Randall. And that was when things had begun to happen. Steve had grasped his idea instantly, spent a couple of sleepless nights mulling it over, and then had showed Pop exactly where he had been making his mistake.

"We're working on it together now," Pop had told Millie. "And when we finally put it on the river, this Randall boy will deserve just as much credit as I will. We're going to try and sell the patent, if it works out, and split the profits fifty-fifty."

"Sounds pretty good," Millie had admitted. "But what makes you so sure you can interest any of the big outfits?"

Pop had leaned forward. "That's the rest of the news. I spoke to one of the big men from the Raceway Motors out-

fit, who was there. And you know what he told me? He says that if Steve and I can have that motor working by the time the Gold Cup Races come along, and if we can show him that it's all we say it is, he'll be interested in buying us out!"

THAT announcement had really got Millie excited, not just because Pop would make a lot of money, but for what that money would mean to him. His health was none too good, and he wasn't due to retire for several years. A windfall like the sale of a patent to a huge concern like Raceway Motors would enable him to retire at once. It would give him a chance to get himself back in good shape, and to enjoy life for whatever length of time was left to him. He had been battling uphill ever since Millie's mother had died some years before.

Yes, this was really an opportunity, for an awful lot of reasons. And Millie was plenty grateful to Steve Randall, long before she met him.

But this wasn't the only thing which had happened to Millie Blake recently. For during this same stretch, she had met Claude Chalmers—and that had been no small event either.

Claude was one of the Country Club crowd, and he could toss more money away in an evening than Millie's secretarial job brought her in a year. Millie wasn't in love with him, and had never pretended to be, but she was human enough to enjoy being escorted around to the Jersey Coast's better night spots by one of the society crowd's prize eligibles.

Besides, Claude's Number One girl previously, had been the slightly insufferable Glenna Thorndike. And it made Millie chortle with glee to know that Glenna's pride was being dealt a staggering blow, and that she herself was the gal responsible for it.

She hopped out of the bath and did a fast job of dressing. A quick survey in the mirror when she was ready showed her that the effect was far from bad. She was wearing a pale blue wool suit tonight, and it did things for her soft blonde hair that no other outfit

could do. The smiling lips had just the right amount of lipstick, and the blue eyes were even more vivacious than usual.

"Thanks to Steve Randall," she breathed, noting the extra dose of animation which seemed to radiate from her. Then she made a gesture of impatience and scolded herself: "What are you talking about, dopey? No male can make a girl feel this way in just twelve minutes. That's all you've talked to him, remember? Just twelve minutes!"

It didn't work. Millie had never been much good at fooling herself. She knew that two minutes would have been plenty. In fact, from her very first look into Steve Randall's laughing brown eyes, she had been a dead pigeon.

But she obviously couldn't let this astounding fact become apparent during the evening ahead, because it was Claude Chalmers she had a date with, not Steve Randall.

## CHAPTER II

### STANDING OFFER



**B**Y the time Claude's maroon convertible glided up to the door, Millie was all set for him.

"Greetings," she called, and smiled as Claude stepped out of the car and came up the path.

"Don't tell me you look that fresh after an hour on the commuter's special from New York?"

"I didn't go in today," Claude said easily. "I've been working too hard lately, and I decided I needed a day off."

Millie made a valiant effort to smother a smile. The idea of Claude working himself into a nervous breakdown in his father's Wall Street brokerage office was a trifle on the comic side. Claude's business day usually consisted of his taking a midmorning train into New York, having a two-hour lunch with somebody, and returning to Red Bank in the middle of the afternoon.

"Well, you can't blame me for wanting to beat that gruesome afternoon rush," he would explain, as though Millie required any explanations.

Tonight he said, "So you're wearing the blue outfit. Good. That blends right in with the murals."

"What murals?"

"At the Atlantic Yacht Club. That's where we're heading, if the idea appeals."

"It appeals," Millie said happily.

No question about it, it was fun walking into such swanky spots on the arm of Claude Chalmers. Not that Millie ever demanded such extravagance. Her dates with Windy usually consisted of a bargain-rate movie and a hamburger, and she was tickled pink with the deal. But if Claude Chalmers happened to feel like spending some of his father's hard-earned money taking her to nice places, why not let him? What could she lose?

Pop came out on the porch and joined them. Millie kissed him good-by.

"I won't be late, darling," she said. "But don't wait up for me."

"Why should I waste my time waiting up for you?" Pop said. "Besides, I'm going to be busy tonight."

"Busy?"

"Sure. Steve Randall is coming back later. We've got a lot of talking to do."

Millie's enthusiasm for the Atlantic Yacht Club went into a nose-dive. Steve Randall would be right in her own house, all evening long, and she wouldn't even be here to see him!

"Who's Steve Randall?" Claude Chalmers asked.

"He's a life-saver for me, that's who he is," Pop replied.

"I still don't get it."

"Ask Millie," Pop said, with a broad wink. "She only met him tonight, but she can tell you plenty about him, I'll bet you. Yes sir."

Millie flushed. "I love you better when you don't talk so much," she said, with an embarrassed laugh. "I think I'll buy you a muzzle on the way home tomorrow."

"Take more than a muzzle to make me forget the way you looked at Steve tonight."

"And a padlock to go with the muzzle," Millie added. "So long, sweet. If you're a good boy, and don't do any more talking out of turn, I might bring you a pint of ice cream when I come home."

"Good," Pop said. "Steve sure will appreciate it."

"That's gratitude for you," Millie said. "I wasn't even thinking of Steve."

"Sure," Pop said. "Have a good time, you two."

"That should be easy," Millie muttered to her self, "after this lovely head start you've given me. If I can crawl-fish my way out of this mess, I'll really be a magician."

She waited nervously for Claude to start asking questions, as he swung the sleek car on to River Road and purred along toward the ocean. Not that Claude had any claim to her heart, but . . . Well, she just didn't like the idea of having her emotions aired in public, that's all. Pop was grand, but his attempts at humor were a trifle misplaced sometimes.

CLAUDE drove along in silence for a while, and then it came.

"I still don't know who Steve Randall is," he said. "Or maybe you don't feel like telling me?"

"Why shouldn't I feel like telling you?" Millie said defiantly. "Dad was doing a lot of kidding, but obviously what he was saying was ridiculous."

"Obviously," Claude said. "But I'm still listening."

So Millie told him about the motor, and the offer from one of the big manufacturers to buy the patent provided Steve could make a good showing with it in the Gold Cup Races. Claude listened quietly as the breeze whipped his straight blond hair back from his forehead. He had sharp, rather sensitive features, and Millie had to admit that he was plenty easy on the eyes, especially in that light tan tweed suit he was wearing tonight.

"So your father may have a chance to retire soon," Claude repeated, when she had finished.

"A chance, yes. It's a long shot, of course. The motor may not be as good

as Pop and Steve think it is."

"What company was it that made your father the offer?" Claude inquired.

"Raceway Motors. Why?"

"Just interested, that's all," Claude said. "And I hope it works out, Mil. It would be swell if your dad could retire. He's not looking any too well these days."

"I know," Millie said softly. "That's why I'm pulling so hard for Steve to make a good showing in the races."

"That's the only reason, of course," Claude murmured.

"Of course it's the only reason! You're certainly not taking Pop's joking remarks seriously, are you? I never saw Steve Randall in my life before tonight."

She pulled herself up with a start. Why should she get drawn into these long explanations. It wasn't Claude who was attaching importance to this business. She was the one who was doing it!

Apparently those twelve minutes of conversation with Steve Randall had done more damage than she had realized!

But she stopped worrying as they crossed the bridge into the little coast town of Sea Bright and turned right along the shore. Off to the left as they sped along the broad highway, the blue waters of the Atlantic curled softly on the quiet shore.

Millie relaxed and closed her eyes, drinking in deep lungfuls of the tangy salt air.

She opened her eyes as Claude braked and turned into a parking lot.

"Atlantic Yacht Club," he announced. "Last stop."

"What, no free transfer?" Millie laughed, hopping out and looking up at the gorgeous rambling building that nestled at the water's edge. Then she added, "Golly, Claude, it's beautiful!"

"You've never been here before, have you?" he asked, pleased.

"I should say not. This sort of fare has always been a little beyond my reach."

"There's no reason why it ever should be again," Claude said. "All you have to do is say you'll marry me, and I'll buy

this place for a toy."

"Gee, Claude!" she said gently. "Let's not get into that again."

"Fair enough, Mil. I just want to keep reminding you that the offer still stands."

Millie took his arm and together they went into the club. It was an ornate affair, designed to lure Monmouth Country's better class of dollar bills, and Millie couldn't help but get a kick out of the atmosphere. The place was already beginning to fill up with members of the horse and yachting set, and Millie recognized several people whose pictures she had seen often on the society pages of the New York newspapers.

She was therefore not too surprised, and not particularly displeased, to see a tall, svelte brunette, with raven black hair which hung to her shoulders, detach herself from a group and make for Claude Chalmers with long, positive strides. This, Millie knew, was Glenna Thorndike who had been Number One on Claude's list before Millie had come along.

"Darling!" Glenna cooed to Claude. "How nice to see you. It seems ages since I've heard from you, sweet."

"Ah . . . Glenna, I'd like to have you meet Millie Blake," Claude broke in uncomfortably.

**G**LENNNA'S eyes rested on Millie with all the warmth of a pair of ice cubes.

"How do you do, Miss Black?" she drawled.

"The name is Blake," Millie said sweetly. "How are you, Miss Thorn-whistle?"

The ice spread from Glenna Thorndike's eyes and slithered down her backbone. Claude couldn't help but smile, and Millie added insult to injury by murmuring, "Shall we go inside, Claude? I'm simply utterly famished." And she led him away, leaving five feet seven of sizzling womanhood behind.

"You're pretty adept at taking care of yourself, aren't you?" Claude asked, after they were seated in the spacious dining room.

On the rostrum a small but excellent orchestra was dispensing a Jersey



Millie was fervently thankful she had bought that new green and black bathing suit

brand of society music.

Millie smiled wryly. "I hate to get in to those things," she admitted. "Hair-pulling is not one of my specialties. But I don't enjoy having my own hair pulled either."

"I know what you mean," Claude said. "Glenna can be pretty obvious sometimes. That's one reason I happen to prefer your company to hers. Shall we dance?"

They danced. And they ate a delicious dinner and danced some more and Millie enjoyed herself to the utmost. But as the evening slid by, she found her thoughts wandering out of the Atlantic Yacht Club, leaping seven miles of space, and coming to rest in her own living room at home. Steve Randall would be there now, talking to her father, Steve Randall, with red hair and a grin.

Claude's voice penetrated her thoughts from a distance.

"If it's Tyrone Power, I won't mind. If it's anybody more tangible, I'm going to be jealous."

"Who—what?" Millie said, with a start.

"I'd like to think I was the one you were dreaming about then. But that would be asking too much."

"Don't be silly." Milly laughed uneasily. "I was just wool-gathering, that's all."

"It's getting late anyway," Claude said. "And I have a hard day at the office ahead of me tomorrow. Maybe we'd better start for home."

On the way back toward Red Bank, Millie remembered something.

"Would you mind stopping some place where I can get some ice cream?" she asked. "I'd like to take some home."

"Why take it home?" Claude said. "We can have a soda downtown."

"It's for Pop," she explained. And added lamely, "He and Steve have been talking all night, and I guess they'll be hungry. I mean . . . Well, Pop likes ice cream."

"Sure," Claude said, and pulled in at the next soda fountain they passed. He bought the pint of ice cream for her while she waited in the car, wondering why she managed to get so tongue-tied

every time she spoke of anything that concerned Steve Randall.

## CHAPTER III

### A GRIN TO REMEMBER



**M**ILLIE was even more tongue-tied when she and Claude reached home and he came in the house with her. Steve was still there, and as she

saw him again her heart went into a soft-shoe routine. He looked just as terrific as she remembered.

"Hi," he said cheerfully, rising from the couch as she and Claude came in. "Pardon the formal attire, but your dad and I were doing some work on the motor."

He was wearing a baggy, grease-covered outfit that somehow made his shoulders look even broader than before. Pop didn't rise from his chair in the corner, but he waved a friendly hand.

"Come in, Claude," he said. "I want you to meet the future winner of the Gold Cup Regatta."

"Hold it, old-timer," Steve protested, with a grin. "Throttle down there a bit. We've got plenty of work to do before we can start talking that kind of way."

"This motor can't flop," Pop said. "You know it as well as I do."

"Millie was telling me something about that," Claude said carefully. "You're Steve Randall, aren't you?"

"That's right." Steve's hand came out and he and Claude shook hands.

"Glad to know you," Claude said, but he didn't look it. In fact, he didn't look happy at all.

"Been behaving yourself, Dad?" Millie asked.

"Good as gold," Pop said.

"How about that, Steve?"

Steve pretended to ponder. "Well, I suppose you'd say he's been fairly good. Of course, he woke up once screaming for his mamma, and I had to change his diapers three times."

"I ought to tan your hide, young fel-

ler," Pop said. "Let me have that ice cream, Millie. I know that's what you're hiding from me."

Millie gave it to him and he and Steve headed for the kitchen. Claude didn't seem in much of a hurry to go, but Millie didn't work too hard persuading him to stay, so he finally departed. From the kitchen came the sounds of plates and spoons, and that laugh of Steve's that seemed to go right through Millie and leave her knees shaking. She pulled herself together and ambled out to join them.

"Want some?" Pop asked her as he dishes the ice cream.

"No, thanks," Millie said. "We just finished dinner."

"Good. That means more for Steve and me."

She sat down at the table with them. "How do things look? Seriously, I mean?"

"Good," Steve said. "Very good. We've got most of the kinks out of that engine now, and for my money we'll have it in topflight shape for the races."

"What about your boat? How does that stack up?"

Steve smiled.

"Don't worry about the boat, Millie," Pop said. "She's one of the sweetest jobs you ever saw. Used to belong to a man Steve worked for, and he gave it to Steve when he lost interest in racing. No, there's nothing to worry about there. Our job is to get a motor into that boat that will do it justice."

"Swell," Millie breathed. "I'll be pulling for you."

"Tell you something else," Pop said. "Windy Peters is certainly doing all he can to help. He's letting Steve bunk with him until the races. Not only that, but he's offered to serve as Steve's mechanic, at no salary. What do you think of that?"

"I'm not surprised," Millie said softly. "Windy is an awful good egg."

"You can say that again," Steve said. "What a break, having a fellow like that working with me. He knows his motors too, don't ever kid yourself on that."

"Aren't you going to finish your ice cream?" Pop said.

Steve's spoon was in midair at the

time. But he looked at Pop's empty dish, grinned, and passed his own over to him.

"Why, Dad, you old hog!" Millie chided.

"I like a man who's honest, Millie," Steve said. "Besides, when we win the Gold Cup and sell that motor, I'll buy three truckloads of ice cream. One for each of us . . . ."

MILLIE didn't do much sleeping that night. She tossed around in the darkness of her room, staring up at the ceiling with wide-open eyes. Then just as she would be falling off to sleep, she would remember Steve Randall's grin and wake up all over again. But she didn't mind in the least. It was wonderful fun, lying there in the quiet night and thinking about Steve Randall for hours and hours and hours . . . .

The next day was Saturday, and Millie didn't have to work. She was awakened at nine by a phone call, and she groped her way to answer it.

"Lo," she muttered sleepily.

"Turn the phone around." The voice seemed to come from a long way off.

"Huh?"

"Turn the phone around. You're talking into the receiver."

Millie snapped to wide awake attention. Not because she was, indeed, holding the phone upside down, but because the voice she had finally recognized had belonged to Steve Randall.

"Thanks for the tip." She laughed excitedly. "Alex Bell never intended the gadget to work that way."

"That's what I figured," Steve said. "I suppose I woke you up?"

"Don't be silly. I've been awake for—oh, at least a half a minute."

"You don't sound sore," Steve said. "I've known girls who would throw an anvil at anybody who woke them up in the morning."

"I don't throw anvils," Millie said. "Crowbars are my specialty. You want to speak to Pop, I suppose?"

"Guess again. He's down here at the docks with me. Reason I called was to find out if you'd like to drift over. Windy is here, too, and the joint is humming."

"Would I!" Millie gurgled. "Give me time to down a cup of coffee, and then look up the road. The gal coming down the slope will be me."

She hung up, and the phone rang again. She answered it impatiently.

"Well, well," Claude said. "Who were you talking to so early in the morning?"

"Oh, hello," Millie said without enthusiasm. "That was Steve. I mean," she added hastily, "he was phoning for Pop. They want me to come down and watch them work on the boat."

"Sounds fascinating," Claude said drily. "I was calling to find out if you'd like to have a lobster dinner this evening?"

Millie hesitated. "Golly, Claude, I'd love to, only—"

"Only what?"

"Well, I've been out several nights already this week, and I'd just rather hold myself open tonight. I'll probably be turning in pretty early."

"Okay," Claude said. "Just thought I'd give you first offer."

"It was mighty sweet of you."

"Skip it," Claude said. "I'll call you the first of the week. Maybe sooner."

He hung up, leaving Millie feeling vaguely disturbed. She wasn't quite sure herself just why she had turned that date down. Or was she sure? Was it because she was hoping like all get-out that maybe Steve Randall would ask her for a date instead?

When she reached the waterfront, she found that Steve hadn't exaggerated when he said the joint was humming. With only three weeks left before the races, it seemed that everybody and his brother was there working on boats of all sizes and shapes. The air was filled with the clatter of metal on machinery, and the roar of powerful motors.

Out on the broad surface of the Shrewsbury River every variety of boat darted back and forth, from tiny outboards skipping over the surface like animated bugs to the large, custom-built craft. Millie got a huge kick out of it. And she knew that this noise and confusion would be multiplied many times over when the actual racing week-end rolled around.

SHE found her way down to the pits, and spotted Steve's red hair glistening in the morning sunlight. He and Windy and Pop were crouched over Steve's boat. They were looking at the motor, cooing over it like fond parents over their first infant.

"What's that thing got that I haven't got?" Millie said.

The three men looked up and Steve grinned. "Nothing," he said, "but it uses less fuel."

"I'll make you eat them words, Randall," Millie laughed. "How's it going?"

"Terrific," the usually reserved Windy said with unexpected enthusiasm. "No kidding, Mil, this thing is solid. I knew your Pop had an idea, but I never figured he could make it work. Steve sure has proved I was wrong on that score."

"Did you have breakfast?" Pop asked her.

"Of a sort. I was too excited to eat much."

"Glad you hurried," Steve said. "We can use those blond tresses of yours for inspiration. Pull up a grease spot and sit down."

Millie stuck around all morning. As the lunch hour approached she climbed the hill to the nearest bean wagon, loaded up with sandwiches and coffee, and came back to the pits.

"She's not only ornamental, but useful as well," Steve said with approval. "Like a radio-ashtray combination."

"Lovely comparison," Millie laughed, but her heart was singing at having Steve joke with her that way. The longer she hung around Steve, feasting her eyes on him, the more she found herself longing to have him like her.

Like her? Only like her?

But she couldn't let herself go beyond that point. Not after knowing the character less than twenty-four hours!

However, she was in no mood to refuse when, at three-thirty, Steve called a halt and suggested that they all head for the beach. Her enthusiastic "I'd love to!" was out before Steve had scarcely finished talking, and he laughed.

"That's one taker," he said. "What about you, Pop? And Windy?"

"Count me out," Pop said. "I haven't been this tired in years."

"How about you, Windy?"

Millie was surprised to find that Windy was watching, not Steve, but her.

"I guess so," he said at last. "If I wouldn't be in the way."

"What are you talking about!" Steve said, not getting it.

But Millie got it, and hastily put her arm around Windy's shoulders.

"Are you kidding?" she said softly. "I want to see the day when you'd ever be in the way. Furthermore, if you don't go, I won't either."

"That seems to settle it then," Windy said with a grateful smile. "Count me in."

Windy was a good friend, that was all. Nicest boy in the world, but just a friend.

Or was even *that* true, she asked herself? How could she be sure of anything concerning her love life, the way her emotions were being batted around these days like a tennis ball?

She couldn't be sure of anything! That was what was so disturbing!

But she fought to keep the other two from spotting her state of pleasant confusion.

"Quite a car you've got here, Steve," she commented as they clanged along. "It reminds me vaguely of Jack Benny's."

"I resent that slur, madam," Steve said. "This is a magnificent automobile. Sometimes it even runs."

"I want to see you out on that river," Windy said. "Opening up on the straightaways. I'll bet you're solid in a race."

"Pop says he's terrific," Millie added. "And he should know."

Steve shook his head. "Those races won't be a cinch for anybody," he said thoughtfully. "Not even if the motor works as well as we hope. I understand Tony Dunlap is entered. He's a tough boy to beat."

"You're right there," Windy agreed. "But I'll still put my seven cents on you."

Steve chuckled. "This is disintegrating into a mutual admiration meeting. Let's concentrate on telling me where to go. I was never in this neck of the woods in my life before."

[Turn page]

CHAPTER IV

"BE SURE YOU'RE RIGHT"



**T**HE incident disturbed Millie more than she cared to admit, and she didn't do much talking as Steve guided his antique jalopy toward the ocean. She knew how Windy felt about her, and hurting

him was the last thing in the world she would ever want to do.

But darn it, she still wasn't in love with him! Claude Chalmers might walk off with her heart some day, or maybe even Steve Randall, judging by the disturbing things which had happened to her since last night. But not Windy.

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**UPSET STOMACH**  
**JUMPY NERVES**



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So they gave him directions, and within twenty minutes they were splashing in the warm afternoon surf. Millie was fervently thankful that she had bought a new green and black bathing suit just a few weeks before. She couldn't have picked a better time.

Steve turned out to be no disappointment either, once the overalls were shed in favor of bathing trunks. He had the usual assortment of rippling muscles, packaged in a bronzed physique which was plenty satisfactory. He was a good swimmer, too, but Millie was surprised to find that Windy was even better. When Steve suggested a race out through the breakers, it was Windy who wound up far out in front.

"Take him away," Steve gasped to Millie as they came back into shallow water. "He's out of my class."

Windy smiled, scarcely out of breath at all.

"That's because I've trained him so well," Millie said.

Steve looked at them questioningly. "That's right. You two have known each other a long time, haven't you?"

"Ever since our two-straws-in-one-soda days," Millie replied.

Again Steve looked uncertain, and Millie had a sudden panicky thought that he might lose interest in her, thinking that she was Windy's property. Or Claude's. Or anybody's.

But Windy himself saved the day on that score by bowing out of the party as soon as the swim was over. Steve had taken it for granted that the three of them would have dinner together, but Windy turned thumbs down on the idea.

"I've got to get myself some shut-eye," he explained. "Millie can do just as good a job of showing you the ropes around here as I can."

"Well, okay," Steve said uncertainly. "If that's the way you want it. I'll run you back to town."

"Forget it," Windy said. "You kids stay down here at the shore. I can hop a bus that'll leave me two blocks from home."

Millie knew that she should urge Windy to stay, but the idea of having a whole evening alone with Steve was

just too delicious to resist. She made a lame effort to say the right things, but it was pretty feeble and Windy couldn't help but notice it. He stuck to his guns, and Steve and Millie waited with him until his bus came along and hauled him away.

Steve looked at her and grinned. "Now where do we go?"

"Well, what did you have in mind?" Millie asked.

"I had food in mind. For that matter, I always have food in mind."

"You and I are going to get along great," Millie laughed. "There's a little place down the line called the Lobster Pot. How does that sound?"

"Just my speed," Steve said. "Lead me to it."

SHE led him to it, and they were having a delicious time ripping through a seafood dinner when Millie looked up and paused with her fork in midair. Two people had come in, and both seemed much interested in her and her company. Claude Chalmers looked angry. Glenna Thorndike looked triumphant.

"Well," Glenna drawled, "this is an interesting meeting."

"Very," Claude snapped. "I see you changed your mind, Millie."

Steve rose to his feet, wondering what the double talk was all about. But Millie wasn't wondering. She knew. And a pang of guilt stabbed through her as she remembered Claude's phone call of this morning, inviting her to let him buy her a lobster dinner tonight. Darn it, couldn't she have had more sense than to bring Steve to a seafood place tonight, of all nights? Especially one of Claude's favorite places, where he was liable to breeze in at any time and see them?

But it was too late now, so Millie tried to make the best of a bad bargain. She introduced Glenna to Steve and the dark-haired girl perked up at once.

"Oh yes, I know who you are," she said, and her tone was ten degrees warmer already. "You're here for the races, I believe."

"That's right," Steve said.

"I've been hearing a lot about you,

Mr. Randall. Everyone says you're a simply fabulous driver. Most people are picking you as the one person who might beat Tony Dunlap."

Millie was beginning to do a slow burn. Glenna Thorndike had never given a hoot about boat racing before. Why this sudden burst of interest? Or was the interest more in Steve than in racing?

But Claude was none too happy about the setup either.

"We'd better be getting a table, Glenna," he said curtly. "The place is beginning to fill up."

"Of course, darling," Glenna said, but her eyes were on Steve as she added, "Delighted to have met you, Mr. Randall. Really delighted."

When they were out of earshot, Steve permitted himself a smile.

"What caused that act?" he asked. "And don't try to tell me my masculine charm was responsible. I know better."

Millie could have disputed that point with him, because his masculine charm had already sent her, for one, into a tailspin. But she said, "I think the barbs were meant for Claude. She's pretty sore at him these days."

"Why? Because he's paying a lot of attention to you?"

Millie flushed. "Eat your lobster, Randall, before one those claws nip the end of your nose."

"Don't get sore," Steve said, and now he was serious. "And don't blame me for trying to get the setup on what goes with you and these local lads." He paused, and Millie's heart leaped as he added:

"I may as well warn you, angelpuss, that you're going to find me dogging your path for a while. You seem to be doing things to me that haven't happened since they took my appendix out. So there." He glared at her. "Understand?"

She shivered deliciously. "Eat your lobster," she whispered. "I understand. Maybe I understand even better than you think."

It was a wonderful turn of events, and the situation improved by leaps and bounds in the days that followed. Steve had dates with her every other night,

then every night, then Millie found herself not even waiting for Steve to pick her up at home, but heading straight for the waterfront instead the minute her day's work was over.

NO question about it, the big redhead was doing things to her. Steve's comparison of the lost appendix didn't quite fit, but whatever this thing was, its effect on Millie's equilibrium was certainly drastic.

By the time the races were only a week away, Millie was floating on air. She knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that Steve was falling in love with her. And there hadn't been any doubt that she was doing exactly the same thing with him from the very first time she had ever set eyes on him.

The one strange feature was that Steve hadn't made any attempt to put things on a more cozy basis. And that was one detail that had Millie a trifle concerned. After years of training herself to ward off clinches, it was somewhat disturbing to find that the one man she had no desire to ward off was the one who kept himself strictly under control!

## CHAPTER V

### ON A FEATHERY CLOUD



WHEN Millie and Steve reached home this particular night and paused for the usual five minutes in the shadows of the front porch, Millie was particularly upset. Pop, as always, had thoughtfully gone to bed long before, so that there were no lights burning to put a damper on anything which might transpire at the good-night stage.

But that was the trouble, darn it! Nothing did transpire! And as Steve hesitated, reluctant to leave but not doing much about it, Millie felt frustrated enough to chew nails.

"It's been a grand evening, Steve," she said in a tone that was far from hostile.

"I'll say it has," Steve said. "You and I always have fun."

Silence. And then Millie grew desperate.

"Look," she said abruptly, "maybe this isn't according to the latest rules of maidenly modesty, but . . . Well, if you wanted to kiss me, I wouldn't sue you."

More silence, but this time it was charged with electricity.

"Did I hear you right?" Steve said at last.

Millie sighed. "Never mind. Just forget the whole deal."

She turned to go in the house, but a pair of powerful arms seized her and spun her around. Steve's eyes blazed into hers.

"Forget the whole deal?" he boomed. "Are you kidding?"

And from then on Millie needn't have worried about how to handle the proposition, because Steve had come out of his shell in no uncertain terms. She felt herself pressed tight against his powerful young chest, felt his strong lips find hers, felt herself sailing aloft on a soft, feathery cloud.

When she came up for air, those bells were tinkling inside of her again, playing the sweetest music she had ever heard.

"That's better," she whispered hoarsely. "I was beginning to think I was losing my touch."

"You little dope," Steve said, and there was a ring in his voice. "Don't you know what's been going on? Haven't you seen it?"

"Haven't I seen what?" she asked, crossing all ten fingers that the answer would be right.

It was.

"That I'm so crazy about you I'm walking on my hands, that's what!" Steve said. "Yeah! Me, Steve Randall, the original out-of-sight, out-of-mind kid. And here, after all these years, I've been knocked so silly by you that I haven't even had the nerve to ask you for a kiss! Confound it, Millie Blake, I don't like it! It bothers me! Furthermore—"

But this time it was Millie who went into action, cutting off his words in a

way that Steve didn't mind at all. And this time there was no reason to interrupt the kiss for any useless explanations. Words had suddenly become completely superfluous!

So that made everything more than perfect. Now the luscious truth was out in the open. Now Millie knew where she stood, and Steve knew where he stood, and it was all very fine stuff.

Nothing of a concrete nature had been said before Steve finally staggered back to his jealousy, but Millie wasn't complaining. The chain of thrilling events was moving along smoothly at last, and she was sure that it was just a question of time before she would find herself all wrapped up for life by the nicest pair of arms east of the Mississippi. Or maybe west of it either.

And then, just as everything seemed so perfect—the roof caved in!

It happened the very next day and the first blow came in a phone call from Steve just before noon, although Millie didn't realize at the time that it meant a thing.

"Millie, I'm afraid I'm going to have to beg out of our date tonight," he said in a tone that was flat and impersonal.

"Oh," Millie said, not trying too hard to keep the disappointment out of her voice. "Gee, darling, that's too bad. But it's okay, of course. Will I be seeing you tomorrow?"

"I don't think so. We'd better not set anything else up right now."

She still didn't suspect that anything was wrong.

"All right, Steve, whatever you say. I know how busy you are, now that the races are coming so close. But you'll keep in touch, won't you, sweet?"

"I'll keep in touch," Steve said briefly.

AND that was it. Millie didn't give another thought to the incident until she left the office. And even then she decided to drift down to the pits and watch Steve and her father working on the boat.

They were still there, as was Windy. But Steve seemed embarrassed when he saw her, and his "Hello, Millie," was far from cordial.

"Don't mind me," she said with an attempt at lightness, although by now she was beginning to wonder. "I'm just here for a bit of plain and fancy on-looking."

Steve didn't reply. And as he continued to labor over the motor with more concentration than necessary, Millie grew alarmed. Steve was no actor. And now she realized definitely that he was trying to avoid talking to her.

When Pop finally said, "That should do it, son—you can try it out in the morning," Millie swallowed her apprehension and drew Steve aside.

"I just thought I'd tell you," she ventured, with an uncertain smile, "that I'm not one of these proud babes who mind a last minute date. If you find that you're free now, I'm still available."

Steve looked at her uncomfortably. "I hope you didn't turn down any other offer," he said.

Millie's smile disappeared. "No. No, of course not."

Then it came, all in a rush. "You may as well get this from me before you learn it from somebody else. I have a date tonight with Glenna Thorndike!"

Millie stepped back as though he had slapped her. The complete surprise of it, the harshness of his tone, the fact that he had actually broken a date with her to make one with another girl—it didn't seem possible!

"All right, Steve," she said at last. "I—I think I understand."

And she turned from him and fled, battling to hold her tears in check until she could make the haven of her home.

Pop came in a few minutes later, and he seemed angry. He went into Millie's room and stood there looking down at the huddled figure curled up on the bed.

"I kind of figured you and Steve had had some sort of fuss," he said at last. "What's it all about?"

"I don't know," Millie said miserably. "I honestly don't know."

Pop seemed worried. "Windy doesn't get it either. He says when Steve came in last night, he was happy as a lark. He didn't even go to bed for a long time, but just sat up smoking cigarettes and talking about you. Incidentally,

that must have been a little tough on Windy."

"Go on," Millie said tensely.

"That's all. Windy was just as much surprised by what happened this afternoon as you and I were." Pop's voice was gentle. "You kind of like Steve, don't you, honey?"

"I'm so goofy about him I can't think straight," she whispered. "And I was sure he felt the same way! Gee, Dad, I just don't get it at all."

She choked up again and stopped trying to talk. Pop patted her awkwardly and moved to the door.

"Want some supper?" he asked.

"Not right now," Millie said tonelessly. "Maybe later. I don't know."

Pop nodded, and the door closed softly behind him.

Windy phoned at seven to ask if she wanted some company, but she turned him down with thanks and went to bed for what she hoped would be a good night's sleep. It wasn't.

But by the next afternoon, with no further word or apology or explanation from Steve, her spirit was bouncing back again, and there was a touch of temper along with it.

Claude Chalmers telephoned her at the office.

"I ought to have my head examined for continuing to chase you," he said. "Especially after the way you've been throwing yourself at Steve Randall."

"I'm the one who should have my head examined," Millie said. "Does this call mean that I've been let out of your dog house?"

"It does. I'm even asking you for a date tonight."

"I'm accepting," Millie snapped. "With the greatest of pleasure."

"Now we're getting somewhere," Claude said, and hung up.

**H**E came for her shortly after she got home, and she was surprised at how glad she was to see him. In her headlong plunge over Steve, she had more or less forgotten that Claude was a pretty nice companion himself.

And Claude turned on the personal-ity full force tonight, in an all-out effort to make up the ground he had lost to

Steve in the past two weeks. He took her to the finest restaurant in the area and bought her a dinner that would have melted down anyone's resistance. After that they went for a long drive in his convertible and the soft summer breeze did even more to sweep the unpleasant memories of the day before from Millie's thoughts.

Claude took her up on the bluff overlooking the entrance to New York Bay, and they parked. Beneath them a steady stream of brightly lighted ships moved slowly toward the harbor or out from it, and far off in the distance was the glow of the huge metropolis.

"Having fun?" Claude said, putting his arm around her.

"Lots of fun." Millie nodded.

It wasn't an invitation, but it wasn't a refusal either. Claude drew closer and his lips caressed her cheek.

"It's been quite a while since you've let me kiss you," he said softly. "A little cooperation along those lines would be greatly appreciated."

She looked at him. "You're sweet, Claude," she murmured.

He kissed her. For a brief instant the memory of Steve's kiss rolled back over her with the force of a wave. Just for a second she drew away. But as Claude looked at her anxiously, she found his lips with her own and wound her arms around his neck.

Phooey on Steve Randall anyhow! If he expected her to sit home biting her thumbs while he tooted around the country with some other wench, he had another think coming!

She was so sure she was well on the way to getting Steve out of her heart that she readily agreed when Claude suggested another stop before calling it an evening. He headed down Route 35 and drew up just short of Asbury Park at a charming old homestead which had long ago been converted into a dining room and cocktail lounge. Claude had taken her there before, and she was expecting the comfortable bar, the excellent piano music, and the soft lights.

She found something else, however, which she definitely was not expecting. And that was a deliciously intimate

twosome at a corner table.

A twosome composed of Steve Randall and Glenna Thorndike!

## CHAPTER VI

### SECOND CHANCE



EACH of the two pairs spotted each other at the same instant. Steve rose haltingly to his feet, his mouth half open. Glenna froze solid. Claude smirked. And Millie wanted to fold up and crawl under the piano.

"Well, this is a pleasant surprise," Claude said.

Glenna glared at him and replied, "A surprise, yes. I wouldn't be sure how pleasant."

Millie could cheerfully have poked her in the eye with a cocktail shaker, but she was too miserable to have the energy. Here she had been thinking she was on the road to getting over Steve, and boom! One look at him, and she was back in the same old rat race again.

"Won't you join us?" Steve invited with a startling lack of enthusiasm.

Millie was just about to bolt for the door when Claude said, "Swell idea, Steve. So nice of you to ask us."

So Millie sat down and exchanged mental daggers with Glenna. Millie was jealous of Glenna, Glenna was equally jealous of Millie being out with Claude, and Steve looked uncomfortable for a lot of reasons. Claude alone seemed to enjoy himself, watching the sparks fly from the other corners of the table. All in all, it was a delightful half-hour.

"I ought to cut your throat, Claude Chalmers!" Millie fumed as they finally pulled away and headed back for Red Bank.

"Why?" Claude said. "I didn't know they would be there. But as long as they were, I thought you'd like to join them."

"That's not true, and you know it. You knew perfectly well I didn't want to get mixed up with that combine."

Claude hesitated. "All right, I admit

it," he said finally. "I did know you hated the idea. And that's exactly why I accepted the invitation."

"What on earth—"

"Use your head, Millie! I know perfectly well that you think you've fallen in love with Steve. I also know that he's not good enough to scrape the mud off your shoes. The sooner you get a few illustrated object lessons on how he's been making a dope out of you, chasing around with other girls while he was telling you he loved you, the sooner you'll snap back to normal." His hand found hers and squeezed it hard. "I hated to do it, Mil, but it was the best way."

"You may be right," she admitted grudgingly. "But . . . Oh, what's the use? It's done now anyway. And if you wanted to give me the most uncomfortable thirty minutes of my life—Mister, you sure did succeed."

But in spite of Claude's beautiful theory that everything was now all fixed up, Millie knew that actually nothing had been fixed up at all. She paced the floor for a long time after she got home, trying to figure what to do.

Darn it all, she was still in love with that Randall character! And in spite of how he had dropped her faster than the well-known hot potato, she still couldn't believe that he hadn't been sincere when he told her he loved her!

"There are two things I can do," she finally admitted to the image of Millie Blake that scowled at her from her mirror. "Either I can take Steve's slap in the puss and never speak to him again, or I can swallow my pride and give him another chance." She sighed. "And if I don't speak to that goof again, I'll wind up in a strait jacket. I just can't win, that's all."

Her reflection leered back at her. "Kid, you've got it bad," the image said, and both Millie Blakes nodded in violent agreement.

But pride or no pride, she made up her mind to try another experiment. The next morning she got on the phone and lined up a beach party for the following afternoon. She called Windy first to find out if he could get away from his job and join the fun.

"I guess so," Windy said. "Nobody's doing much work at the shop these days. Everybody seems to have racing fever. Besides, I'm the fair-haired boy right now because I'm serving as Steve's mechanic."

"So you can be there?"

"You bet." He seemed pleased that she had thought of him.

MILLIE crossed her fingers. "What about Steve? Think he would come too, if I asked him?"

There was a pause. "I don't know, Millie. You mean you *would* ask him, after what's been going on?"

"Don't tell me I'm a dopee," she grumbled. "I know it already. But to answer your question . . . yes, I would ask him."

"Well," Windy said thoughtfully, "You can't lose anything by trying."

That was exactly what Millie thought. And as soon as she could break loose from the office that afternoon, she headed for the river. It didn't take any guesswork these days to know that that's where Steve would be, every daylight hour he could squeeze in.

Pop was there, too. The Duchesne Yacht Works couldn't make an exception in his case and retire him before he was due to be retired, but they did know about this opportunity to sell the motor, and they were giving him all the free time he needed up until regatta day.

But Millie didn't waste much time just now in chatting with Pop. She had come down here for a purpose. The purpose had red hair, and it was standing up looking at her questioningly.

"Listen," she said, pouring the words out fast before she lost her nerve, "I don't know what's been going on between you and me, and I don't particularly care. If my charming company no longer intrigues you, that's your business." She took a deep breath and kept going. "But I'm in sort of a spot, and it's going to be pretty embarrassing for me unless you're willing to do something about it."

Steve frowned. "You're in a spot?"

"Yes." She was trying not to look at him. "You see, I . . . Well, I invited a

gang of people for a beach party in your honor. I did it before—” She stopped and began again. “Well, I did it several days ago, when I thought you might go for the idea.”

Steve wasn't at all happy. “Gee, I'm sorry you went to all that trouble, Millie. It was darned nice of you.”

“Never mind the dramatics,” she cut in. “I'm just asking you if you'd feel like coming along for the ride, just so that I won't look like too much of a dope having my guest of honor take a powder on me.”

“Sure I'll come,” Steve said, and his voice was a lot softer than it had been recently. “And I'll enjoy myself plenty, too. Don't worry about that.”

POP walked up the dock with her. When they were out of earshot of Steve, he said:

“I didn't know you had planned anything like this before you and Steve blew up.”

“I didn't,” she admitted. “But if I hadn't put it on that basis, Steve wouldn't have come. And I've just got to find some way of breaking him down, Dad! I can't take much more of this silent treatment from him!”

Pop nodded. “I sure don't understand what's going on,” he confessed. “I still like him more every day I see him, in spite of the way he's treated you.” He shrugged. “I can't figure it out, Millie. I wish I could.”

But at least the wheels had been set in motion again. And the beach party the next afternoon was a huge success, even viewed through Millie's anxious eyes. Steve thawed out considerably as he spent the afternoon frolicking in the surf like a huge, playful puppy. He tried racing Windy again, but just as before, Windy wound up kicking sea water in his face.

“It's no use,” Steve said, and grinned at Millie. “I just can't lick this lad. His mother must have been frightened by Johnny Weismuller.”

Millie was feeling considerably better. It was the first time Steve had smiled at her in several days. It seemed more like several years. But maybe whatever had been wrong was now

righting itself. Maybe things were back on the track at last!

AT five o'clock the gang gathered in to a group and grilled weenies over an open fire in the sand. Steve, of course, was the center of attraction—which was exactly as Millie would have wanted it. Everybody was asking him questions, wanting to know how he felt about his chances in the races that would take place this coming week-end. But Steve wasn't talking much.

About all he would say was, “I've got a good boat and a motor that's a honey. I'll do the best I can with both of them. That's about as far as anybody can go right now.”

“Think this new engine of yours will give you a chance against Tony Dunlap?” somebody inquired.

Steve shrugged. “Ask me that after the last race. I can give you a better answer then.” And the crowd laughed.

Millie's hopes grew higher as the party began to break up. Steve was chatting with her now as though nothing had happened. He still hadn't volunteered any reason for his strange behaviour, but Millie didn't care about that just so long as she was back in the contest. Which, at this stage of the game, she definitely seemed to be.

“This will be my last date of any kind until the races are over,” he told her as they were heading out toward the parking lot. “Your dad and I have a heck of a lot at stake in these races, and from now on I'll be sticking close. But you're as welcome as a spring breeze any time you want to drift down to the dock and—”

He froze in the middle of the sentence. Millie saw him staring past her, saw the mask of reserve drop back over his face.

She turned. Claude Chalmers had just swung into the parking lot and was coming toward them, smiling.

“I'll run you home, Mil, if the party's all over,” he said casually. “Hello, Randall. How's the boat going?”

“Okay,” Steve said briefly.

Millie struggled to think of what to say and couldn't.

“Thanks a lot, Claude,” she finally

stammered, "but I came down with Steve and Windy, so—"

"Why don't you go with Claude?" Steve broke in, and Millie's eyes widened with hurt and disbelief.

"You—you want me to?" she asked.

Steve looked miserable, but he looked angry too. "I'd appreciate it if you would, now that he's here. Windy and I can get in a little more work on the boat before it gets dark."

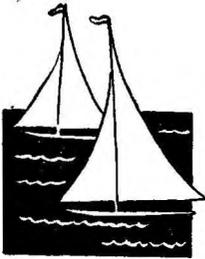
And without even waiting for a reply, he turned on his heel and strode away toward his car!

"See what I mean?" Claude said softly.

"I don't see anything!" Millie fumed, getting in Claude's automobile and dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief. "Just take me home, and please don't ask any questions!"

## CHAPTER VII

### HEART ON HER SLEEVE



CLAUDE didn't. He drove silently, and he made no protest when Millie leaped out of the car the minute it reached her house. She appreciated his understanding, and was thankful that he didn't try to follow

her. She was in no mood for polite chatter right then.

Pop had been sitting on the porch, but he came inside and looked at Millie thoughtfully as she sat on the edge of the big armchair, her fists clenched with anger.

"It didn't work," Pop said.

"It *did* work, darn it!" Millie choked. "Everything was grand for a while, just as swell as it used to be. Then all of a sudden it was all wrong again."

"I ought to tell him to jump in the river," Pop said, "the way he's treating you. But I can't. We're into this thing now, and we've got to stick together till after Sunday."

"Sure you do," she agreed.

"And what's more," Pop admitted,

"I still can't help liking the boy!"

Millie nodded, ever so slightly. She knew exactly what he meant.

She was still wearing her heart on her sleeve by the time Saturday rolled around, the first of the two racing days. And in spite of how miserable she felt, she couldn't help but be gripped by the excitement and holiday spirit that filled the air.

The usually quiet and subdued little town had suddenly erupted into feverish activity. Hotels and tourists homes were jammed, roads were clogged with automobiles, and from all over the country boat racing fans were pouring into Red Bank, swelling it to the bursting point.

The day was a perfect one for racing, and the hot sun shone down from a cloudless sky. Out on the Shrewsbury River, racing boats of every type roared back and forth, lording it over the luxurious yachts which, for these two days, had been swept off to one side, there to watch the festivities in haughty disdain. For today and tomorrow, speed was king.

Millie had planned to spend both days down at the pits with Steve and Pop and Windy, but even her patience had reached the breaking point with Steve's latest brush-off, and she didn't have the courage to go near the place.

Instead, she reluctantly let Claude persuade her to spend the two afternoons on his yacht, which was anchored with hundreds of others along the edge of the course. It was a perfect vantage point, and for that much at least Millie was grateful.

"Quite a day," Claude said as he relaxed in the stern of his sleek cruiser and sipped a highball. "Sure you won't have one of these, Mil?"

"No, thanks," Millie said tensely. She knew that it would have taken a lot more than a drink to get her nerves unbound today.

The races started on time to the minute, with the smaller outboard craft snarling around the course after each other. But it was the middle of the afternoon before the big powerful boats took the river. And that was when the thousands of spectators in the boats

and on the sloping lawns of the river bank, got their first glimpses of the big babies which would write the headlines.

The announcer's voice boomed out from the loudspeakers placed along the shore.

"There's Tony Dunlap in *Spitfire*. He's been sweeping everything in the East so far this season. Here comes another out of the pits. Let's see . . . That's Bob Carter in *Katydid the Third*." A pause. Then: "And here comes the unknown quantity of the regatta—Steve Randall in *Dreamboat*!"

There was a ripple of excitement all along the waterfront, and thousands of necks craned. Millie felt her heart lurch as Steve drifted onto the course, moving slowly. She scarcely recognized him under his racing helmet and life jacket. And out there, the center of attention in a huge, colorful spectacle, he seemed a thousand miles removed from her.

On the official barge, the minutes to the starting gun were being clocked off. Then the final one minute, being marked to the second by a huge hand on the clock face which could be seen all over the course.

THE field was forming now into a fluid mass of thundering power. Then, as though an invisible hand had pointed a gigantic finger, all the drivers swung toward the starting line, and the motors opened up full. The last three seconds ticked off. The starter's cannon boomed just as the first boat touched the starting line. A perfect start, and the field roared past!

The announcer's voice floated over the river.

"They're rounding the far turn. It's *Katydid* in the lead, *Spitfire* second, *Misdemeanor* and *Dreamboat* tied for third. There comes *Spitfire* down the back stretch! He's even with *Katydid*! *Katydid* is dropping back, Steve Randall is holding his own . . ."

Millie closed her eyes and counted to ten. She didn't know quite how that would help, but she was willing to try anything. When she looked up again, the roar was getting louder.

"Here they come on the first lap!"

the announcer called. "It's Tony Dunlap's *Spitfire* out front, *Dreamboat* a close second. Randall's boat seems to be staying right in there. Maybe that motor of his—"

There was a yell from the crowd, and the announcer's voice went up an octave:

"There comes *Dreamboat*! Randall is turning on the heat! He's pulling up on *Spitfire*, but Dunlap is fighting him off!"

They were gone again, leaving surging waters and the pungent smell of burnt fuel behind.

"Looks like your boy friend is giving Tony Dunlap quite a battle, Mil," Claude remarked.

"Who says he's my boy friend?" Millie snapped. But she still strained to see what was happening on the back stretch.

It was a two-boat race now, with the rest of the field falling behind. Steve took the lead briefly, only to lose it again on the lower turn. Millie's hopes began to rise. The motor seemed to be holding up!

They went into the last lap with *Spitfire* still in front by a hair's breadth. As the two tiny jets of water streaked down the back stretch and plummeted into the last turn, every spectator was on his feet. The roar drew nearer, the two boats seemed to fuse into one swirling mass.

"It's Randall coming through on the inside!" the announcer screamed. "He's opening it up! It's Randall by a length, *Dreamboat* by a length, still *Dreamboat*—"

The cannon went off.

"*Dreamboat* takes it!" the announcer screeched, and pandemonium broke loose up and down the river.

"He did it!" Millie cried gleefully, forgetting completely that she was supposed to be sore at Steve. "He did it, Claude! Isn't that terrific?"

Claude looked at her peculiarly. "I suppose your interest only has to do with your father's inventing the motor?" he asked.

Millie recovered. "Of course," she said guiltily. "You certainly don't think I'd be rooting for that red-headed drip,

do you?"

"Sounded like a pretty good imitation," Claude said tightly. "I never heard a girl get that excited about a motorboat engine before."

But Millie didn't particularly care if Claude was angry or not. Sure she was glad Steve had won, even if he had turned into a first-class punk. She was glad not only for her father's sake, but for his too.

"He kicks me in the teeth," she told herself ruefully, "and all I do about it is come right back for more."

There were some additional races with the smaller craft, then the second heat of the big one. Once again it turned into a two-boat affair, and this time Steve took the lead for Tony Dunlap the second time around and held it to the finish.

Definitely this first day had been his, hands down—and Pop's. And Millie was feeling swell indeed, even if the heart that was beating inside of her was somewhat tattered.

SHE felt so much better that she agreed to accompany Claude to a lavish regatta dinner at the Country Club. Only after the evening was under way did she realize that being with Claude tonight made little or no appeal, and it took real effort on her part to keep up an appearance for the evening.

She hadn't wanted to hang around home, where Steve would probably be in a huddle with Pop, but . . . Well, this sort of business didn't make much sense either. Not with Claude. Not with anybody, for that matter, but Steve.

She was relieved, however, to find that Steve had left by the time she got home, and the house was dark. Claude cut his motor, but when Millie made a move to get out, he stopped her.

"Do you see any reason," he said abruptly, "why I shouldn't pick this time to ask you to marry me?"

She turned to him in surprise.

"Claude! Are you serious?"

"Certainly. Why shouldn't I be?"

"No reason, I suppose. Only . . ." She laughed, breathless. "Well, I just

wasn't expecting anything like that right now."

"I don't know why not," Claude said, his voice suddenly vibrant. "You know how much I love you, Mil. You must know it. And it's not much fun waiting around indefinitely for you to make up your mind."

Millie's pulse was racing. She liked Claude, sure, and she wouldn't hurt him for anything in the world. But it wasn't Claude she was in love with. It was Steve. And she was beginning to realize that getting Steve out of her system was going to be a very difficult job. Maybe even an impossible one.

"I—I'll have to think it over," she stalled. "Honest Claude, I hate to keep you dangling this way, and I do appreciate it, but—"

"I get the idea," Claude said. "All right, Mil. I'll settle for that, if I must."

She didn't resist when he kissed her good night, but there was no use trying to kid herself—it was nothing like Steve's kiss. Millie sighed as she left Claude and went into the house. She was learning fast that no kiss would ever be an adequate substitute for Steve's.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CURE FOR A TATTERED HEART



POP had gone to bed, but he wasn't asleep. He called to Millie as she opened the door, and she went into his room, snapping on the light.

Pop blinked against the glare, but even with the blink he was jubilant.

His voice was high-pitched when he spoke.

"Did you see him?" he repeated over and over. "Did you see him, Mil? Wasn't he great? Did you see him?"

"Of course I saw him," she laughed. "I'll bet you're feeling pretty pleased with yourself tonight."

"I'm proud of that kid, too," Pop said softly. "Motor or no motor. you've got

to be plenty good to beat a driver like Tony Dunlap. Besides, there wouldn't be any motor if Steve hadn't steered me out of that rut I was in."

Millie nodded. "I can thank him for that much, at any rate."

But this was one night that Pop wasn't thinking of Millie's troubles. When she kissed him and tiptoed out, turning off the light as she left, Pop was staring up at the ceiling, a blissful smile on his face. The satisfaction of seeing a dream come to life was plenty in itself to make him happy. But the knowledge that that dream might also be translated into cold cash, which would enable him to give up his job and take a much-needed rest—that made it even better.

Millie was still concerned for fear something would happen on the final day of racing to destroy the good impression and record which had already been made. But she needn't have worried. She hung from the stern of Claude's yacht and watched Steve nose out Tony Dunlap for the third straight time in the final heat of the Sweepstakes.

Then in the Gold Cup Race, with no reason left to hold the motor in check, Steve opened her up for fair. He roared away from Tony Dunlap in the first stretch of open water, screamed around the course all by himself and blasted past the finish line to set a new course record. The regatta was over—and Pop and Steve had won their battle hands down!

"Let's go ashore, Claude," Millie said happily. "I want to see Dad's face when they award those trophies."

Claude didn't seem too enthusiastic about the idea.

"I was sort of figuring we'd take a run downstream, now that we can use our river again."

"But gee, Claude, I want to be there! It's the big thing. You don't really mind too much, do you?"

It was obvious that he did, but it was also obvious that Millie had made her mind up. So Claude took her ashore, and together they battled their way through the laughing, cheering crowd into the winners' circle where the

trophies were being awarded.

It was an impressive sight, and it would have given Millie a lump in her throat even if Steve Randall hadn't been involved. The prizes were placed on tables set in the center of a stretch of green lawn. The winning drivers in each event were sprawled on the grass, and the uniformed regatta officials were making speeches into a public-address microphone which had been set up for the occasion.

Millie caught sight of Steve, laughing and talking with Tony Dunlap. He saw her, but gave her only a brief nod and didn't bother to come over to her. It brought back the pain all over again.

Then she saw Pop, and held her breath. He was deep in conversation with a man Millie had never seen before, and he was bent over a paper which looked enticingly legal. Pop called Steve and the three men went into a huddle, and then somebody produced a fountain pen.

Millie felt as though a weight of a thousand pounds had been lifted from her shoulders. The motor had been sold! And Pop's enthusiastic babblings when he finally located Millie only confirmed what she had seen for herself.

"Was that the man from Raceway Motors?" she asked excitedly.

"You bet it was," Pop yelled. "And he's buying us out. Yippee!"

"Shall we go now, Millie?" Claude said, taking her arm.

"I want to speak to Steve, Claude," Millie said. "You can go if you like."

"You want to speak to Steve! But why?"

"To congratulate him. And—oh, I don't know. I just want to see him, that's all."

**H**ER eyes were pleading with him to understand. But Claude's temper flared.

"If you're still throwing yourself at Steve Randall after all he's done to you—"

"I'm not throwing myself at him, Claude. I merely want to speak to him, that's all."

Claude's face flushed. "Maybe I will check out, then. You can go home with

your father, can't you?"

"Very easily," Millie said stiffly.

"Good. Then I hope you won't be angry, but I don't think I could take any more of this hero worship. I've seen enough already today to last me a lifetime."

And he departed, leaving Millie more confused than ever. In a way she couldn't blame Claude. But that still didn't make her like this latest spoiled-child gesture.

She wasn't sure herself what she was going to say to Steve, but she had to say something. He would probably be leaving Red Bank in a day or so, maybe this very night. She couldn't let him go without one last desperate effort to find out what had gone wrong between them, just when everything had been going so right.

She waited until the crowd had dispersed, until Steve was alone with Windy Peters. Then she approached timidly, and forced a smile.

"Congratulations, Steve," she said. "You did mighty well."

"Thanks," Steve said awkwardly. "Your father deserves most of the credit."

Silence.

"Gee whiz, Steve," Millie burst out then, let's not end things this way. We both know something is wrong. You're not the kind to treat a girl the way you've treated me. Won't you tell me what happened, Steve? Please?"

He looked at her. He seemed to be struggling with himself, but then he turned away.

"There's nothing to tell," he mumbled.

"Oh yes, there is."

It was Windy who had butted in at last. Steve whirled and said:

"Hold it, chump. You promised to keep quiet."

"I'm breaking that promise right now," Windy snapped. "I happen to be pretty fond of Millie, too fond of her to stand by and let her throw her happiness out of the window." Before Steve could interfere Windy fired a question. "Isn't it true, Steve, that Claude Chalmers came to see you a few days ago, just when you and Millie were

getting along so swell?"

Steve nodded reluctantly. "And isn't it true," Windy went on, "that he informed you he was a big stockholder in Raceway Motors?"

"I never knew that!" Millie gasped.

"Straight goods," Windy said. "And Steve himself checked and found out it was true. That's why he had to play ball with Claude, and do what Claude said."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

Windy faced her squarely. "Claude Chalmers told Steve that if he didn't give you up completely, he would see to it that the deal for Raceway Motors to buy the new engine would be called off!"

Millie let out her breath in a long "Whoosh!" The nerve of Claude Chalmers anyhow! Pulling a sneaking, low-down trick like that!

But then she grew equally angry with Steve. "And you took it!" she blazed. "You were so anxious to sell your precious motor that you let a threat like that keep you away from me! Of all the cowardly dopes—"

Windy seized her and shook her gruffly.

"Let me finish," he rasped. "You've got it all cock-eyed, Millie. Sure, Steve knuckled under to Claude, but not because he was cowardly. Have you forgotten your father was mixed up in this, too? Have you forgotten that his chance to retire, that maybe five or six years on the end of his life, was also at stake?"

THE anger fled from Millie, left her feeling weak and miserable.

"You're right," she admitted. "I did forget that."

"Well, Steve didn't! If he had been the only person involved, he would have told Claude to take a running jump into the Atlantic Ocean. But he remembered how much the sale of that motor meant to your father. And that's one reason he gave you the cold shoulder."

"One reason! You mean there was another?"

"I'll say there was," Windy rushed on. "Claude also told Steve that you

and he were engaged. Steve might not have believed that just on Claude's say-so, but everything he saw seemed to confirm it. You and Claude were obviously very palsy-walsy before Steve came to town, and Steve was bound to notice that. Furthermore, he saw how Claude showed up at the beach picnic and insisted on taking you home, real possessive-like. Steve's proud, Millie. That sort of thing can hurt any man. Especially when Claude sprung the clincher."

He paused. "Claude's final blow below the belt was to tell Steve that your only interest in him—in Steve, that is—was to keep him under control and in line until after the races, so that your father could sell his motor!"

Millie wanted to sit down. Things were happening too fast. As though from a distance, she heard Windy wind up this amazing chain of revelations.

"Sure Steve gave you the go-by. First of all, for your father's sake. But also because no man likes to feel that he's being played for a sucker. It looked to Steve as though you and Claude were ganging up on him, and laughing yourselves sick behind his back. That's why

he dropped you, and that's why he teamed up with Glenna Thorndike. He wanted to get even with you, both of you, and hurt you the way he thought you were trying to hurt him!"

"Is that true, Steve?" Millie demanded.

Steve shrugged. "Yeah, it's true. It might not have hurt so much if I hadn't been so darned much in love with you."

"Then what are we waiting for?" Millie cried.

She proceeded to throw her arms around him and kiss him right then and there, crowd or no crowd. But apparently, Steve didn't mind much, because he wrapped her up himself and did exactly the same thing!

"All straightened out now?" Millie asked softly, pressing close to Steve's cheek.

"As straightened out as any poor goof will ever be who's married to you," Steve replied gruffly.

Their eyes met. And in that one glance, Millie knew that the uncertain past had been swept away forever. From here on, they were starting fresh—along a pathway that led straight across the river to Paradise!



*Danielle Belden discovers that old loves can return—and bring new problems for the heart to solve—in*

## HALO FOR A SINNER

BY JEAN FRANCIS WEBB

Next Month's Fascinating Featured Novelet!

# RED KNIGHT *on a* WHITE HORSE

by H. THOMPSON RICH

*Jen Warren wanted a touch of glamour with her romance!*

**J**EN WARREN saw the big rig come skidding out of the rain.

*S-ssssh!* went the coaxing air-brakes. *R-rrrr!* went the fractious tires. Behemoth crab-walked the park-way strip, came wallowing on.

Jen tensed as she stood by the porch rail, under the little wooden TOURISTS WELCOME sign.

"It's happening, Mama!" she called into the house. "Just like we always said it would!"



"I'll improve with rinsing," Jen told herself. "And maybe I won't be so mad."

The new section of Route 1 made a sharp turn at that point, on the north edge of Wilton, Mass. By keeping straight on, any southbound vehicle could do what this one was about to do—score a bull's-eye on the old Warren place.

"Did you hear me, Mama? A big truck is coming smack into the house!"

As Behemoth lurched slowly, fatefully up the lawn, headed right at her, Jen caught a glimpse of the driver. He was young and his hair was red. So was his face, and freckled, though somewhat pale at the moment. And his balky mount was white, or so it seemed in that last panicky glance.

"I'm being called on by a big red knight on a big white horse!" Jen laughed grimly, as she slid a slim leg over the porch rail and yelled: "Mama! Maude! Gus! Scram!"

Then she slid the other leg over, leaped.

Jen's intention had been to land on her feet but they didn't get to the ground as soon as other parts of her did. What was worse, she found herself sitting in the Johnny-jump-up bed.

"Darn!"

Ruefully Jen rose, wiped the mud off her slacks and shirt. A least she was all in one piece. So was the house, she saw. Ditto the truck, and the old elm that had halted its wild lunge, though neither had come out of the affray unscathed. The tree was on a rakish tilt, the truck had a bumper bent in a curve resembling Route 1 at that point. As for the driver, he also seemed to be all in one piece.

AN awfully big piece it was, Jen saw as he climbed down, started surveying the damage. It was still raining and he was getting soaked. There was a lot of him to soak, for his shoulders were broad and he must have been over six feet tall. Jen was getting soaked, too, but she didn't care. Maybe the rain would wash off some of the mud. He hadn't noticed her yet, for she was hovering behind a forsythia bush.

"I'll improve with rinsing," she told herself. "Also, maybe I won't be quite so mad in a moment. Your hair is a

bit fiery, Sir Lancelot, and your steed somewhat oversize, but—" Suddenly Jen stared hard at Behemoth. "Why, it isn't white at all. Just a sort of muddy gray. 'Good-by, Romance!'"

A plump matron, gaining the porch on a gallop, sighed, "My, it's a wonder some folks wouldn't look where they're going!"

That was Mama.

"Oh, our lovely elm!" wailed a tallish blonde, one step behind her. "The—the vandal!"

That was Maude, Jen's elder sister.

"Does he do it with mirrors, maybe?" A pale, dark chap one step behind Maude had made this inquiry. "Or maybe with one too many?"

That was Gus Pringle, the star boarder.

"Quiet!" Jen called, emerging from the forsythia bush. "The young man is trying to say something."

Whatever it was, he seemed to have said enough of it to soothe his feelings, for now he broke off with a sheepish grin, and accorded the girl by the yellow bush a careful inspection. Starting with her wet brown hair, he went to her eyes, which for the moment were a low-Fahrenheit blue, then quickly to realms warmer and more pleasing, to realms pleasing indeed, despite what the mud and rain had done to them.

"Very nice!" he said. "Sorry I messed you up."

"Sorry you didn't break your fool neck, you big lug!"

The young man frowned. "Is that any way to greet a caller? But perhaps it is because we haven't been formally introduced. So permit me. Name, Joseph Hogan. Address, Brooklyn. Age, twenty-four. Sex, male. Eyes, brown. Hair—"

"Barn-red! Face, turkey-freckled! Manner, paint-fresh! But intentions honorable, I hope. What are you going to do by our Nell?"

"Oh, the tree? Why, fix it."

"That's something I want to see!"

"So do I," Gus said from the porch. "Might be I could add it to my routine."

"He does parlor tricks," Jen informed. "But you're way out of his class, Mr. Big, I feel sure. So do your

stuff—and make it good!”

“Maybe we ought to phone the police,” Maude sniffed. “Our poor Leaning Lady!”

“Maybe you ought to take an aspirin, darling,” Jen told her. “Get going, Redhead! We haven’t got all afternoon just for your act. Besides, Nell is apt to fall over, if she isn’t propped up or something.”

“Okay, Beautiful.”

Joe climbed into his cab, backed off, unwrapping his battered bumper from poor Nell’s bruised flank. Then, driving around to her nether side, he shoved against it, shifted into compound low, revved up. As they watched, eyes wide, his big drive-wheels bit deep into the tough soil of New England—and slowly the elm came erect.

“There!” Joe descended from his cab. “See what I mean? Add that to your routine, Gus. It’s yours for free.”

“But look at her roots!” Jen said. “Why, they’re all loose on one side and half pulled out on the other.”

“The old gal does seem a bit out at the toes,” Joe admitted. “Got a shovel?”

They had, Mama thought. It was in the cellar somewhere. Jen went to get it. Joe, meanwhile, hauled several lengths of towrope and chain from the rear of his cab. Then he climbed to the top of the trailer, caught one of the lower limbs of the teetering elm, swung aloft.

Jen was gone quite some time. When she returned, it was seen that she had found not only the shovel but some dry clothes. They included a neat brown skirt that barely hid her knees and a little orange V-sweater that—well, barely fitted. She had toweled her hair and combed it. The rain had stopped and a pale shaft of April sunshine was doing nice things to it.

“Pretty sharp!” Joe called down.

**W**HEN Jen looked around, seeking the author of that appropriate and quite acceptable comment, Mama tilted her head.

“He’s up there,” she said.

“Hiya, Tarzan!” Jen called, tilting her own head. “Will you come down if I give you a banana?”

“For a kiss I will!” There was plenty of this girl but not too much, he was thinking. “Catch!” He tossed her a rope and she caught it. “Catch!” She caught that one, too. “Good! You can play on my team.”

Joe climbed down, jumped to the trailer-top, then to the ground. One rope he secured to a larger elm, farther from the house. The other he bound onto a length of chain, looped the latter around a jutting slab of granite over by the rock-garden.

“If Old Nell slips now, she’ll take half the county with her!” he said and grinned. “Anyway, she’ll hold till I can send out a tree surgeon to do a proper job. And now, if you’ll excuse me, I have troubles of my own.”

Joe walked to his cab, lifted the hood, stood frowning at what he saw. Jen came over. Things did look kind of jammed up in there, she had to admit.

“Got an hour’s work, at least, and it’s four P.M. now,” he said. “Never get to Brooklyn before our warehouse closes, no matter how hard I pour the cob to her once I get going. Wound her too tight on that long drag back there, forgetting your bobby-trap here. Well, that’s all water over the dam now. Can you put me up for the night, miss?”

Jen considered. She felt she ought to say, “No, we don’t cater to truckers.” But he had such nice eyes and his hair was so wavy and soft, even though so terribly red. And it hadn’t really been his fault, skidding on that awful curve. And he’d done the best he could about the tree.

“I think it might be arranged,” she said. “Dinner’s at six. Shall I draw your bath, say in an hour? While you’re having it, Mama can dry and press your suit.”

“You’re the girl of my dreams, Beautiful!” Joe told her. “Make it medium hot, and deep.”

Jen did, and many more like it, for Joe took to dropping in on them almost every time he rode Behemoth up and down Route 1, which was about twice a week.

“To see how Old Nell is coming along,” he would say. “That tree surgeon sure did a good job.” Or, “I think

her roots are taking hold okay but maybe I'd better shovel a bit more of your front lawn on 'em." Or, "Maybe I could plant some grass-seed on that bare spot where I've been digging. And incidentally, if you have a lawn-mower . . ."

He had two brothers, also red-headed, he told Jen one night, out on the porch. They had all played football on the Brooklyn High team, had all been Marines. Now they were all in their pop's trucking business. Pat, the eldest, rode Route 20—New York to Buffalo. Tim, the middle one, rode Route 9—New York to Albany. And he, the kid of the family, rode Route 1—New York to Boston.

"They call me Shrimp," Joe said. "I'm not only the youngest but the smallest."

Jen said nothing. She was trying to visualize what Pat and Tim must look like.

"Pop is bigger than any of us," Joe went on, puffing a big cigar. "He isn't well now, and is practically retired. Before he had his accident, he could heft a three-hundred-pound case. Pat and Tim can both heft two-hundred-pounders. Me, I don't fool with anything over a hundred and fifty."

"No, I wouldn't." Jen lit a cigarette. "Just thinking about it gives me a back-ache. Trucking must be awfully hard work."

"But fun!" His warm brown eyes were boyishly eager. "And there's money in it. Soon we're going to put three more rigs in service, one on each route. And we have plans for expanding still further. In a couple more years we'll make big dough."

Joe waited for Jen to say something. When she didn't, but only looked off across the lawn, he asked:

"I've got enough to marry right now, if I should meet the right girl. There's a babe in Brooklyn I go out with some, but you've got what she wishes she had. Pat and Tim are married, and they'd like to see me settle down, too. How about it, Beautiful?"

Jen's blue eyes smiled, but she shook her head.

"I'm afraid you came along too late, Joe, and not on the right color horse."

"You mean my rig? What's wrong with the color?"

"Nothing you would understand, I'm afraid. Just a romantic notion. Some day I'll tell you, maybe, but not now."

"Why not now? I *can* be romantic, too!" Joe moved close but Jen drew away. "Well, okay. I guess it's not the color of the horse, but Gus. But I can't understand what you see in him."

"Suppose we skip it! You'd better marry that Brooklyn girl."

Jen rose. Joe tossed away his cigar, rose also. They went inside, where Gus was doing parlor tricks for Mama and Maude. . . .

Mama got to like Joe, and so did Maude, particularly after he sold them on that neon sign idea. He had known from the first that the Warrens were having a tough time of it. The head of the family, Henry Warren, a lawyer of the town who had died the year before, hadn't left much besides the house. They had only recently opened it to boarders and Gus was their one steady customer. Few of the thousands who rushed by the old place on Route 1 ever saw that little TOURISTS WELCOME sign over the porch. But a neon sign they would see!

The idea had taken quite some selling. They had viewed it at first as a device beneath the Warren dignity. But Joe had persisted. In addition to drawing business, and high-class business at that, he argued, it would act as a reverse magnet on gas-happy cars that might come skidding in as he had done. Jen had been the last to yield but Mama and Maude, being practical souls, had finally won her over.

Now YE OLDE ELMTREE INN blazed forth like a beacon from the porch roof in bright, futuresque green. A night seldom passed that they had any vacant rooms. Mostly they were sending away customers by eight P.M. and Mama already talked about building an annex. Even Jen, though she said Papa would turn over in his grave if he could see what was going on, had to admit that the family finances were much improved.

They wanted to pay Joe for the sign, but he kept stalling.

"It's to make up for the damage I did to Old Nell," he would say. Or, "Later. It didn't cost much." Or, "Wait till you make your first million. But if you want to let me take it out in trade . . ."

It wasn't his investment in the Warren family that worried Joe. It was Gus. Though not over thirty and much younger in appearance, he had an owl-ish, mysterious air about him you wouldn't think would get far with a keen little number like Jen.

The more Joe studied Gus, the less he could understand him, or what she saw in him. Okay in his way, no doubt, but certainly not her type. It wasn't just the parlor tricks that made him mysterious. He had a way-off look in his deep-set gray eyes, as if he were living on a cloud somewhere. Or maybe he needed glasses.

Gus had been a soda-jerk at the Wilton Pharmacy, back in the days when Jen and Maude were going to high school. Then, when the war came, he had joined the Navy, served as a pharmacist's mate on a warship in the South Pacific. He had been wounded, and now walked with a slight limp in his left leg, and had a small pension. Also, he had some money saved up. Not much, probably, but enough to keep him going. When he felt like it, which was usually in the mornings, he worked at the pharmacy.

Equally hard to figure out was Gus' attitude toward Maude. Here was a girl more his own type, about twenty-seven and on the faded side, but still pretty in a leanish sort of way. He seemed to like her more than he let on and might have opened up if she had given him some encouragement. Though obviously interested, however, Maude showed few outward signs of it. Mainly she sat by and let Jen play her game, whatever it was.

But you got the feeling that Maude, too, was playing a game. A waiting game, maybe. For maybe Jen was just playing cat-and-mouse with Gus, hoping for someone better to come her way.

"I still can't see it," Joe told Jen one night.

They were out on the porch, as usual.

It was June now and the air was fragrant with the scent of wistaria and iris. Old Nell had driven her new roots deep and was in full leaf. There was a crescent moon—Wishing Moon! It was a night to dream much and talk little.

"If only the big lug would say something romantic, if he *must* say anything at all!" was Jen's wish. She stirred impatiently, added aloud, "See what?"

"You and Gus. And where does Maude come in?"

SHE didn't reply and Joe knew she was angry. Well, he couldn't help it. It seemed that he had a right to know, feeling the way he did. She would come around. The evening was young. How lovely she was! That light little print dress she wore made her seem especially feminine and desirable tonight.

They were off on a dim corner of the porch, well away from the guests who sat rocking in well-fed content, watching the cars come rushing out of the dark. Gus and Maude were inside somewhere. So was Mama. As once before, on that other night, Joe moved close. This time Jen didn't draw away, though she tensed.

"Please don't be cross," he said. "I didn't ask just out of curiosity, but—"

"Because of that girl in Brooklyn." Jen managed a smile. "She wants her answer. So why not give it to her? The kind of answer she wants."

"That isn't it at all. At least, not the way you put it."

"Then what, Joe?" her voice was soft now. "But no, don't answer. Look! See how that horrid sign of yours throws green shadows across the lawn. The lightning bugs don't seem to mind it. They go darting about with their tiny lanterns. What do you suppose they're looking for?"

"I don't know. I only know I love you, Jen." He tried to take her hand but she wouldn't let him. "You think I'm not the fellow for you, but I could prove differently if I had the chance. There's nothing I wouldn't do to make you happy."

Jen sighed. He was nice enough, even

though so big and unromantic. You could depend on a fellow like that. But if only he had some poetry in him, some sense of adventure, something to match the night — and the many nights, and days that would make up their lives if she said yes. So instead, she said no.

"But I'll tell you about Gus, since you insist, though I'm sure you won't understand. Leaving Maude out of it for the moment, let's say that Gus appeals to my yen for going places and doing things."

"But you could get that with me. We could go lots of places, do lots of things."

"Yes—trips to the beach and rides on the scenic railway! But that isn't what I mean, Joe. I'm a vagabond at heart, I guess and I crave the open road."

Joe was puzzled, as she knew he would be.

"The open road! That's what I get all day long. Can't see anything romantic about it, except sometimes when you skid and make an unexpected call on people. But how does Gus fit into such a picture? If he's romantic, then I'm Romeo!"

"No you aren't, dear." Jen smiled, touching his arm. "You're just Joe Hogan—Shrimp, as your brothers say. You might have been Sir Lancelot, only you didn't come on the right color horse. His was a white one, wasn't it? Anyhow, Gus didn't come on one of that color, either, but he came first. He was Don Quixote, if you know your Cervantes, and he came on a mousy old plug called Rosinante. He's been riding around the countryside doing good deeds."

"A Boy Scout, huh?"

"Well, sort of. Have you a flashlight?"

"Huh? Why, yes—in the cab. Why?"

"Let's get it. I'm going to show you Rosinante. Gus won't like it, and you mustn't tell him, but I'm going to. She's out in the stable, bedded down."

They got the flashlight and Jen led Joe across the dark lawn to the big, old-fashioned barn at the rear of the house. He helped her slide back the

warped door on its creaking rollers.

"Look!"

What Joe saw was a beat-up old trailer, the kind you sleep in. Dusty and rusty, with vari-colored blobs of paint here and there, covering dents and scars, it gave evidence of hard service.

"That's Rosinante. When she gets hitched to Gus's old Ford, that is. He had her all over the country before the war. Doing what, do you suppose? Selling patent medicines! And to get the crowds rallying around, he'd work those little card tricks and magic acts."

"Boy Scout is right! The good deeds were selling alcoholic cough syrups in dry states."

"Could be. Anyhow, Gus parked Rosinante here when the war came, went to doing other good deeds. And when he got back, he was Mama's first boarder when she and Maude opened our home to the public. He hasn't been too well, but Mama's food is bringing him around."

JOE laughed a little wryly.

"Yes, I've noticed that!"

"Funny. I thought you were always too busy with your own groceries. Anyhow, soon he plans to take Rosy on the road again. If he does, maybe I'll go with him. But Mama and Maude want him to sell Rosy, buy the Wilton Pharmacy, which is for sale cheap. If he does that—well, then he can have Maude. Now do you see?"

"Yes, I see!" Joe's voice was scornful. "In other words, you'd marry a man you don't love, help him sell cough syrups in Kansas, rather than let him marry Maude and make pills in Massachusetts."

"You don't see at all!" Jen said angrily. "You could never see. You're just not made that way, I guess." Then her voice softening, "But surely there must be some romance about Behemoth somewhere. Speak up, my prosaic red-headed knight, or forever hold your peace!"

So Joe did his best, told Jen how he and his brothers were what is known as Gypsies, not hauling for any one firm but picking up business wherever they

could. There was more freedom that way, he said. It was fun in a sense, rolling over the roads at all hours of the day and night, pulling up at check-stops and sleep-shops, talking with interesting people, having little adventures here and there.

"With babes!" Jen said. "While the missus stays home and has little adventures with other babes."

"You get me all wrong," Joe flushed. "Riding a big rig is no job for a woman. Neither is rattling around the country peddling patent medicines. A woman's place—"

"Is in the home! Haven't I heard that before somewhere? No, Mr. Big. Your proposition doesn't appeal to me. Here's one babe isn't staying in any home, unless it's Mama's. Not yet a while, anyhow. Help with this door, please."

They locked Rosinante up, went back to the house. Joe wanted to sit on the porch some more but Jen was feeling too annoyed with him. So they went inside. Gus and Maude were in the parlor, on the sofa, eating some of Mama's cold cuts.

Jen sniffed, said in a loud voice, "What will you have for breakfast, darling?"

"Why, four eggs and bacon to match," Joe answered in normal tones, startled. "Why?" Then, catching on, he added resoundingly, "Just a little cereal and some jam. I'm not going to have the romance fed out of me."

Jen glared at him. "That wasn't so funny!" she whispered.

"No?" Joe grinned. "To me it was. Listen, Beautiful!" He grabbed her by the arm. "Do you love that lad or don't you?"

"That's my business. Let go of me!"

Instead, he increased the pressure. "Yes or no?" he said.

"Ouch! Darn you!"

Jen kicked him, but he caught her foot, sat her on the floor.

"The answer is NO! So listen, Beautiful! Leaving aside Sir Lancelot and Don Quixote, let's get down to facts—or up to them, rather." He lifted her to her feet. "Just what are my chances?"

"About like being President!"

"Then I'd better start campaigning!"

He drew her close, implanted a firm kiss on her lips, which had just opened to say something he didn't want to hear anyhow. "There! That's my keynote speech. The platform is now yours."

Jen stood there uncertainly for a moment, after Joe released her. Then she turned and walked upstairs.

"Good night—and good-by!" she called from the first landing. "That's my keynote speech!"

Then she went on up.

"Okay, Beautiful, if that's the way you want it."

He shrugged, walked out on the porch, lit a cigar. . . .

Joe had to give Mama his order for breakfast, next morning, for Jen hadn't come down.

"I treated your daughter kind of rough last night," he said, as she sat with him while he ate it. "She doesn't want to see me any more."

"Oh, she'll come around. I'm sure you didn't treat her any rougher than she deserved. Jen has needed a strong hand ever since Papa died. You love her, don't you?"

"I sure do, ma'am."

"And want to marry her?"

"I sure do."

"Then if you'll take the advice of one who has known Jen much longer than you, Joe, you'll go along on some of her romantic notions—that about the white horse, for instance. Papa used to ride one that went flying off into the clouds, for he was a poet of a sort." Mama's eyes went thoughtful. "Pegasus, he called it."

Joe sighed heavily.

THIS place is sure full of horses!" he said.

"It is indeed." Mama smiled. "Papa had too much of the romantic for his own good, but a moderate amount is all right, particularly in a girl. Jen's trouble is, she got a double portion, while poor Maude didn't get any. So don't try to knock it all out of her, Joe."

"Gee, I wouldn't do that. I like a girl with spirit."

"But don't hesitate to treat her kind

of rough, as you say, when she gets out of hand. I never was able to and even Papa was too soft-hearted, sometimes."

"I didn't really treat Jen very rough," Joe reflected as he sipped his coffee. "Many girls wouldn't have thought so, at least."

"I'm sure you gave her what she needed," Mama said. "She no doubt has come to that conclusion, or soon will."

"I sure hope you're right, ma'am!"

"About what, darlings?" inquired a sweet voice from the hall. "I hope I'm not too late for breakfast with you, Mr. Big and Rough."

"There!" Mama smiled as Jen came in. "See what I mean?"

"Sit down, Beautiful!" Joe said. "Do you love me?"

"My, Mama!" Jen laughed, coloring. "So romantic, first thing in the morning! What have you been feeding him?"

"A little common sense." She winked at Joe. "Horse sense!"

Just then Gus came in.

The kitchen door opened and Maude, who had evidently been awaiting his arrival, called:

"Good morning, Gus. Will you have some of my nice pancakes with your eggs?"

"Good morning, Maude," he called back. "Yes, I'd love to—lots of 'em!"

Joe got up. "Well, I guess I'll be taking off, folks," he said. "If you've got a minute, Gus, there's something I'd like to say to you, in private."

Everyone looked at everyone, Jen especially at Joe, but no one said anything except Gus. "Okay," he said. "Only don't make me miss my pancakes."

They went out on the porch.

Gus came back alone. He was grinning, and his eyes had lost that way-off look.

"Well?" Jen asked.

"I've sold Rosinante, and I'm buying the Wilton Pharmacy."

"Gus!"

Jen was horrified, but Maude smiled happily. And Mama—well, it's hard not to take sides in a family argument. But when things are coming your way, sometimes it's advisable to just sit and listen.

"Joe says he can use her in his busi-

ness," Gus was saying. "He must have a good business, for he's giving me much more than she's worth. And now, Maude dear, if they'll excuse us, there's something I'd like to say to you, in private."

Jen excused herself, too, and went upstairs and tried to feel sorry for herself. When she came down, Mama told her that Gus and Maude were engaged. So she went right up again. . . .

Knights of all kinds, on horses of all colors, went by Ye Olde Elmtree Inn the next few days, and the usual number pulled in and took rooms, but the Red Knight tarried in his castle in Brooklyn. Or at least he didn't show himself to his Sorrowing Lady.

But one day he did, on the biggest and whitest horse Jen had ever seen—a creamy new Buick roadster, hitched to a huge rectangular hunk of summer cloud.

"Rosinante! But so young and streamlined!" For a moment, Jen's eyes were blue lakes way down south. "Sir Lancelot, you've come for me at last, and we're going off to the wars in Rosy!" Then squalls ruffled those deep waters. "No, I'll never set foot in her! She'd remind me too much of poor Gus and how he sold his dreams for a store full of pills—for a tummy full of Maude's pancakes, rather. Not that they're like pills but—"

Mama and Gus and Maude had gathered around the gala rig and Joe was showing them some of its wonders. Jen hung off, though not far enough to miss what was said.

"See—there's a little kitchen, just right for a young couple. There's a dinette with seats that make up into a nice double bed, wide enough. And there in the rear is the office, complete with desk, typewriter, filing cabinet and all. That's for my secretary. I'm marrying her."

Jen felt as if she wanted to sit down.

"I'm going to hit the road for Hogan Brothers, lining up new routes, calling on new shippers, doing a little hunting and fishing on the side, having my only vacation since before the war. Be gone six months at least, maybe a year, depending on how business is and how my

secretary likes it."

"When do you plan to start, Joe?" Mama asked.

"Soon as I can find the right girl for the job." He grinned at Jen. "She's got to be a good-looker, and at the same time be able to do light housekeeping and light bookkeeping. Someone with a level head but a bit of romance about her. There'll be time out for—well, poetry."

**S**UDDENLY Jen was back to normal. "The only girl I know who might take the job," she frowned, "has a bit too much romance about her to go riding around with a man on another man's horse."

She tossed her brown head, took off at double-time.

"Hey, Beautiful! Wait a minute!"

Joe tore after her, caught her, carried her into the trailer.

"Just like Papa carried me into this very house!" Mama was heard to say, one of the few romantic remarks of her life.

Joe put Jen down and she looked

around. This wasn't Rosinante! Not only the fittings but the very bones of the beast were new.

"Latest model," Joe said. "Right out of the factory."

"B-but she looks like Rosy."

"Built by the same company. I turned in the old plug as a down payment."

"Poor Rosy!" Jen's smile was a trifle wan. "I do hope they find a good home for her."

"They will. They're going to curry her up and put her in fine shape. She'll have lots of adventures yet—but we'll have more."

"I'll hold you to that, Sir Joseph Hogan!" Jen's smile was gay now. "What, my big Red Knight, are we going to name our big white horse?"

"Pegasus! He's going to take us way off in the clouds, Beautiful."

"Mama—I got me a poet!" Jen called, as she moved into his arms.

Joe looked over her shoulder, saw Mama standing by the trailer door, beaming.

"See what I mean!" she said.



## To An Impetuous Beau

*I can't see why you always try  
To date me every night—  
And when you hold me in your arms,  
You hold me much too tight!*

*Your kisses are too ardent, far,  
So kindly, sir, desist—  
I wish you wouldn't rush me so,  
Because I can't resist!*

—HELEN ARDSLEY

"Let go of that girl!" Abner said,  
and stepped up to Jiminez



a novelet by  
**J E A N N E**  
**L E G G I T T**

# THE SENATOR'S *Daughter*

CHAPTER I  
SOCIAL WHIRL

**E**VEN if Clid Ravenswood's old man had not been a Senator, Clid would have been a stand-out in any crowd she might choose to join. But her father *was* Senator Gerald L. ("Roarin' Jerry") Ravenswood and that fact certainly did Clid's Washington social career no harm. Roarin' Jerry, for all his nickname and the poses he was



*Clid Ravenswood was  
the favorite of all  
Washington Society,  
but wanted to be just one man's darling!*

so fond of striking on occasion, was highly regarded in the Capital. His colleagues liked him because they knew he could always be depended upon to do what he promised to do. His constituents liked him—as witness his regular return to the Senate—because he kept a keen eye on their interests without, at the same time, ignoring the broader national and international picture. The press liked him because he gave them good copy and, to the delight of the photographers, possessed a photogenic daughter with whom he was delighted to pose, at the click of any given camera shutter.

Of late, Clid had grown very tired of donning an amiable smile and widening her eyes, forgetting a possible headache, while the photographers called: "Just one more, Senator, and would Miss Ravenswood look a little more this way, please?"

She also became extremely weary of making the perpetual round of parties with her distinguished pa. There were times when she would rather have curled up with a good nap somewhere rather than climb into a new frock, sling the platina fox scarf around her neck and grab Roarin' Jerry's arm enroute to another shindig.

Senator Ravenswood, however, was one of the most sought-after guests in the Washington social whirl. No invitation list was quite complete without his name. Moreover, he was handsome, wealthy and, strangely, he possessed none of that iron will that marked him in the Senate when it came to dealing with fair ladies. Seeing that it was no secret that Roarin' Jerry had been marked as fair game by half a dozen widows—grass and sod—the good Senator thought, and Clid was forced to agree, that it was imperative that she go along with him to all social functions except stag dinners, to repel female boarders in that sweetly discouraging manner she had developed since Mother had died.

**I**T was not, exactly, that she was dead set against her father remarrying. Should some nice, wholesome, nonpolitical woman possessed of sincerity come

along, Clid would have stepped aside willingly, nay gladly, and welcomed her as a stepmamma. The trouble was that nice, wholesome, sincere women not already married to nice, wholesome sincere men were a rarity in Washington, and the crowd of women setting their sights on the Senator were, for the most part, fit to be classed as high-grade harpies.

And, experience had proved, Roarin' Jerry might be able to pick a minute loophole in a voluminous piece of legislation with half a glance, but when it came to women he was totally blind to faults that any girl past high school age could spot at four blocks, on a snowy night.

"Good gravy," Clid said, on one occasion, "I had to use everything but a bulldozer to get you away from that awful Mrs. Greetson. Another two minutes and you'd probably be taking her over the bridge to Alexandria and a quickie wedding."

"Fine woman," the Senator puffed. "Had bad luck all her life, from what she told me."

"Sure," Clid said, "except she made all her own bad luck. She's been married four times and gambled away all their money before she divorced them. All but one, that is. She gambled away his insurance money."

"Hang it, Clid," the Senator complained, testily, "she looked like a nice person. Said she was interested in children and horses and dogs."

"The horses and dogs I can believe," Clid said acidly, "but I haven't heard of any children tracks opening up around the country lately." She added darkly, "Some day I'm going to throw up this job of chaperoning you around and let you trot along your merry way by yourself."

Her father gave her a quick glance of consternation, his deep brown eyes into which so many women gazed soulfully reflecting his anxiety.

"You wouldn't do that, Clid," he said. "Gosh, I'd be lost without you."

"But what about me?" Clid wailed. "What chance do you think I have of living a normal life, meeting my own kind of people, maybe falling in love

and getting married, when you keep me in a dog trot from one darned party to the other? The only men I meet are the career cocktail party boys or people your age who pat me on the head and say, 'What a pretty baby.' If any of them kissed me I'd know it was because they were absent-minded and thought they were getting another couple of votes."

**R**OARIN' Jerry cleared his throat and Clid winced. An oration, she knew, was on the way.

"Very few young women," the Senator proclaimed, "have the opportunities you do to observe the very heart of your government at close range. If you would listen to some of the conversation taking place at these affairs we attend, you might acquire an insight into national and world affairs that would prove invaluable."

"Just how," Clid asked bitingly, "can I listen to weighty conversations and keep my mind on them when I always have to be watching you to make sure some scheming female doesn't drag you off into a corner and get your undying promise to make her the second Mrs. Ravenswood? There was that Mrs. Millikan—"

"Never mind Mrs. Millikan," the Senator said hastily. "That was a—er—misunderstanding, as I've explained. But you speak of never meeting any eligible young men. At that party we just left there were a good many fine upstanding young men. Peter Hess, for instance. What's wrong with him?"

"Nothing," said Clid bitterly, "that getting to be Secretary of State won't cure. Deliver me from all the bright young men in Government Departments. You flutter your eyelashes at them and bend close, so they can sniff your Chanel Number Five, and how do they react? They return your lead with a sparkling bit of chit-chat that has to do with the Abyssinian trade balance or who's getting whose job in what bureau and why. Phooey!"

"Peter," said Roarin' Jerry, rather weakly, "seems like a fine young man to me. I thought—I rather hoped—you were interested in him."

**CLID** reached for the cigarette case in her bag and extracted a long white tube. She was careful with her lighter, steadying her hand against the motion of the purring town car that was bearing her father and her off to yet another party. She exhaled a cloud of smoke in the general direction of Glenn, the chauffeur's, back and replaced the lighter and case.

"I was," she admitted, "but he wasn't. Peter Hess has the fire and passion of a codfish. He is interested in only one thing—getting ahead in the State Department. I might do the dance of the seven veils for Peter Hess and unless I was shucking export and import bulletins, he wouldn't give me a second look."

"A fine way for a daughter of mine to talk!" Senator Ravenswood stormed. "Sometimes I think I've neglected your upbringing!"

"But I'm not neglecting yours," Clid said moodily. "You asked me about Peter Hess and I told you. Maybe some other gal with more than I've got could kindle a light in those cold, gray eyes, but little Clara admits she's licked. I thought one time—oh, never mind."

She huddled in one corner of the wide, gray-upholstered seat, puffing hard at her cigarette and trying to push away the memories that insisted on crowding in on her.

Those memories had to do with a May night in Rock Creek Park, when she had been in Peter's convertible and the moon had been full and mellow and warm. It was an oversized moon, a pre-war moon, capable even of making Peter Hess forget for the moment that a stiff note to Costa Monica would be absolutely necessary unless Dictator Guarinillo stopped pushing his minorities around.

Clid had first sensed this astounding change in Peter when he had steered the convertible over to the side of the road, to a spot that would have been blackened by shadows had it not been for the fact that it was speckled with dabs of moonlight, shining through the leaves of the trees overhead. Her first thought had been that something had gone wrong with the car—Peter Hess

never parked—but when she looked up at her escort, she had seen that his eyes were shining behind the lens of his glasses with a new kind of light that rivaled the moonlight. And when Peter had slid an arm along the back of the seat, just an inch above her shoulders, Clid had silently subscribed to the old maxim that if you want a thing hard enough, long enough, you'll get it.

For Clid had been very much in love with Peter Hess at the time. She had felt her heart do a one-and-a-half gainer the first time she had glimpsed his rugged frame and the finely chiseled face topped by the crop of curly blond hair. Even the heavily-rimmed glasses Peter wore did not detract from the general effect of Peter Hess on Clid Ravenswood.

"That's Peter Hess, State Department," her hostess had told Clid when she had made inquiries. "Everybody say's he'd have one of the Under-Secretariats right now, if he wasn't so young. Give that lad a few years and you'll see him right up there, Clid."

"Mm," Clid had murmured. "Married, of course?"

"Good heavens, no," her hostess had ejaculated.

Clid might have wondered at the forcefulness of that answer then, but she found the reason for that blurted denial before many weeks had passed.

She had not thrown herself at Peter Hess—well, not exactly. Of course she made sure that he was included on the invitation lists of all the parties she threw for her father and she found herself cutting her staying time at parties where Peter Hess wasn't and lingering past the accepted time at affairs where Peter Hess was. She had also found herself neglecting her watch over the Senator in favor of staying close to Peter, listening to him explain just why he couldn't explain the State Department's official opinion of Uncle Joe Stalin.

Peter, she learned, was not one of the corps of young men who suddenly found themselves labeled diplomatic experts and shoved into the State Department, at a time when their fellowmen were being shoved into olive drab and Navy

blue. Glasses and all, Peter had served in the AUS and he had fought in more than the Battle of Constitution Avenue, at that.

He never told her, but Clid had learned from other sources that Peter had the right to wear the lapel pin that proclaimed him winner of the Bronze Star, as well as the purple bar that had been given him with his Purple Heart. But, whereas Clid had always thought that the soldier back from the wars was interested chiefly in thick steaks, long drinks and pretty girls, Peter Hess, it developed, was interested in Making His Way in the State Department—nothing else.

And his ambition did not spring wholly from a desire to get to the top. He was inspired by his earnest conviction that only through the work of capable men in the State Department could the peace of the world be secured. He would admit, frankly and honestly, that in his particular line of work, he was the most capable man available.

"I specialized in school," he explained to Clid, "and I kept on filling myself with the subject every chance I got, even during the war. There's not a man in Washington—and I don't say this boastfully—who knows as much as I do about the subject I've been given to deal with."

"Which is?" Clid asked.

"Central American political economy," Peter Hess said, firmly. "Especially Costa Monica."

## CHAPTER II

"YOU HUMAN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD!"



CLID was to hear a great deal more about Costa Monica in the days and nights to come. She was to hear so much, in fact, that she eventually reached the point where she had to restrain screams at the very mention of that tiny country's name.

Before she knew Peter Hess long, Clid could recite figures dealing with

the population, voting trend, history, agricultural resources, oil possibilities, mining developments and the home life of Dictator Guaranillo, with her eyes shut. The United Nations, she had thought on occasion, would be doing her a personal favor by voting to incorporate Costa Monica in the city limits of Los Angeles and letting Dictator Guaranillo and the others whom Peter Hess dwelt upon at length dodge themselves to death in California traffic.

But getting back to the Rock Creek episode, Clid had been enveloped by a warm cloak of triumphant receptiveness when Peter Hess's arm had slid along the back seat over her shoulders. Here at last, she had thought, was the real Peter Hess. Here, in the soft moonlight, with the trees whispering love secrets over them and a moonlit lake glinting through the leaves, over to their left, Peter would forget all about Costa Monica, the State Department, his career—about everything except that a reasonably lovely girl was almost in his arms, waiting to be kissed.

She had looked up at him, her lips slightly parted, her eyes luminous.

"Clid," he had said, his voice slightly husky.

"Yes, Peter," she had replied, and her voice had seemed to be playing tricks on her, too.

"I want to ask you something," he had said, in a low tone. "Maybe I have no right to say this, but—" He hesitated, seeming to grope for words.

"But what, Peter—Pete," she had breathed.

"Well—ah—I can't go to your father, yet, but—"

"Oh, Dad's a swell egg, Peter," she had interrupted. "You don't have to be afraid of Dad."

He had smiled down at her and she had felt her heart lurch dangerously. His was such a sweet, crooked smile; one that showed the beginnings of a dimple in one cheek.

"Tell me, Peter," she had whispered. "Tell me now."

"Well," he had said, and his tone had grown brisker. "It's like this. The Department wants to know what the trend is in the Subcommittee on Central

American Loans, as it pertains to Costa Monica. Your father is chairman of that committee, Clid, and I was wondering if he's mentioned anything to you about whether his committee is going to recommend the loan or turn it down."

She had stared at him, her eyes wide, her soul experiencing a shock comparable to having been tossed into an ice-cold needle shower. Peter Hess had still been smiling down at her, his eyes still possessing that lambent glow. He had still been the direct, sincere, earnest young man he always had been. He had not meant to lure her into the belief that he was about to make love to her. All her thoughts, her expectations, had been the product of her own imagination, and the moonlight had been responsible for the look in Peter's eyes.

"You—that's what you want to speak to Dad about?" she had asked, faintly. "That—that's why you parked here?"

"Sure," he had said easily. "After all, I wouldn't want you to be overheard in case you could tell me anything. This seemed like an ideal spot for privacy."

"Uff," Clid had grunted. She had turned and reached for the lever of the car door. "Lemme outa here," she had said, ungrammatically and vociferously. "I gotta get outa here!"

"Clid!" Peter had called, in alarm. "Where are you going?"

"Anywhere but here," Clid had grated. "Costa Monica! Subcommittee on Central American Loans! Moonlight! You—you human Congressional Record, you!"

She had slipped from the car and started blindly up the moonlit road. Behind her she had heard a car door clunk and Peter Hess' feet clapping on the hard road surface. His hand had touched her shoulder and she had shrugged away from him.

"Clid — Miss Ravenswood — what have I done?" Hess had asked, in alarm. "Maybe I didn't have any right to ask you something your father might have told you in confidence, but all you'd have to do is tell me it was in confidence. I don't see—"

"There are a lot of things you don't

see, *Mister Hess!*" Clid had snapped. "Let me alone. Stop bothering me, or I'll scream."

"But you—you can't walk home like this," Peter had protested. "It's late. The park—there's no telling what might happen."

"Whatever happens," Clid had said viciously, "nobody's going to come up out of the bushes and accost me with statistics about Costa Monica. Let me alone."

**PETER HESS** had pleaded, he had argued, apologized—for what he did not really know—and in the end he had driven his car, in low gear, behind Clid while she stalked along the park road, to an exit and to a boulevard where she had been lucky enough to get a cab, almost at once. And that had been her last date with Peter Hess, the bright young man of the State Department.

Oh, he had telephoned, but she never had been in when he called. They had met at this affair and that, but beyond an icy acknowledgment of his greeting, a deliberate turning of one slender shoulder against his gaze, there had been no other contact between them.

Truth to tell, Clid was ashamed, more than anything else, over the fact that she had practically cast herself at Peter Hess, had used every wile at her command in her effort to interest him, had been assisted by an unbelievably big moon and a sylvan setting that would have started a robot's heart pounding—and had never once got Peter Hess' mind off the State Department and Costa Monica.

She had been a complete flop, a bust. Her pride was hurt and it had been a long time since anyone had hurt the pride of the beautiful daughter of Senator Roarin' Jerry Ravenswood.

"Well, we're here, baby," the Senator was saying, as the town car drove up a long, paved drive and under a porte cochere. "Put on a pretty smile, Clid, and show everybody how happy you are to have a handsome, distinguished gent like me for your old man."

She looked at him, a biting retort on her lips, and then she saw her father's eyes twinkling as he gazed at her.

Roarin' Jerry always could get Clid out of moods such as the one she entertained now by making fun of himself, calling himself the "brain of the Senate" or commenting on his own good looks. It was his way of telling his daughter that both of them realized that, once outside the Senate Chamber, Roarin' Jerry was just another babe in the woods, needful of his young daughter's chaperoning.

A smile forced itself to Clid's lips, despite herself, and she leaned over to pat her father's hand.

"Okay, Senator," she said. "I'm sorry I got into such a pet. It was just something I happened to remember that made me mad."

"Something about Peter Hess?" the Senator asked, carefully.

"Your tie's a bit crooked," Clid said. She straightened it as judiciously as though it actually had needed straightening. "All set?"

"Uh-huh," Senator Ravenswood said. "We'll make this a short stay and then go home. Get some rest. You're tired."

"Sure," Clid said dolefully, "and tonight's the Wellener's dinner and theater party. And tomorrow—"

"Maybe they won't send me back here next term," the Senator said. "Then we can go back to Seven Oaks and sit around with our shoes off all day."

"They always send you back," Clid said, "and you know you'd just dry up and blow away if you didn't have a chance every day to send those pear-shaped tones of yours rolling through the Senate Chamber. Come on."

It was a typical Washington cocktail party, all noise and cigarette smoke and rich food that practically nobody ate, and countless drinks that practically everybody drank; footmen in severe black uniforms with incongruously striped vests bearing trays and somehow miraculously getting through the crush without tripping, slipping, tilting or spilling; a hostess—there seldom seemed to be a host—chattering like a magpie about nothing. She would be keeping her brain as busy as an over-worked comptometer, estimating the size and social weight of the crowd and wondering if her affair would eclipse, equal

or, perish the thought, fail to come up to the level of the party *dear* Mrs. Entwistle was giving around the corner; wondering where in the world the news photographers were keeping themselves. But never would she be wondering why all this was necessary in the interests of good government which, at some time in the dim and distant past, must have been the reason for the establishment of a National Capital on the banks of the Potomac.

Clid and her father greeted their hostess, listened to her rattling discourse on the latest rumor that seemed to be a curious combination of something about the A-Bomb and a scandal that had, would or might develop in Chevy Chase, and plunged into the maelstrom. Clid watched the sharp-eyed widows begin a slow convergence on the Senator and immediately attached her father to a group consisting of four other Senators and their wives, none of whom would see seventy again.

With Roarin' Jerry secured, Clid turned away, accepted a glass from a passing tray—a glass she intended to keep untasted until it came time to set it down somewhere and leave—and looked around for somebody she knew. She exchanged hello's with some casual acquaintances and headed for a corner where Abner McMurray reared his shaggy head above the crowd.

CLID liked Abner McMurray. He was a new Representative from some backwoods district and her previous meetings with him had convinced Clid that he had the sharpest wit, the driest humor and the most piercing insight into Washington affairs of any of the younger men she knew. Abner worked hard, as most first-termers did. Clid had the idea that he would continue to work hard for the people who had elected him and for the country at large, long after the other new brooms had decided they had swept clean for a long enough spell and deserved a rest in the corner—preferably the corner of some cocktail lounge—for a spell.

"Hi, Miss Ravenswood," McMurray said, when Clid drifted up. "You're looking as pretty as a bluejay on a

snowy branch. Drag up a chair and sit down. Only there aren't any chairs. What do they do with chairs in a house like this when they give one of these brawls? Ever since I've been in Washington, I've been looking for a cocktail party that had enough chairs. Made it my Number One Project."

"You haven't worked at it very hard," Clid laughed. "I never see you on the party circuit and I've heard hostesses say you must have your regrets letters mimeographed. How come you're here today?"

"Mimi"—indicating the magpie hostess—"is an old friend of mine and I promised her I'd come. She's from my home district, matter of fact. Used to feed me apple pie and cheese in big hunks, on her back porch, before her husband invented something that put them both in the big money. He came to Washington, to the House, years back and Mimi got the Washington society bug and . . . Hey, don't misunderstand me. She's still a grand person, Miss Ravenswood."

That was Abner McMurray, Clid thought; fearful that he might sound disloyal to an old friend, still Mimi's champion despite the fact that the woman who had once fed him apple pie and cheese now seemed embarked on a headlong campaign to make herself one of the biggest feminine fools in Washington.

"Of course she is," Clid said swiftly. "Everybody loves her. And how's the national free clinic bill going?"

The clinic bill was one of McMurray's pets and Abner launched into a discussion of it with an enthusiasm that almost matched Peter Hess' discourse on the state of affairs in Costa Monica. Except that Clid found herself intensely interested in this recital, as Abner McMurray colored his talk with bits of humor, touches of human interest, brief stories of his own boyhood in a house that held too many children and too little food.

He could talk, could Abner McMurray, and the sincerity, the fervor, in his voice was like a clean wind sweeping through the cover of innuendoes, spiteful gossip, cynical partee and oppor-

tunistic conversation that clouded most Washington talk.

### CHAPTER III

#### QUITE A SESSION



**A**BNER McMURRAY was well launched on his topic when Clid saw his mouth hang open, in the midst of a phrase, and saw dismay leap to his eyes. Turning, she saw the reason for McMurray's discomfiture.

Lydia Carley, one of the Capital's leading huntresses, was bearing down on them, waving a cigarette in a foot-long holder as she approached.

"So theah you are!" she cried, at a distance of ten feet. "Clid, dahling, I just can't have you monopolizing all Mr. McMurray's time."

Abner McMurray was equal to the occasion. His hand plunged into the breast pocket of his coat and came up with a small, leather-edged celluloid case that contained snapshots.

"Just telling Miss Ravenswood about the folks back home," he said. "Quite a little family, wouldn't you say, Miss Carley?"

He proffered the case to the huntress and Clid, who despised Lydia Carley, had the satisfaction of watching the huntress's enameled mask reflect her consternation for one brief second.

"Oh—ah—" Lydia Carley stuttered. "I didn't even know you were married, Mr. McMurray. How secretive you young Congressmen are about your home affairs."

"The boy standin' there beside his ma is named after me, naturally," Abner said, pointing a blunt finger at the snapshot. "Seven, rising eight. The little girl is four and she's named after her mother. Susan. Cute as a little red wagon, and smart, too."

"I see," said Lydia Carley, in a dead, flat tone. "It's a wonder you wouldn't bring them on here, Mr. McMurray."

"The housing situation is bad, you know," Abner said, tucking the snap-

shot back into his pocket. "And, besides, I think they'd like it better back home, where they are."

"Er—yes, no doubt," Lydia said. "I imagine they would find Washington quite a change from—er—the rural section."

"The backwoods, Miss Carley," Abner McMurray said cheerfully. "Susan and the kids live eight miles off the State Highway and they come to the county seat once a week—if they're not snowed in."

"How interesting," Lydia Carley said. "Well, I must be moving on. I see . . . oh, Jimmy!"

She moved away, unable to mask her disappointment at finding out that Abner McMurray carried snapshots of a woman and two children around with him. Clid almost laughed aloud as she watched the predatory female's departure.

"Whew!" Abner sighed, as the Carley woman moved out of earshot. "Y'know, I decided to carry that snapshot today, just in case she'd be here. The last time I met up with her, I had the devil's own time, breaking loose. I figured that an eyeful of that snapshot would head her off quick."

"It certainly did the work," Clid laughed. But as she laughed, she was conscious of a twinge within her, an ache that had no business there. She was no Lydia Carley, she told herself, and it made no difference to her whether Abner McMurray was married or not.

"Good heavens," she told herself, silently, "have you got so bad that you're looking at every man you happen to like a little as a replacement for Peter Hess? Abner McMurray is just a pleasant, heart-of-gold man with a lot of good ideas. Just why should you feel this way, as though he'd paid you some attention on the supposition that he was single?"

"Look, Miss Ravenswood," McMurray was saying, "I hate to have to cut our little conversation short like this, but I've got an appointment at my office with some folks from back home in a couple of minutes. I've got to go."

"Surely," Clid said, automatically.

They all had to go—Peter Hess to his white papers and top secret files, Abner McMurray to his constituents and, probably, to a long distance phone call to the woman and two children out in the backwoods. None of them stayed. None of them would ever stay, long enough for her to find love.

"Certainly," she repeated. "It's been nice seeing you, Mr. McMurray."

"I—uh—wondered," McMurray said, hesitantly. "I was wondering if perhaps some evening we—uh—couldn't have dinner together, see a movie or something. The two of us, without all this crowd around us."

While Susan and Abner Junior and Little Susan stayed home, bragging to the neighbors about Pop, who was headed for the White House? No thanks, Mr. McMurray. I might like you and admire you, but there's not a thing that lies in that direction.

"I'm afraid I'll be awfully busy," she said, in a cool voice.

"Clid, if it's about that picture—"

"I see somebody I have to speak to," she said hurriedly. "Good-bye, Mr. McMurray."

SHE walked away from him, made a great show of talking to a senile ex-Senator whom she cordially detested for his heavy-handed wit—in quotes—and then moved on, deeper into the human jungle. Senator Ravenswood, she saw, was still safely anchored to the over-seventy party and the harpies still hovered at a respectable distance. She kept on down the long room.

"Oh, Clid," a voice at her elbow said. "I'd like you to meet Senor Jiminez Malfredo. Senor Malfredo is—"

A scream of laughter from an adjoining group drowned out whatever the introducing agent was saying, but that didn't matter. Clid Ravenswood was looking into the most remarkable pair of eyes she ever had encountered.

Senor Malfredo bent low over Clid's hand, almost low enough to suggest that he was going to kiss it, but not quite. When he straightened, and looked at Clid again, she saw that she had not been mistaken in thinking that this was perhaps the most incredibly hand-

some man she ever had seen.

He was tall, he was wide-shouldered, he had an olive skin, the aforementioned eyes, a lean, muscular face and blue-back wavy hair. There were none of the less admirable attributes she had encountered in other Latins she had met in Washington, and all the more admirable attributes. And, she decided silently, when a Latin was wholly admirable, he certainly was something.

"S'rita Ravenswood," Senor Malfredo murmured. "It is a great pleasure. I have admire the father for so long that now I find myself almost what-you-say reluctant to share the admiration with the Senator's daughter for her beauty. I say it better in Spanish, which you speak, perhaps, no?"

"No," said Clid Ravenswood, "but thanks."

After that, it was as though she were being borne along in a canoe, on a quiet, but swift-flowing river, as Senor Jiminez Malfredo moved her into a relatively deserted alcove and proceeded to entrance, ensnare, enamor and enthrall Miss Clara ("Clid") Ravenswood.

It was not the practiced patter of the "career cocktail party man." It was a liquid outpouring that seemed to come from Senor Malfredo's very heart. Listening to him, Clid found it not at all difficult to believe that: (a) Washington had been a gray, dismal place until Jiminez had met her. (b) There was not a woman in the United States of America who could compare with her in face, complexion, figure and graciousness. (c) It was an occasion for unrestrained rejoicing on the senor's part that boys in the United States were so dull, so hesitant, so timid or so blind as to permit S'rita Ravenswood to remain unmarried until he, Jiminez Malfredo, could have the opportunity to find her. (d) All other girls in the United States were either coarse, pallid, cloying, silly, stupid, gauche, naive, or downright impossible, compared to her, and (e) love at first sight was not only a possibility, it was an actuality, as far as Senor Jiminez Malfredo was concerned.

Yes, it was quite a session. The won-

der of it was that Clid, veteran of so many Washington cocktail parties, target of so many splashy compliments aimed by those who wanted to get in Roarin' Jerry's favor through his daughter, swallowed it. Whole. Entire. Intact.

"In my country, you would be—" Senor Malfredo was saying.

Clid came out of her roseate fog with a start.

"I'm sorry, Senor—" she began.

"Jiminez—Jeemy," he urged.

"Well—Jimmy," she said. "I'm sorry, but there was so much noise around us when we were introduced, I didn't quite catch the name of the country you're from. Unpardonable of me, of course, but—"

Senor Jiminez Malfredo smiled tenderly down at her, his white, even teeth showing in just the right amount.

"Costa Monica," he said proudly.

She blinked, shook her head slightly in an unconscious movement.

"Costa Monica?"

"It is a small country, perhaps, but perfect," he explained. "It is—"

"I know," she said. "Population three hundred eighty-four thousand five hundred, approximately. Area, seventeen thousand eight hundred sixty-three square miles. Mean annual temperature ranging from sixty-eight degrees, in the mountains, to eighty-two degrees, in the coastal regions. Principal exports, bananas, coffee, cacao, sugar, hides and tropical woods. Some gold and silver mining—not much. Monetary unit, the *colon*, worth—"

"This is remarkable," Senor Malfredo stated, his eyes widening. "Is it from your esteemed father that you learn so much of my little country?"

"No," Clid replied. "I got all that from another—person. But go on, Senor Malfredo, with what you were saying before I interrupted you."

**SE**NOR MALFREDO went on, doubly enthused now that he had discovered that Clid knew of Costa Monica and would not require an atlas to be shown where he hailed from. The liquid words poured on and on, and Clid listened.

She knew, vaguely, that she should be attending her father, making sure that the harpies did not descend on him, should he leave the group of old Senators and their wives. She knew she had overstayed her required time at this cocktail party, that she should be getting home to prepare for the Wellener's dinner and theater party.

She knew that it was ridiculous that this young man from Costa Monica—Costa Monica, of all places—should be permitted to take up so much of her time at their first meeting. She knew that she was acting like a bobby soxer given a private interview with her pet erooner. She knew all this, and she decided to heck with it.

It was her father who finally broke up the little *tete-a-tete*. Instead of Clid hunting up the Senator and gently detaching him from the crowd that ordinarily surrounded him, diplomatically freeing Roarin' Jerry's hand from its cocktail glass and insidiously guiding him outside, it was the Senator who went on the prowl for his erstwhile chaperon when the hour grew too noticeably late.

He found her, still in the alcove, listening raptly to Senor Jiminez Malfredo's explanation of just how wonderful, how gorgeous, how intelligent and how superfine she really was.

Roarin' Jerry distinctly was not pleased when he saw Malfredo. His eyebrows came down into something approaching a scowl as he walked up to the voluble Latin who held his only child in his spell.

"Er—humph," he grunted. "Getting pretty late, don't you think, Clid?"

The girl looked up at the Senator with eyes that appeared slightly dazed.

"Late?" she inquired. "Oh—late! Goodness, it must be late, Dad. I didn't realize—I mean—"

It was the first time, the Senator reflected, he had seen his daughter flustered since the first time he had caught her smoking a forbidden cigarette in her room.

Senor Malfredo had sprung to his feet with the Senator's approach. Now he bowed low. If he had had a plumed hat, Roarin' Jerry told himself, he

would have swept it to the floor.

"Senator Ravenswood," the Costa Monican murmured, "a thousand pardons for detaining your charming daughter."

"Hullo, Malfredo," Roarin' Jerry grunted with bare civility. "Clid, if we're going to the Wellener's, we'd better hurry."

"The Wellener dinner party?" Senor Malfredo inquired. "Ah, how fortunate. I, too, am going to the Wellener dinner party."

"Isn't that grand!" Clid breathed.

Her father permitted himself another grunt which may have meant that he thought it was grand, also—but didn't.

"Come, Clid," the Senator said, with unaccustomed fatherly direction. "We must be going."

This time, Jiminez *did* kiss Clid's hand, sending little shivers of delight rippling up the girl's spine.

"Until tonight then, S'rita?" he asked, his eyes looking up at hers from over her hand. "I shall count the hours."

"Until tonight," she said, feeling as though she were wearing a rose behind one ear.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HANDSOME LATIN



**O**UTSIDE, in the town car Senator Roarin' Jerry Ravenswood went paternal in a large way.

"Far be it from me," he said, "to interfere in your affairs, *but*—"

Clid turned her eyes on her father and Roarin' Jerry hesitated for a moment, surprised no doubt to find the usual positions reversed and himself giving a lecture to his daughter, instead of vice versa, after a cocktail party.

"*But*," he went on staunchly, "there are certain things concerning my position—my official position—that you've got to keep in mind when you make and—er—develop friendships. After all,

I'm chairman of the Subcommittee on Central American Loans."

"Yes," said Clid, succinctly, remembering Peter Hess. "I know you are."

"And, as such," her father went on, "I have a certain responsibility to carry. I must be careful in my personal relations with representatives of the countries which might benefit by any decisions my committee might make. And you, as my daughter and official hostess, are in somewhat the same position."

"Meaning," Clid asked sweetly, "that you don't approve of my talking to Senor Malfredo?"

"Oh, talking's all right," the Senator said, with a wave of his hand, "but it seemed to me you were involved in something more than an idle chat with that—that fellow when I walked up to you in that alcove. I know he's handsome, and I suppose he's as charming as those people can be. But I must absolutely insist that you keep him at arm's length—er—figuratively speaking, of course. It would never do to have anybody saying that any decision made by my committee which, I might as well confess, I practically run, single-handed, were based on any personal friendships my daughter might have with the Consul-General of a country benefitted by such decisions."

"Is he Consul-General?" Clid asked musingly. "He seems young for a job like that."

"Hah!" the Senator barked. "He got the job because he's nephew to old Dictator Guaraniillo. The old boy has his whole family in office, where it counts. The whole country is a sink of fascist nepotism. Aside from the fact that my committee position makes the whole situation impossible, I wouldn't want any daughter of mine to have more than a distant social connection with any member of that crowd."

Clid looked at her father, and her mouth tightened into a thin and unbecoming line. Too long had Senator Roarin' Jerry Ravenswood leaned on his daughter for aid in getting out of one disastrous *affaire-de-coeur* after another for him to play the heavy parent now. If the Senator suspected that when he began his lecture, he did not

have long to wait to find his suspicions were well-based.

"My dear Senator," Clid said, in a voice she seldom used, "for months—years—I have spent practically every waking moment making sure that you didn't get yourself into a jam that would give you some freak of a woman for my stepmother. For year's I've been a good little girl and smiled for the photographers and gone with you on your campaign trips and listened to the same speech a couple of million times, always looking as avidly interested as though I were hearing it for the first time."

"I have trotted around with you from reception to cocktail party and from

"I know, dear, and I appreciate—" cocktail party to wedding and from wedding to reception again. My tummy rolls like a Gene Krupa drum at the sight of a lobster paste canape and my mouth cringes when I see a frozen Daiquiri. I've sworn that one more visit to the Senate gallery would mean that I'd be carried out in a strait-jacket, screaming, but I always went back, when you were due to make a world-shaking speech and it would look better for me to be there, and I haven't screamed yet. I've been your hostess, entertaining a lot of boring and sometimes boorish people for your sake, and I've always kept my smile, I've never complained."

"I know, dear, and I—"

"I've done everything you asked me, dear Father, and some things on my own hook. I've kept your weight down and I've cured you of saying 'sanrich' instead of 'sandwich.' I've made you learn how to stretch out your cocktails so you can take in all your parties and still stay sober."

"I know—"

"And now, at last, I rebel, I revolt, I kick over the traces," Clid went on ruthlessly. "I've met a man who is very attractive to me and he seems to like me. He's not married and he looks to be a complete gentleman."

"He's—"

"He's not a human fish who quotes State Department statistics when he ought to be trying to kiss me," Clid said,

"and he's not a diamond in the rough who'll turn out to have a wife and two children."

"Who's got a wife and two children?" Senator Ravenswood asked curiously.

"Never mind," Clid said firmly. "We're talking about Senor Malfredo. I know the State Department doesn't like Costa Monica's foreign policy or something. I know you're head of some subcommittee on loans. Well, let the State Department take care of Costa Monica's foreign policy and let your committee take care of the loans. Jiminez—Jimmy and I like each other and we're going to see each other and—I'll just quit my job as chaperon-secretary-hostess to you if you do anything to try to stop us. Well?"

SENATOR ROARIN' JERRY RAVENSWOOD looked properly subdued.

"You're old enough to know what you're doing," he said humbly. "But I think you're making a mistake. If this Malfredo was a man like Peter Hess, now—"

"Don't mention that man's name!" Clid almost shouted. "And here we are, home, thank goodness! You'll have to hurry and call me when you want your tie tied."

"I am perfectly capable of tying my own tie," said the Senator stiffly.

"Sure," Clid agreed, "but it always looks like the propeller of a B-Twenty-nine." She leaned toward her father with a sudden wave of affection and planted a kiss on his cheek. "Oh, Dad," she said, "don't you see I'm all buzzy inside and I think—I know—this is the real thing, finally, international politics or no international politics. Don't do anything to spoil it, Dad. Please!"

"All right, Baby," Senator Ravenswood said soberly. "I won't do anything to spoil it. But I . . . Never mind."

Clid never knew whether the Fates decreed it or Jiminez pulled strings, but she found herself seated next to the handsome young man from Costa Monica at the Wellener's dinner. She never could tell, later, what she ate at that luxuriant board although she al-

ways remembered the words that Jiminez poured into her willing ear.

She was vaguely conscious of Peter Hess, sitting very straight and looking very disapproving, down the table across from her, and of her father, trying to mask his concern with more than usual conviviality, at the end of the table, on the hostess's right, but she ignored both men. The Senator was safe, she had seen during the seating, surrounded by non-voracious females, and as for Peter Hess—phooey and double phooey.

She did not need any of the sauterne, the port, the champagne, that flowed up and down the table. Her heart bubbled more madly than the liveliest champagne and Jiminez' words were more limpid than any of the still wines. Malfredo made up for her abstinence, she half noticed, but for all the glasses he consumed, there was no change in his manner, no interruption in his speech. If Peter Hess, now, had drunk that much he would be incoherent, she told herself, which proved something or other. She was not sure just what.

Miraculously, she found herself seated next to Jiminez at the theater, and a passably fair performance was wasted on Miss Clara Ravenswood. Outside the theater, Malfredo bent close to her ear.

"How about a drink and a bite to eat at the Willard?" he asked. "Somewhere where we will be without this so-big crowd."

"I'd love it," she said instantly.

She didn't even give a thought to the possibility that Mrs. Greetson, who had been at the dinner and at the theater, might finally convince the Senator that her past really had been all due to hard luck, in her absence. Let the Senator take care of himself, she would have said, if she had thought about the danger at all. Little Clid had her own life to lead.

As they were waiting at the curb for the senator's car to pull up, Peter Hess approached Clid.

"Ah—Clid," he said. "I've been wanting to talk to you for some time. I—"

"My father hasn't said a word about that matter," Clid said frigidly. "I'll

let you know when he does. By mail."

"But I—"

"*Hola!*" cried Jiminez Malfredo. "Here she is."

A shining cabriolet of French manufacture pointed its blunt nose in to the curb and drew up in front of them.

"The Willard," Jiminez directed his chauffeur. "And we are Diplomatic. No stops-lights for us, eh?"

The cabriolet boomed away from in front of the theater. Clid did not look back at Peter Hess, standing on the curb.

At the Willard there were more drinks—a great many more for Jiminez—while Clid toyed with a highball. It was wonderful, for the first hour, and then it suddenly was not so wonderful. Jiminez, it appeared, had taken a great deal for granted in Clid's barefaced adoration. He grew more and more possessive, his voice grew louder and a bit harsher than it had been. All those glasses of wine he had had at the Wellener's, apparently, had trailed Jiminez to the theater and finally had caught up with him.

When Malfredo reached the pawing stage, and people at adjoining tables were beginning to cast surreptitious glances over their shoulders at the couple, Clid decided that the evening had lasted long enough.

**E**VEN then she didn't blame Jiminez. Any man, she told herself, could overestimate his capacity once in a while and it was probable that Malfredo, in his elation at finding his true love—the same elation that Clid had felt—was celebrating a bit too enthusiastically. Sort of a New Year's Eve let-down, permissible to any man.

"I think we should go," she murmured, gathing up her gloves and bag and shrugging into her coat.

"Go?" he asked, in that voice that had grown unconsciously loud. "Hah—not Jiminez Malfredo. Go at this hour? In Costa Monica, the party does not start until after midnight and it lasts till dawn. In Costa Monica, the girls I take to parties better not say they want to go home. They know better."

"This," Clid said, with a trace of

tartness, "isn't Costa Monica. And I'm tired."

"Not Costa Monica, hah?" the young man said loudly. "No, is United States. Uncle Money-Bags. Yankee Imperialism." He leaned across the table with a lurch and wagged a finger in Clid's face. "But we show them, some day," he blatted. "Now we mus' beg the money from your Congress, from the committees like the one your father is head of. Some day, it will be different. Some day Costa Monica and the others who feel her way will be strong and then—then you will beg the money from us, maybe, hah?"

He sagged back in his chair, those perfect teeth shining too whitely now.

"Then it will be your young men who will have to come to us and make love to the daughters of our legislators," he said. "Then you will need the money and your young men will make love—try to make love—to the Costa Monican girls. But our girls, they will laugh at your young men. They will not be like you stupid American girls who throw themselves at the feet of every man who gives them a smile and a pretty word."

It was then Clid slapped him, forgetful of the staring, crowded room, forgetful that she was a Senator's daughter, forgetful of the fact that this man, after all, was a representative of a "friendly State," possessed of diplomatic immunity. She slapped him, and she put a lot of wallop in her swing.

Then she gathered her coat around her and hurried out of the place, her face buried in the fur of the collar, unmindful of the murmur of applause that had spread over the room.

## CHAPTER V

### THIS IS REAL!



WITH cheeks flaming, and her eyes filled with unshed tears, Clid paced down the corridor toward the revolving doors that led to Pennsylvania Avenue. She had been a fool—

again. She had forgotten everything she had been taught, everything she had learned, in the few minutes it had taken that—that man back there to murmur a few pretty words into her ear. He had been right. She had been stupid, shamelessly so, and she had deserved everything she had gone through as a result of her stupidity.

She felt cheap, soiled. The society crowd, the cocktail party gossips, would have a field day, gnawing that little slapping incident down to the bone. The State Department might put the official quietus on the newspapers but the word was sure to leak out. The gossip columnists probably would pick it up, half veiling the substance of their paragraph with something like:

"What prominent Senator's daughter slapped the envoy of what Latin-American country across the mouth the other yawning in the Willard—right in front of everybody?"

If there were only somebody she could turn to, somebody beside Dad who was more or less hamstrung by his official position? Peter Hess? Abner McMurray? But how could she turn to Abner?

Because she had her head bent down, she collided squarely with a tall frame that turned out to be one of the men she was thinking of, Peter. He caught her arms to steady her and held her there, looking down at her.

"Clid," he said earnestly, "I—I tried not to follow you here, but I had to see you. I had to let you know that it wasn't just because of your father's committee that I parked that night in Rock Creek Park. I wanted you to know—"

There was an interruption in the form of Senor Jiminez Malfredo of Costa Monica. Senor Jiminez was half staggering on his feet now and he entirely ignored Peter Hess. Malfredo's face was black and his lips were drawn back in a drunken snarl as he twisted Clid out of Peter Hess's hands.

"I want you to know, S'rita," he grated, "that in my country a man does not take a slap in the face lightly from any such as you. In my country, it is the man who beats the woman, not the woman who beats the man."

"See here," Peter Hess said. "What's going on?"

Jiminez Malfredo raised his eyes to Peter's and jerked his head toward the door.

"This is between me and this—this woman," he sneered. "You will not stiek your nose into this."

"Peter!" Clid cried. "Do something!"

Peter Hess stepped forward—and then stopped. He looked at Jiminez Malfredo and Clid could see recognition come into Peter's eyes.

"You—you're the Consul-General of Costa Monica," Peter stammered.

"Yes," snapped Jiminez. "Now leave."

"Peter!" Clid said. "He—he's hurting me."

Peter Hess swallowed, looking miserable.

"I say," he managed. "You shouldn't do that, you know. I mean, you're hurting the young lady. Be a good fellow and let her go, will you?"

Clid stared, her jaw dropping. Peter Hess had the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He was as big as Jiminez and he was no coward. But there he was, stuttering and stammering like a schoolboy confronting a principal.

Then she understood. Jiminez Malfredo might be a rat of the lowest order, one whom Peter would have enjoyed socking—under different circumstances. But Jiminez Malfredo was the Consul-General of Costa Monica. He was Diplomatic. And if Peter threw one punch at Jiminez, that would mean the spools of red tape at the State Department would begin to spin, the cables would begin to buzz back and forth between Washington and Dictator Guaranillo, the bright career of Peter Hess would be endangered.

So no matter if the girl he had been about to name his beloved squirmed in the grip of this drunken emissary of a semi-fascist state, no matter if those in the corridor obviously waited for him to throw the punch that was forthcoming, Peter Hess could not risk his career.

"I—I'm sorry, Clid," he faltered. "You see, I—my position—awkward. I—"

"Then step aside, son," said a drawling voice. "I gave you your chance and you don't seem to know what to do with it. Step aside."

Abner McMurray gently pushed Peter Hess to one side and stepped up to Jiminez Malfredo.

"Let go of that girl," he said. His voice was not loud but it was as piercing as a drill. "Let go of her, and then come on outside, where we won't have such a gallery."

ALL the mild humor in Abner's face was gone now. His eyes blazed and his lower jaw jutted. For a second, the two men stared at each other and then Jiminez released his grip on Clid's arm.

"I—I am Diplomatic," he said, and his voice was almost as faltering as Peter's had been. "If you punch me, my country will make trouble for you. I warn you."

Abner McMurray gave a short laugh.

"I'll risk it," he said drily. "Let's step outside, where it's cooler."

Jiminez Malfredo backed away.

"No," he said. "No, I do not wish to. I have something else to do."

He turned and walked away. While he did not exactly break into a run, he came close to it. As he left, a short, stout man in evening clothes, his shirt front startlingly white in contrast with his dark skin, stepped up to Clid. The Senator's daughter recognized him as the representative of another Central-American State, a sister republic to Costa Monica.

"Senorita Ravenswood," the stout man said earnestly, "I apologize to you in behalf of all decent Costa Monicans, in behalf of all the people in my part of the world. That—*fellow* is not a true representative of Costa Monica, believe me. I trust you will forgive us for being grouped as colleagues of that man."

Clid managed a feeble smile.

"I know, senor," she said. "There is no need for apologies."

"He will not be with us long, that one," the stout man said. "I can assure you of that. *Buenas noches, senorita.*"

She was making her way toward the door again, a steadying hand at her elbow. Outside, she was not unduly

surprised to find that the man escorting her was Abner McMurray.

"Had an appointment with a man who lives at the Willard," he explained, briefly. "Happened to come along at the right time."

"Th-thank you," she said.

"You can't blame young Hess too much," he went on. "Malfredo really could have made things unpleasant for the boy. With a backwoodsman like me, Costa Monica won't bother even to send a note if Malfredo squawks, which I think is unlikely."

"Yes," said Clid, keeping her head down, knowing the tears were close to the surface now.

**S**HE KEPT her eyes on the toes of her shoes while the doorman whistled in a cab. What had become of Peter Hess she did not know, nor did she care.

"Well," Abner said, when they were in the cab, "you might not have taken very kindly to the idea of a date with me, but I'm seeing you home, just the same, it seems."

No answer from Clid. A few blocks, silence and then Abner McMurray said:

"Clid Ravenswood, why did you give me such an abrupt brush-off when I asked you to have dinner with me? I got the idea somewhere that you liked me, that you were interested in my pet bills, that we might have a lot of fun together—for a long time. And yet, the first time I nerved myself to ask you for a date, you froze up as though you were the snob I know you're not. Why was that? What happened?"

"Th—the picture," Clid said. "Oh, I do like you, Abner—Mr. McMurray. B—but you had the snapshot and it was the first time I knew you were married and—and I couldn't—"

His arm drew her close to him. His voice was soft and tender and faintly amused.

"Listen, you little dopey," he said. "I tried to tell you about that snapshot but you rushed off too soon. You didn't hear me tell that Carley gal that the woman in the snapshot was my wife or the kids mine, did you? Susan's my sister, married to a trapping gent who's a mighty fine fellow. They named their boy after me because, for some reason, they think I'm a danged fine fellow. I carried that snapshot for protection against women like the Carley gal. I thought you knew, though I don't know why you should, and then, when I saw how you had misinterpreted the whole business, I tried to explain, but you weren't having any."

The tears came then, flooding down Clid's cheeks in blessed relief. She knew now what she had known, subconsciously, for a long time. Jiminez and even Peter Hess were mere figures in the churning, noisy, unreal Washington scene, while Abner McMurray was something fine and steady and real to whom she could always turn and find, in his eyes and his arms and his kiss, the peaceful security that had been denied to her for so long.

Later, when she had dried her eyes, she lay there with her head on Abner's chest, listening to the steady beat of his heart, feeling his hand on her shoulder, his arm couching her head.

"I hope," she said dreamily, "that the Senator hasn't gone off and got married since I left him."

"Don't worry about the Senator," Abner McMurray said. "Between the two of us, we ought to be able to keep Roarin' Jerry out of trouble."

"You don't know Roarin' Jerry," Clid said. "You don't know what kind of a dowry I'm bringing you."

"I'll take my chances," Abner McMurray said, as his lips descended to meet Clid's, "so long as you come with the dowry."



COMING NEXT MONTH

## LOVE SONG FOR A LADY

A Glamorous Romantic Novelet by RUTH ANDERSON

*Ann Prescott carries a  
torch until its light  
begins to flicker!*



Opposite Tim sat one of the  
most strikingly beautiful girls  
Ann had ever seen

# ANOTHER LOVE

*by Polly Sweet*

**A**NN PRESCOTT had known from the first it would have to end some time. She had been warned enough times that Tim was not the marrying kind. June Thompson, her best girl friend, had told her, so had

several of Tim Farrell's own young friends, fellows who worked with him—and then, Tim, himself.

"Ann," he had said softly, on that first night when they had danced together at the country club and his arm

had tightened around her, "you're very beautiful, and it would be easy to fall in love with you but I'm not going to. You see"—he had hesitated for just a moment—"I may not stay here long, and when I leave I'm taking only memories with me. It has to be that way."

Ann had looked up at him with her gentian-blue eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, and smiled. She wanted to ask him why it had to be that way. What reason could there possibly be for his being afraid of falling in love with her? She had wondered what it could all be about, but had not asked.

"Tim," she said, "let's take each day as it comes and enjoy it."

Holding her close, Tim had lightly touched the soft waves of her hair with his lips.

"And there will be no regrets when it is over?"

She had a sharp, little pang of foreboding but she had answered, still smiling gaily:

"No regrets, Tim—ever."

After that they had been together every day. They had had glorious times together.

"I'll be leaving soon, Ann," he was saying now. "My orders came today. The company is transferring me."

It seemed to Ann that the world had stopped moving, that she couldn't breathe, that the sharp pain she felt would strangle her.

"But, Tim, you've been here such a little while. You can't be due for a transfer."

"Not ordinarily but—well, there will be a better chance to get ahead in New York. This is only a small town, and—"

"You asked for a transfer?" Ann asked.

"Yes, in a way."

"I see," said Ann. She was beginning to see a lot of things. "New York isn't very far away." There was just a chance that this might not be good-by after all.

"I know," Tim replied slowly, "but I'm afraid . . . Ann, I'm afraid we won't be seeing each other."

was telling her that this was the end. He was going away—not far, for it was less than a hundred miles—but he was leaving this town, and her. He was taking only memories with him as he had told her he would.

"I see," Ann said again, but her heart cried out, "He can't mean it! He loves me. I know he does. Why—why doesn't he say so?"

"We've had grand times," Tim was saying.

"Yes," It was barely a whisper.

"And I'll miss you, Ann."

She raised her eyes to his. Her lovely lips trembled. Then she was in his arms. Tim's lips found hers, not casually, lightly, as they had so often before in a good-night kiss or a quick, little kiss of welcome. Without a moment's hesitation, she surrendered to his embrace. Now—now he would surely tell her that he loved her, that he hadn't meant what he had said about it being the end.

There was a long moment of ecstasy before he lifted his head and gently but firmly pushed her away from him.

"Sorry, Ann. I didn't mean to do that."

Sorry! Ann's heart seemed to die, but she must not let him see how she felt.

"No harm done, Tim," she said brightly. "That was just good-by. I'll be seeing you again sometime perhaps. When do you leave?"

"Tomorrow."

Ann was silent. The soft moonlight touched her face, showing how pale it had become. Somehow, the gay, casual remark would not come. Surely, surely he wouldn't let things between them end this way, without even an explanation. Oh, yes, she remembered that Tim had a reputation for loving lightly, but that was before her, and with other girls. This was different. It had to be different.

But Tim was saying instead, "Well, come on, let's dance. This is our last night together. We mustn't waste time."

Oh, no, no! They mustn't waste time. She laughed, but she felt as though her heart were slowly breaking.

**I**T took her a moment to comprehend the full significance of his words. He

They danced, and Tim held her close while she smiled bravely. It had been a game with him and she must make him think it had been just that with her.

"Well," she said, as she lifted her head proudly and smiled brightly, "that's one of the nice things about life. It seldom gets monotonous. I heard today that Jed Harrison is coming back to town. Jed and I used to have grand times together before he went away to the city to work." She shrugged. "So you see it's the old law of compensation. You go, he comes."

Ann laughed, and it was meant to sound gay but it was only hard and brittle.

"Jed Harrison!" Tim flashed. It was almost as though he were jealous, but of course he wasn't. "He's the fellow you used to like."

"Like?" asked Ann meditatively. "Of course I liked him. We used to have fun together. I told you so. But we were just kids."

"I know, but you're not kids now."

"So?" asked Ann and waited to hear what he might be going to say. Even now it might be, "Never mind Jed Harrison. Ann, darling, marry me."

What Tim really said was, "Ann, be careful of Jed. I've heard things about him. His reputation—"

"What about his reputation?" flashed Ann.

Out of her heartache came a spark of anger. What could Tim possibly say against Jed? That he was gay, irresponsible, loved lightly and often? Not so different from Tim himself.

"Oh, nothing," Tim answered. "Only I wouldn't want to see you get hurt."

Ann almost laughed at that.

"Don't worry, Tim. I'll manage."

At last the dance was over and Tim was taking her home. They rode in almost complete silence. Ann managed a casual remark or two, but Tim said nothing. Not until they reached Ann's door did Tim speak.

"Good-by, Ann. I wish—" Again Ann's heart stood still waiting but Tim only said, "The best of luck always."

Then Tim was gone. Ann moved slowly, almost as one in a daze. She

got ready for bed. Tim was gone. She brushed a hand across her eyes and walked to the window to look out. The brilliant moonlight bathed everything in silver beauty. The fragrance of flowers lay heavy on the air. Ann's breath caught in her throat. This was a perfect night for love.

**L**OVE! At last the tears came. Tears of grief and heartache and then suddenly tears of fury, anger that she could suffer so over a man who could love lightly and leave without any explanation. If only there were a reason, even another girl, she could have fought it better.

The week that followed was agony for Ann. She was too proud to show her hurt. Not even her best friends could guess what Tim's going had meant to her. Ann kept busy and was, on the surface always her gay, eager self.

She was popular, so there were plenty of invitations. There was always something for her to do. Even her mother knew only that Tim Farrell, the man Ann had dated most of the time for the past few months had gone away, so now Ann's dates were with someone else. Ann seemed quite as happy as ever.

Only at night as she lay in her bed did she let herself think of Tim. She wondered what he was doing and sometimes prayed he would miss her so much that he would write or telephone, or even run down to see her. But as the days passed without hearing from him, a strange numbness seemed to possess her.

She made up her mind then to get over Tim Farrell, to forget she had ever imagined she loved him. She was in this mood when Jed Harrison arrived.

Jed was gay, charming, handsome. Ann had known him almost all her life. They had gone to school together. In her junior year there had been a brief romance that had ended when Ann had lost her heart to the senior football hero. Jed hadn't seemed to mind. He had immediately found himself another girl, and he and Ann had remained friends. Friendship with Jed was comfortable. It never demanded too much, yet always was there.

Sometimes she wondered about it. Surely there must be some girl in his life. When she had questioned him about it, he had laughed heartily, assuring her that there were indeed several girls in his life, that one romance had just come to an abrupt end when his heart interest of the moment had run away and married another fellow.

For the past year Jed had been working in New York. He had had an excellent job, but he had left it to come back to Greenville. Vaguely Ann wondered why. Jed seemed definitely the type who would prefer the city to a quiet town. It didn't really matter much. All that mattered was that she needed Jed terribly at this time and that he was back. She felt certain that if anyone could help her forget Tim Farrell he could.

Jed hadn't been in town an hour before he called Ann.

"How many rivals do I have to dispose of before I can have a date with you?" he asked.

Ann tried to sound casual. "It just so happens that I haven't a thing to do this evening, and—" She couldn't keep the pretense up. She certainly wasn't in love with Jed, but she had always been honest with him and he with her. That was what made their friendship so comfortable, so right. "Jed, I haven't any date for this evening because Tim, the man I've been dating, has gone to New York to work."

"Lucky me," Jed interrupted. "I'll have to use my influence to keep him there. I can't endure rivals. Darling, I'll be there at eight."

"Jed Harrison, you idiot," said Ann, but she was laughing. It was nice to feel light-hearted again even if the feeling could not last. "And, Jed, I'll be ready at eight."

Promptly at eight Jed arrived. Ann had forgotten how handsome he was, how gay his smile, how dark his eyes.

Immediately and quite naturally he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Hello, Ann," he said, "More beautiful than ever, and growing up."

"You don't have to flatter me, Jed Harrison," laughed Ann. "We've known each other too long for that, and of

course I'm grown up."

Jed looked down at her and for a moment his eyes were serious.

"Of course," he said quietly. "And where do you want to go this evening? I've got my car—a better one than the old jalopy. It will probably make Sunset Inn or Danny's or—"

"Not Sunset Inn," Ann said, almost sharply. She and Tim had gone there often. "Nor Danny's. Only youngsters go there, the high school crowd."

Jed shrugged. "Where then?"

"Danny's," Ann replied illogically. Her eyes were suddenly shining. "Jed, it would be fun. I haven't been there for ages. There's only a juke box for dancing but—" Ann hesitated and her face flushed with embarrassment.

Not for the life of her could she account for her enthusiasm at the prospect of going to Danny's, a roadside barbecue stand with a wide veranda where young people sat at tiny tables and drank soft drinks and danced to the music of the latest recordings.

"It would be silly wouldn't it?" she added hastily.

Jed nodded. "Very silly, but lots of fun. Let's go."

"It would be just like old times," exclaimed Ann, catching up her coat and starting toward the door.

**J**ED did not reply nor did he move, and Ann found herself very close to him. His dark eyes searched hers for a moment.

"Then you do—remember?" he asked softly. "Even Tim Farrell couldn't make you entirely forget."

"What do you know about Tim?" asked Ann swiftly.

"Not much," Jed replied. "And at the moment I'm not interested, but I'd like to get started for Danny's if you're ready."

He was smiling again his usual, friendly smile, a smile that warmed her yet left her entirely free. That was more the way she liked it.

"I'm ready," Ann said.

They were like a couple of youngsters as hand in hand they ran out to the car.

Ann was surprised at how wonderful

it was to dance with Jed again. She had forgotten how well he did it. It wasn't quite like being with Tim. That had been like making love to music, this was—well, just dancing, but you felt like singing, too. Like everything Jed did it left her free.

She had a wonderful time and for a while, at least, forgot all about Tim Farrell.

During the days that followed, Ann and Jed went everywhere together. They never mentioned Tim Farrell again, but Jed seemed to sense that Ann was restless so almost every evening he took her somewhere for a good time. Then, one day he suggested they run down to New York for a week-end. Both he and Ann had friends with whom they could stay.

"I want you to see a quaint little French restaurant I used to go to a lot," Jed told her.

"Nice place to dance?" asked Ann.

"Nope. Good food, a quiet place lighted mostly by candlelight. Nice place to make love."

"Let's go to a place where we can dance," said Ann.

"I do very well by candlelight—at love-making, I mean."

"Be serious, Jed. I'd like to go to New York. The Johnson girls have been begging me to come for weeks, but we'll go dancing."

"The food is very good at Peter's Place."

"Dancing," Ann stated emphatically.

"Dancing," agreed Jed, with a shrug.

It was always like that with Jed— anxious to please, and yet never seeming to care too much.

As Ann made her preparations to go to New York, she found that one thought was uppermost in her mind. Would she see Tim there? Of course New York was a big place but there was a chance, a tiny one. She hoped, yet dreaded to see him. She wondered what he was doing, wondered with whom he was playing at love now.

The Johnson girls were delighted to have Ann and insisted on celebrating with a party the first evening, so that it was not until the second one that Jed finally had his own way and took Ann

to Peter's Place. After all, Ann thought to herself, it didn't matter too much where they went.

Peter's Place was all that Jed had promised—quaint, candlelit and romantic. There was violin music and a tiny space for dancing. Only three or four couples could take advantage of it at the same time, but it was apparently enough as most couples seemed to prefer the dimly lit seclusion of their own little booth or table.

Then Ann saw Tim. He was sitting at a table for two. Opposite him sat a girl, one of the most strikingly beautiful girls she had ever seen. She was talking to Tim and he was all attention. Across the table their hands touched, and Tim held hers for a moment before he released it.

Ann's blood ran cold. She clenched her hands tightly together. That intimate, little gesture of Tim's had set all the precious, tender memories running riot through her mind.

"There's Tim," she said to Jed. Her voice choked.

Jed did not even look in the direction Ann indicated. Instead, he looked at her intently.

"Still carrying the torch for him, aren't you?" he asked.

"No, of course not." Her eyes met Jed's bravely for a moment, then fell before his searching gaze. "I guess I am," she said. Her voice was husky.

Ann was aware of Jed's fingers at her elbow.

"Steady," he said. "Don't act as though you'd seen a ghost. Farrell comes here often."

"And you knew it. Somehow you knew it."

They reached their table and Jed drew out the chair for her and took his own seat at the table before replying.

"I knew it," he said simply.

"Then why—oh, why did you bring me here?"

"You had to meet him sometime."

"I know, but—"

THE waiter arrived then and Jed gave their order. When the waiter had left Jed said:

"I know the girl. Let's dance while

we are waiting. I'll introduce you to her."

"No!" cried Ann.

"Coward!" said Jed contemptuously. It was a challenge and Ann accepted it.

"I think I hate you for this, Jed Harrison," she told him in a low voice, "but I'm ready. Come on."

Jed smiled his approval. "Good girl," he said, and held out his hand to her.

Tim greeted Ann with his usual charming nonchalance.

"Ann, what a wonderful surprise! May I present Jean Paletier? She has been most helpful in showing me around town."

Ann thought to herself, "I'll bet," but aloud she said sweetly, "How do you do? Tim is very fortunate."

"You don't know how fortunate." It was Jed who interrupted. "Jean knows all the right spots. Let her know your mood and she will find a place to match it."

"Jed, darling!" exclaimed Jean. "You mustn't say such things. Ann might not understand."

"I understand," said Ann, managing to keep the edge from her voice, "and I quite approve of this charming place with its mood of romance. Come on, Jed, we're wasting time."

"We are, aren't we?" Jed's smile was so smug and self-satisfied that Ann felt like slapping him.

"Yes, darling," Ann replied, and there was no hiding the sarcastic tone of the mimicked "darling."

"You mustn't be jealous of Jean," said Jed. "She calls everyone darling."

"She does?" Ann said with honey sweetness but with a scornful sideward glance at Jed. Then, loftily, "Not that it matters."

"You mean as long as her terms of endearment are directed at me and not Tim Farrell."

The warm color flushed Ann's cheeks. "Jed, it's not fair to you, is it?"

Jed grinned. "I'm not complaining. I like your company, and besides you can dance pretty well."

"Jed Harrison!" began Ann.

"Take it easy, Baby. From what I see from here, dinner is served, and I'm starved."

Ann laughed then and the hurt in her heart was not so great.

They were driving home later that night when Jed proposed. He was maneuvering the car through the Times Square after theatre traffic when he said:

"Marry me, Ann. You're not really in love with Farrell, you know. At least not so much you couldn't get over it with practice. And I'll be a swell husband—practically no trouble at all."

"Jed, be serious."

It was a moment before Jed replied, a long moment while Jed drove carefully and kept his eyes on the road ahead of him.

"I am serious," he said at last. "I'd try to make you happy. Tim will never change. You know that, don't you?"

Ann's heart cried out in denial, but her sounder wisdom told her that Jed was probably right. It was all wrong marrying Jed feeling the way she did toward Tim, yet he had asked her, knowing about it, and somehow she felt so hurt and bitter tonight that she needed Jed more than ever. That must mean, at least, that she liked Jed a lot, next best to Tim.

"Jed, could I make you happy?" Ann asked slowly. "I suppose you're right about Tim and . . . Jed, are you sure you want to marry me?"

"Of course I'm sure."

"Then, I'll marry you, Jed."

Jed's eyes never left the way ahead but he reached out one hand and found hers. He pressed it tightly.

"I'm afraid I can't stop here in traffic to kiss you, but consider yourself properly kissed. Now, we're engaged. We'll get the ring tomorrow and get married as soon as you can get ready. I guess it takes a girl a long time."

Suddenly there were tears in Ann's eyes. She wanted Jed to kiss her. More than anything at this moment she wanted to hide her confused emotions in the shelter of his arms. The longing was almost intolerable. Oh, she didn't love Jed—not at all, of course—but he was so understanding, so wonderful. She closed her eyes and the tears pushed from under her lashes and slipped down her cheeks.

She was not aware that Jed had stopped the car in front of the Johnson house until Jed said sharply:

"Ann, you're crying. For heaven's sake, if you feel so badly about it, forget it."

"No, Jed, no," Ann interrupted. "It isn't that. It honestly isn't that. It's only that I"—her voice was just a whisper—"I guess I didn't like just considering myself kissed."

"Ann!" Jed's voice trembled, and then she was being held close in his arms and his lips were on hers. It was a gentle kiss, not long, not demanding, and then he lifted his head and laid his cheek against her hair.

"We'll be happy together, Ann. Wait and see. We like to do the same things. We sort of belong together."

Ann looked up at Jed and smiled.

"Yes, I guess we do," she said softly.

"And Jed, I do think you're swell. You believe that, don't you?"

"Yes, I believe it," he said simply. . . .

ANN'S MOTHER was a little surprised, but she was accustomed to surprises. Never since Ann had been born had there been a dull moment, and it was with something like a sense of relief than Ann's mother went about arranging for her daughter's wedding.

Ann rushed into preparations, too. At least it was something different to do. Jed was the perfect fiance, anticipating her every wish, doing everything he though might please her, and Ann had to admit that being engaged to Jed was pleasant.

It was a week before her wedding and Ann was busy at her desk checking the list of wedding guests. She wined as she checked Tim's name. She had sent him an invitation, but so far he had not replied. She leaned forward, letting her gaze wander out the window. Somehow she couldn't keep her mind on her work. She couldn't stop thinking of Tim.

She almost thought it was her imagination when a familiar voice said:

"Hello, Ann. Your mother said I'd find you here."

Ann's face went paper white. She turned slowly, fighting for control.

"Tim!" she said, hardly above a whisper.

He came swiftly across the room and stood before her, looking down at her with dark, searching eyes.

"Ann, I just got back. I've been away—on business. Your wedding invitation. Ann, you can't—you can't marry Harrison. You don't really love him."

If only he had said, "Ann, it's a mistake. I love you, not any other girl. Ann, marry me." But he told her that she was wrong, she couldn't marry whom she pleased.

"I don't think that is for you to say." Her voice was like ice and she tried to turn away from him, but he grasped her shoulders.

"Ann, listen to me. You don't love him. You love me. I've learned a lot since I left you. I—"

"Wait!" Ann's voice cut in. "You forget I'm engaged."

"I know, but it's all wrong. I know you love me, and I love you. Just as soon as I can get things straightened out in New York, I'll come back and we'll be married."

Ann's senses reeled. Tim was asking her to marry him. At last the thing she had dreamed of had come to pass. Yet she found herself saying, "I don't know why you think I don't love Jed. Why should you imagine I love you?"

Already she had backed away from him until she stood against the desk. She could not move further away and in panic she saw that he was coming closer. She closed her eyes as he took her in his arms. She fought against the desire to cling to him, but her arms around his neck tightened and something of the old thrilling ecstasy returned as she felt his kiss upon her lips.

Then she was pushing him away from her.

"You shouldn't have done that," she said.

"Why not? You're going to marry me, you know."

"I—I don't know, Tim," Ann said. "I can't hurt Jed."

"But you *can't* love him," Tim insisted.

"I can't hurt him." Ann was stubborn. "I'll see him this afternoon, Tim, and explain that you—that I—"

"Tell him you're going to marry me."

"I'll tell him, and if you want to come this evening, I'll give you your answer then. And now, please go, Tim."

"All right, Ann, but I'll come back later and you'll be waiting. You can't marry a man you don't love."

"No, I can't marry a man I don't love," Ann repeated slowly.

Somehow love had taken on a new meaning. For the first time since she had known Tim Farrell there was a tiny doubt in her mind.

Tim kissed Ann again and Ann responded but something had happened to the old, thrilling ecstasy.

**W**HEN Jed came that afternoon, Ann avoided his usual kiss greeting.

"Wait, Jed," she said. "Come in and sit down. I've got to tell you something, and I don't know just how to begin."

"It's Tim Farrell." Jed's eyes searched her face.

"Yes. I sent him a wedding invitation several days ago. He came as soon as he could. He told me he loves me, Jed. He wants to marry me."

Jed seemed neither surprised nor disturbed.

"And what did you tell him?"

"That I wanted to talk to you before I decided."

Jed lit a cigarette. Deliberately he inhaled deeply and then exhaled slowly, thoughtfully.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I . . . Jed, you've been swell, and I can't hurt you. If you love me—"

Jed regarded his cigarette contemplatively.

"Have I ever said anything about loving you?"

Ann's breath caught. No, he hadn't really. He had said they were alike, they belonged together. He had asked her to marry him but he had never actually said, "I love you."

"Well, I just thought," she began. Hot color flooded her cheeks. "It never occurred to me that you—you'd—" her

cheeks burned hotter—"want to marry me unless you loved me."

"It seemed a good idea. We get along well together."

"But marriage without love—"

"You were willing to marry me although you loved Farrell," he reminded her.

She felt shamed.

"But you knew."

"Yes, I knew," he said slowly.

"But it still doesn't make it right, does it?" Ann spoke out loud but she was really asking herself that question.

Jed merely shrugged. "A matter of opinion," he said.

"Jed Harrison, I never thought—"

Jed ground his cigarette out almost savagely. He rose.

"No, you never did," he said, and his eyes as they swept Ann were cold and slightly contemptuous. "But you won't have to now. Tim is back. He'll do your thinking for you. 'By, Ann. Congratulate Farrell for me. I won't be around."

"Jed!" cried Ann. "Jed!"

But he didn't reply. He had gone, out the door and down the path to his car without once looking back.

Ann had never seen Jed angry before. It was a new Jed, and an interesting one.

And now she was free to marry Tim and he wanted to marry her. Tonight she would tell him "Yes" and tonight she must look her most beautiful best.

Almost feverishly she dressed. It was almost as though she had been waiting for this time ever since she had first known Tim Farrell. Something within her had urged her on to break down the barrier that was keeping him from asking her to marry him. And she had won. At least Tim had proposed, and now they would be married. There would be no need to turn to Jed for comfort. There would be no Jed.

"No Jed!"

Ann said it softly, fearfully at first, and then it was a long, shuddering moan. Her victory in breaking down Tim's defenses became insignificant. Her efforts suddenly seemed childish. Love wasn't like that. Love was something deep, abiding, comfortable, the

way she had felt toward Jed for so long. It was flaming excitement and swift desire, the way she suddenly realized she felt toward Jed now, the way her heart cried out in protest at the thought of losing him.

She finished dressing swiftly. She was only vaguely aware that her mother called up to say that Tim had arrived, and when she went down stairs she was ready to go out.

"Ann," Tim greeted her. "You look beautiful—and you're all ready to go out. Where are we going?"

"I am going to see Jed," said Ann. "I'm sorry, Tim, about this afternoon. I should have known then."

"But, Ann, don't you love me?"

"I love Jed," Ann replied, and just saying the words gave her a warm, happy feeling even while she was remembering Jed's cool, "Have I ever said anything about loving you?"

"And you're going to him now?"

"Yes."

"I hope you know what you're doing," said Tim.

"I was never more sure of myself in all my life, Tim."

IT seemed ages before Ann was ringing the bell of Jed's apartment. She found that she was trembling. When Jed opened the door, his eyes widened in amazement, but it took only a second for him to regain his poise.

"Hello, Ann. I wasn't expecting you. I was packing a few things. Thought I'd run up to New York, maybe go back to my old job." He talked while he busied himself with little things and his eyes avoided hers.

"Jed, don't go away. I don't want you to go."

Jed swung around to face her then, and his eyes were blazing.

"Tim didn't come back," he said. "I'll find him, Ann. I'll knock sense in his crazy head. I'll—" He started again to move restlessly around the room.

"Wait, Jed. Listen to me. Tim did come back. He wants to marry me."

"Then what—why—"

Jed stopped in his pacing and again he was facing Ann. She met his gaze unflinchingly.

"I couldn't marry him, Jed. I don't love him. You see, after you left I got to thinking. I couldn't bear the thought of your going away. Can't you see, Jed, I'm trying to tell you I know it now—I love you."

Jed's face became whiter, if possible.

"Ann, think it over. It may be just that I'm a habit with you, a comfortable habit."

"Jed," Ann's voice broke. Don't you want me?"

In one swift movement Jed had her in his arms, held so close that she couldn't see his face but she could hear the beating of his heart against her cheek.

"Yes, I want you, darling," his low voice said, "more than I ever meant for you to know as long as you loved Tim Farrell. But, Ann, please be sure. I love you so much that I . . . Ann, please be very sure."

Ann moved away from him just a little, enough so she could raise her head and look at him with steady eyes, eyes full of love and longing.

"Jed, darling, darling, can't you see that I'm sure?"

He looked deep into her eyes for a long moment, searching, questioning.

"Ann, my Ann," he said at last huskily. Again she was held close in Jed's arms and now all doubt and misunderstanding had been swept away. She knew beyond all doubt that she was where she belonged.

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*After years of loneliness, Clare Carroll again knows the happiness of welcoming the man of her heart to her home—but he is a bewildered wayfarer whose past is shadowed in the gray fog of amnesia. . . .*

# Forgotten



A NEW ROMANTIC NOVEL BY

PEGGY GADDIS

## CHAPTER I

### HOMEWARD BOUND

**A**LEC was coming home! Alec was coming home!

To Clare Carroll, huddled in the deep old gold brocade chair, white as the simple dinner frock she wore, the words chanted themselves over and over in her dazed mind. The chiming of them was like small golden bells in her heart.

Alec was coming home!

Alec, whom they had all mourned as dead in a plane crash in the West only a few short hours after he had been demobilized from the Air Forces, after thirty-two months in the Pacific Theatre. Alec, whom she had loved with every throb of her young heart since they had been children together, here at the old Jordan place "Sundown."

Jonny, young, intense, desperately worried, leaned toward her and put a small wine-glass in her hand.

"Drink this, Clare," he said swiftly. "Pull yourself together, honey."

"We tried to break it to you as gently as we could," Uncle Jem said anxiously, watching her. "We had to be sure it was really Alec before we told you."

She lifted dazed eyes, deeply blue, almost black in the pallor of her lovely oval face and one shaking hand pushed back a tendril of honey-colored hair.

"Sure that it was Alec?" she whispered faintly, dazed.

Uncle Jem and Jonny exchanged swift glances.

"You see, Clare, he—doesn't remember a thing before the morning when he

awoke in the hospital and realized that he didn't even know his own name," said Jonny slowly, gently. "He had been found in an alleyway, the victim of an armed robbery, with a blow on the head that had caused concussion. The police investigated, decided that at his age there was an excellent chance he'd been in the Service, and of course, after that it was plain sailing. His fingerprints, his Army record, everything opened up. They wired here and I went up immediately. There's no question that it is Alec."

CLARE touched dry lips with the tip of her tongue before she could speak.

"It—It's been almost two years since he—since he—" She couldn't bring herself to speak the words.

"Since the plane on which his name was listed as a passenger crashed in Idaho, killing all on board," Jonny finished for her. "Where he has been since then, what has happened, how he missed being on the plane, is something we can only know if—*when* his memory returns."

She drew a long, sobbing breath and sipped at the wine. She made herself unclench her tight fists and there was an ache in them that made her look at them stupidly.

"We have to face facts, Clare," said Uncle Jem heavily. "The doctors think it is quite possible that bringing Alec here, to familiar scenes among which he grew up, to people who have known and loved him, may effect a complete cure. But amnesia is a queer thing. Maybe—"

Jonny flung him a swift silencing glance and Uncle Jem's tired old face sagged a little. He passed his thin hand over his eyes as though to brush away a dazed feeling that would never quite leave him.

"We have to feel quite sure that he will regain his memory, Clare. He's in perfect physical condition. Mentally, he's alert and on his toes. It's only that a black curtain hides the past. And we feel—the doctors and I, Clare—that that will lift, or at least grow thinner and thinner once he is here, until it will

all come back to him."

Still Clare was silent, so shaken, so dazed, that she could not manage words.

"We *do* want him back, Clare, don't we?" Jonny said, after a moment.

Clare caught her breath as though he had flung a handful of snow into her face. She sat erect, her eyes flashing, color pouring into her white face.

"Want him back?" She breathed the words in a tone of shock and anger. "Want him back? Jonny, how *dare* you! He's—Alec!"

Jonny smiled at her warmly, and she knew he had spoken deliberately to jerk her back into a feeling of being alive.

"Of course we do," he said swiftly. "He's in Charleston at the hotel now. I'm driving down for him in the morning. We'll be back in time for dinner. I felt we had to let you know the whole story, first, and give you time to adjust yourself."

She stood up, despite her trembling knees.

"Jonny, let me go with you to bring him home?" she pleaded.

Jonny hesitated. "Honey, I'd like that. But the doctors felt it would be better if he came face to face with you for the first time here at Sundown. The girl he loves, in the place he has always loved."

Clare's face twisted a little with pain.

"If I'm still the girl he loves," she whispered piteously.

"Stop such foolish talk!" Jonny said sharply. "He couldn't ever stop loving you, Clare."

"Then why didn't he come home when he was discharged?"

"That, honey, is something we may never know. Certainly not until he begins to remember. But there could be a thousand and one explanations. Remember, he had been discharged at the Separation Center that morning; he had been colossally lucky in getting a plane reservation for the midnight plane. But something delayed him, and we must be eternally grateful that it did, for—remember what happened to all those who were aboard the plane?"

Clare shuddered and put her hands over her face for a moment.

"Yes, I know," she murmured, and

warm and sweet and revivifying came her lovely faith in Alec.

She knew that Alec loved her, knew it as certainly as she knew that she loved Alec, and that their love would endure so long as they both should live. Whatever had delayed Alec that long ago night in California had spared his life. Now he was coming home! And some day, perhaps soon, perhaps late, she would know all that she needed to know of the time that lay between that night in California and the night when Alec had been found, unconscious and brutally beaten, in an alley in the warehouse district in New York.

AFTER Jonny had gone, Clare lay wide-eyed, staring into the dark of her beautiful room, looking out into the faint starlight that had not yet been vanquished by a late-rising moon, and went back over the past—the years she had lived here, a ward of Uncle Jem's since the death of her mother and father in a typhoid epidemic in the little country town forty miles away.

She had been eight then, and Alec Jordan, the orphaned owner of this old, old plantation that had been in his family for two hundred years, had been eleven. Uncle Jem had been guardian for both of them, and he had laughed and said lightly when they first met—a stiff, frightened, forlorn little girl and an abashed, outwardly arrogant little boy:

"You're only thirty-second cousins, twice removed. You're not even related, but you're going to be like brother and sister here while you're growing up. So you aren't even 'kissin' kin' as people say down here."

From the first they had been devoted to each other. The adjoining plantation, which was their nearest neighbor, was Hexagon Hall. Its owner, Jonny Graham, had been Alec's own age. The three children, lonely because the two plantations took up the whole of the small coastal island, had grown up together.

When war laid its burning shadow over the world, Alec had been accepted for military service. Jonny had been turned down because of an old foot-



CLARE CARROLL

ball injury, and if he had grieved bitterly in secret, he had been, outwardly, the quiet, good sport that had endeared him to everybody. He had flung himself into the task of managing the two plantations, as Uncle Jem's frail hold on the robust health such a job required, had slipped away. And Clare had plunged in to help, until Jonny had laughed fondly and said he was making a first-rate farmer of her.

She had wanted to marry Alec before he went away. But they had been so young. She had been not quite eighteen and Alec barely twenty-one. And Alec had agreed with Uncle Jem's reluctantly expressed wisdom that it was better to wait.

She stirred restlessly as the first rays of the tired old moon crept into the room, and tears were slipping from her eyes and into the pillow. Tears for the grief and the anguish of that day, almost two years ago, when the word had reached them that Alec had been aboard that wrecked plane. The news had smashed her so flat that for weeks and months she had gone around like a voiceless, sick shadow.

Only in the last few months, surrounded and enveloped by Uncle Jem's love and Jonny's gentleness, had she be-

gun to live again. Timidly, like a delicate plant whose blossoms have been blackened by a killing frost, that scarcely dares put forth a fragile new blossom, she had come almost reluctantly back to life.

She had grown fond of Jonny. All right, she told herself in that moment of clarity and of realization, if it hadn't been for Alec's miraculous return she might in time have given Jonny her second-best love; might have married him, borne his children, been contented, even happy.

But there had never been between them the wild, exultant, tumultuous joy that she had known in Alec's arms. The rapture of Alec's mouth, thin-lipped, masterful, demanding, claiming her own—even the memory of it, after all the long, long years, had the power to shake her to the very depths of her being, and to set her face burning so that the tears were dried, and her heart rose smotheringly at the thought that this time tomorrow night, Alec would be here—at home! With her!

## CHAPTER II

### THE SAME—AND NOT THE SAME



**J**ONNY had said that he and Alec would be back in time for dinner. It was early spring here in this mild Southern climate. Late January, but to the coastal islands, it is an extremely busy time of ploughing, planting, getting in the crops because two, and sometimes three crops a year are cultivated.

Because of Jonny's absence for the last few days, Clare had been working twice as hard as usual. In the late afternoon she rode home along a bridle path that skirted a vast black field where the first tiny green shoots were already beginning to show in beds raised above the narrow drainage ditches.

She was looking forward eagerly to a hot shower, to dressing slowly, carefully in her most luscious frock, making

herself as beautiful as she could, for Alec's first glimpse of her in so long. Her heart soared at the thought. To be once more in Alec's arms!

Suddenly the big sorrel horse shied violently, jerking Clare back to a consciousness of her whereabouts. Startled, she looked up and saw a few feet away from her a tall, blond young man in well-cut tweeds, hatless, the dying sunlight turning his curly blond hair to gold.

For a stunned moment, she sat stock-still. It couldn't possibly be . . . and then he smiled faintly, uncertainly and the next moment she had flung herself out of the saddle and was running toward his arms which opened automatically to receive her, though they did not close about her as hard as her own folded about him.

**S**HE WAS laughing, crying, clinging, to him, hysterical.

"Oh, Alec, darling—darling—darling!"

It was all she could say and for a little it seemed to be enough. He did not kiss her. His arms held her almost laxly. Courteously perhaps would be the better word. After a little, she drew back, conscious of the lack of warmth in his greeting. She stood on tiptoe then and framed his lean young face between her palms and set her lips on his. And instantly the old, lovely magic rose within her, setting fire to her, sending the blood like warm wine through her veins, making her heart do nip-ups.

After the first instant of shock as their lips met, Alec was still. Then his arms tightened about her, his lips warmed beneath her kiss, and Clare had that old, lovely never-to-be-forgotten feeling of walking on rosy clouds, bumping her head against the stars, that she had known in the dear long ago.

It was Clare who ended that kiss, when her heart could no longer endure the exquisitely poignant ecstasy of it. She drew a little away, but now his arms held her closely, and his lean, handsome face beneath the shining rough cap of blond curls, bleached al-

most to straw color, was touched with wonder.

"You're Clare," he said huskily, and the sound of his voice was like the chiming of golden bells in her heart, and cymbals making a breathless tumult.

you as I knew you—without memory."

A tiny chill swept her and suddenly she was crazily enough a little shy of him. Suddenly he was a tall, blond, blue-eyed terribly good-looking stranger. The old, loved, longed-for Alec



"Alec, my boy! This is a miracle!" Uncle Jem was on the verge of tears

"You—you remembered me?"

His handsome face darkened a little.

"I don't see how I could help it, darling." The little endearment came almost automatically. "But that chap, Jonny, told me about you and described

seemed to have slipped away and she had time to remember the abandon of her greeting, and to be conscious of her riding breeches and mud-stained boots, the thin, cool shirt, faded from many washings. And she had planned

to make herself beautiful for his first sight of her!

"I'm s-s-sorry," she murmured, embarrassed. "Please forgive me. I mean I was so terribly excited to see you again—"

"Why should you be sorry?" he asked. "What's there to forgive? It was wonderful. I enjoyed it—thoroughly."

There was something in his bold-blue-eyed glance that brought the stinging color to her cheeks and made it impossible for her quite to meet his eyes. Almost hurriedly, she stammered an apology for her attire.

"Jonny said you'd be back in time for dinner," she said hastily, "but there was some work I had to do. We have a lot of new hands and the first crop of celery is ready to be blanched, and though it's usually Johnny's job, I can do it very nicely."

**U**NDERSTANDING her confusion perfectly, knowing it a tribute to his virile masculinity, Alec grinned at her—and her heart stirred with the old remembered magic beneath the teasing, caressing, almost impudent grin.

"I've an idea you could do anything very nicely that you set your mind to," he told her.

He walked beside her along the winding drive, with its tall azaleas that in bloom, were like soft flames, with the great curtains of Spanish moss draping the old live-oak trees above them giving an atmosphere that was like the smoke from those soft fires.

"This Jonny wanted to bring me over later," Alec said. "But when we passed the entrance gates down there and he told me this was Sundown, I asked to get down and walk from there. He'll be over later."

Clare nodded, and Alec looked down at her curiously.

"I—ah—may be stepping out of line—remember, I'm a stranger here," he said wryly, after a moment, "but I got the impression this Jonny is in love with you."

Clare caught her breath and the color flamed in her cheeks.

"Jonny is your best friend," she reminded him tautly.

"Could be," said Alec almost grimly. "But that still doesn't make it impossible for him to be in love with you."

"He's not!" Clare said quickly.

"Then he's far more stupid than he looks," said Alec drily. "How any man could be exposed to you for any length of time and not be—"

He stopped as though a hand had been laid over his lips, silencing him. For they had come out of the winding drive and before them lay the beautiful old plantation house that was, so legend had it, so beautiful that when a war-weary Sherman and his troops had come upon it at sunset of such a day as this, they had not the heart to fire it, no matter how convinced they were that such destruction was the only way to end a terrible war.

The house was two-storied, square, built of red brick made here on the plantation long, long ago. Twin stairs of white-painted banisters and flat stone led up in a beautiful curve from either side, meeting on a landing two steps below the wide, white-plastered gallery. The long, floor-length shutters to the French windows that opened on the gallery were painted white.

The lawn in front was more than a hundred years old, deep-piled as the most extravagant carpet, emerald-green. The double row of azaleas that lined the drive curved before the house, following the other end of the drive to the road again.

With the giant live-oaks surrounding it, with their curtains of Spanish moss stirring like a ghostly cloud in the faintly salt breeze from the ocean half a mile away, the house was like something in a dream. Something that might fade into nothingness with the first moment of coming awake.

For a long moment Alec stood still, and Clare did not quite know how her hand happened to be held tightly in his. But when he turned to look down at her she saw awe and wonder in his eyes, and a dawning trace of bitterness.

"This is my home?" he asked tautly. "Where I grew up?"

"Yes, dear," Clare said softly.

"And you are the girl I loved and wanted to marry?"

Tears were thick in her eyes and her smile was tremulous, so that she could only nod in answer.

His hand released hers after an almost agonized pressure, and he stood away from her, with his hands jammed tightly into his pockets, his fists balled.

"Then there's something wrong. Some terrible mistake. I can't possibly be the man you say I am. For no man could ever forget a place like this, or a girl like you! No matter what happened to him!" His voice was hoarse, almost violent.

Clare stood stone still, her own hands tightly clenched, tears slipping from her eyes. And Alec stood with his back to her, looking out over the rolling land beyond the house, to where the yellow shimmer of sunlight on black water marked the river. Beyond, half a mile, the dying light made silver ripples against the horizon line marking the sea.

Suddenly breaking the tension of that moment before it could become unbearable, Uncle Jem came hurrying out of the house and down the left hand side of the curving double stairs, leaning heavily on his stout stick, his thin old face transfigured with joy.

"Alec, my boy! Alec, how wonderful to see you here again! This is a miracle, son—nothing short of a miracle!" He was quite unashamedly on the verge of tears.

ALEC looked at him, touched, uncertain, a little uneasy.

"My—father?" he asked.

Tears stung Clare's eyes, but she forced her voice to steady itself as she spoke gently.

"Uncle Jem," she told him, smiling. "He's been like our own father since your parents and mine died a long time ago."

Uncle Jem's old mouth beneath his crisp white mustache tautened a little but when he spoke, his voice was steadier.

"It's mighty fine to have you home again, boy," he said, as though there was nothing unusual in not being recognized by a man who had been like your

own son. "Come in, come in. Mam' Lindy's wild to see you."

Clare laughed shakily at the bewildered look in Alec's eyes and slid her hand through his arm.

"She's the boss of the house," she said lightly as the three of them went up the steps. "She took us in hand when we were children and brought us up in the way she felt we should go. And now she is still the best cook and house-keeper in all the world."

THEY were at the top of the steps now crossing the gallery. As they went into the house, a vast Negro woman in a spotless dark dress, a voluminous white apron and "head-rag" came hurrying along the hall, moving with astonishing lightness for one of her bulk.

"Wheah-at mah boy?" she demanded, her voice rich and warm with affection, and tears on her dark-brown satin cheeks. "Bless de Lawd, mah Mist' Alec! Honey, come heah, let Mam' Lindy look at yo'."

She caught Alec by the arms, looked up into his young face and embraced him heartily, weeping a little, laughing her rich, warm laughter, patting his shoulder, her affection so plain that no one could fail to be touched by its deep sincerity. Then she drew back and eyed him fondly.

Alec, his face white and a little desperate, caught her by the shoulders and turned so the amber lamplight fell full and revealingly on the lean, flat lines of his face.

"You're quite sure I'm really Alec—that there couldn't be any mistake?" he demanded of her in a voice so ragged, so worried, so all but frantic, that Mam' Lindy looked startled.

"Sure yo's mah Mist' Alec?" she scolded him tenderly. "Whut yo' talkin' 'bout, chile? Yo' think ol' Mam' Lindy, whut nussed you when yo' was a baby, ain' know her own chile? Honey, yo' couldn't fool me no mo' dan yo' could de mammy whut birthed you!"

Alec drew a deep breath and his smile flashed warm and his blue eyes deepened with an almost passionate gratitude.

"Thanks, Mam' Lindy—thanks a million," he said heartily.

Mam' Lindy patted his sleeve with work-gnarled, gentle old hands.

"Now I gits yo' yo' dinneh," she said briskly. "De dinneh yo' was always beggin' fo'—shrimp jambolaya, nice fresh shrimp whut ain' been outten de river mor'n three-fo' hours. Miss Clare, yo' tak' kyeh o' him."

CLARE beamed, blinking away the tears.

"Leave that to me, Mam' Lindy," she said gaily.

Mam' Lindy looked at her lovely, eager face and then at Alec.

"Dis hyeh's a proud day fo' all of us, Mist' Alec. Us all been missin' yo'—too much. Miss Clare, she ain' 'et ner slept fitten to keep a bird alive. She a mighty fine gal, Mist' Alec." She added that quietly.

Alec looked at Clare with something in his eyes that brought a rich, warm tide of color to her face.

"She's the loveliest thing alive, Mam' Lindy," he said softly, his eyes clinging to Clare's flushed face with a look that made her own eyes drop.

Mam' Lindy, with all her race's love for a romance, laughed joyously.

"I allus use' to tell yo' 'purty is as purty does,' Mist' Alec, an' Miss Clare sho' is purty!" she agreed heartily, and went back toward the service quarters with that oddly light-footed, swaying gait that had a strange grace which was an inalienable part of her race's inborn rhythm.

"Come along, Alec," Clare said. "I'll show you your room, and then I have to get into something presentable, or Mam' Lindy won't allow me to come to the table."

She spoke with a deliberate lightness that sought to ease the tension of the moment.

"I'll whip up some cocktails," said Uncle Jem eagerly.

He watched as they went up the stairs, Clare slim and tall in her worn riding breeches and boots and shirt, the honey-gold of her hair loose about her shoulders; Alec behind her, handsome and virile in his well-cut tweeds.

### SKYROCKETS IN HER HEART



AT the top of the stairs, with a beautifully proportioned corridor stretching before them, and white painted doors closed on either side, Alec laid a hand swiftly on Clare's wrist.

"Would it be the same room I've always had?"

"Of course," Clare said swiftly. "No one has ever used it since you went away. No one has gone in except to dust and sweep and put fresh flowers around."

"And that, of course, was your job—the fresh flowers," said Alec, so surely that there was no hint of a question.

Clare's color was high but she said lightly, "Well, surely the master of Sundown Plantation rates fresh flowers in his room!"

Alec's eyebrows went up a little and he looked startled.

"You mean all this belongs to *me*?" His gesture took in the house, the surrounding acres.

"Of course. All of it."

"But I thought Uncle Jem — and you—"

"Uncle Jem is your guardian," said Clare. "He's been looking after things until you came back from the war. He has a small income of his own."

"And you?"

She laughed and made a gay little gesture.

"Oh, me—I'm only a poor relation, and a very distant one. Uncle Jem says you and I aren't even 'kissin' kin'." She broke off beneath the look in his eyes at the little phrase.

"Oh, no?" His tone was low, deep, vibrant with an emotion that stirred her heart to swift ecstasy as he drew her into his arms with a strength that would not be denied. He held her close and hard against him, his fingers beneath her chin tipping back her lovely face until his eyes were looking down into her own.



For a long moment Clare met Alec's accusing gaze from eyes that were no longer blue, but steely gray

"Well," he whispered, "that's all Uncle Jem knows about it."

He bent his head and his lips claimed her own in a kiss that set off sky-rockets in her heart and sent the blood pounding through her veins. It was a kiss that in its beauty, its tenderness, its ardent demand wiped out the long,

lonely years between, that destroyed the barrier of his forgetting, that made them one flesh, one heart, one mind. Such a kiss as she had dreamed of, lying awake on moonlight nights when the mocking-birds, plagued by the lovely light, unable to sleep, had awakened to sing softly to themselves of love and lovers.

And when at last he let her go, he was smiling down at her, though blue flames danced in his eyes and a little ridge of muscle leaped along his taut jaw.

"So Uncle Jem says we aren't 'kissin' kin,' eh? Poor blind Uncle Jem!" He spoke softly, and once more his voice, low, ardent, set her heart to doing nip-ups.

"I—I'd better—s-s-s-show you your room," she stammered, crazily abashed, shaken.

"Let's see if I can find it," Alec said quickly.

She stood still, all but holding her breath. He turned and surveyed the corridor, studying each door in turn. Then, while her heart all but ceased to

beat, he moved steadily along the corridor to the very end, and put his hand on a door-knob, turned it and swung open the door. He looked inside, then turned back to Clare, who was clinging to the stair-railing, shaking, her eyes wide.

"Alec!" she breathed. "You *did* remember!"

For a moment he hesitated, then his face went grim.

"I don't think so." He dashed that small, faint hope. "I think it was sort of instinct. You said this place belongs to me, that it was the room I've always had. That meant, I supposed, the best room in the house. What a stuffy little beast I must have been to let you give it to me! This one overlooks the garden, it's a corner room, probably the best, so I must have taken it."

"It was your mother's room," said Clare quietly. "You were born there. So naturally it has always been your room."

Her shoulders drooped a little and she turned wearily away, for she had had a wild, exquisite hope that maybe the return to things he had known and loved had begun to work the yearned-for magic.

HE came back to her and now when he drew her into his arms, there was comfort and an almost impersonal tenderness in his touch, as though she had been a grieving child and he many years older, who offered her peace for her tears.

"Don't take it so hard, sweetheart," he said gently. "The medics said it would take time, that we mustn't try to force it. It may never come back. I may never remember."

"Don't say that! You will! You will! We'll—I'll *make* you remember!" She hid her face against him for a moment while she fought for self-control.

"Of course," said Alec gently, not arguing, not agreeing, just being polite. "Run along now, and wash your little face. Even with tearstains on it and a smudge or two, and no make-up, you're still the prettiest girl I ever remember seeing."

And if there was a trace of bitterness

in that, she was too shaken to grasp it, as she turned and stumbled away, blinded by tears, toward her own room at the opposite end of the corridor.

Alec watched her go and not until her door closed behind her, did he go into his own room.

Showered and dressed for dinner in one of the simple cotton dinner frocks that were so right for her at Sundown, Clare stood before the mirror and brushed her honey-gold hair into a top-knot of shining curls and pinned into the curls a spray of the night-blooming jessamine that she loved. Just a very small spray, for though the blossoms were tiny and starry, ivory-white, their fragrance was as heavy as that of orange blossoms.

The pale blue pique frock, with its wide, gored skirt that brushed the tips of white sandals, the snugly fitted bodice with its off-the-shoulder decolletage was vastly becoming. Her smooth, bare shoulders and arms were delicately suntanned from year's end to year's end, and while she had more formal, more elaborate gowns, she seldom wore them for simple dinners at home with just "the family."

Her heart thrilled to the thought that tonight the family would not be merely Uncle Jem, Jonny and herself. The circle would be completed by Alec, the master! She laughed a little at the thought, and her heart sang with warm delight as she went down the stairs.

As she reached the foot of the stairs, the outer door opened and Jonny came in, hatless as always, his dark head gleaming, his sun-bronzed, pleasantly rugged, unhandsome face alight with its warm smile without which he rarely looked at her. There was a troubled look in his dark brown eyes tonight, as he came toward her, distinguished looking if not handsome in his white dinner-coat and dark trousers, a darkly red cornflower in his button-hole.

"Hello," he greeted her casually enough, though there was nothing casual in his tone or in his eyes, "Alec?"

Clare gestured toward the living-room, from which they could hear the pleasant rumble of Uncle Jem's voice and an occasional answer from Alec.

Jonny stood close to the foot of the stairs, Clare on a step above him.

"Clare, what was his reaction?" Jonny asked swiftly, softly.

Tears sprang to Clare's eyes and she shook her head.

"Nothing," she admitted huskily. "He remembered—nothing. He's not even sure that he really is Alec."

"That's nonsense, Clare. There's no possibility of a mistake. Fingerprints and Army records don't lie, Clare. We checked, rechecked, then double-checked again, before we even mentioned to you that there was any chance." Johnny spoke so strongly that there was more than a measure of comforting assurance in his very forcefulness. "We just have to be patient, that's all. The doctors feel reasonably certain that once he is over the natural confusion and excitement of returning here, once he becomes adjusted, the veil over the past will wear thinner and thinner. It may come all at once. He may wake up some morning and have the whole thing clear, or it may come bit by bit. We just have to wait, to be patient, not try to hurry or urge him."

Clare drew a long shaken breath and suddenly she was white, and her eyes were big and frightened, as she took a step toward Jonny and his arms opened automatically to receive her. She clung to him for a moment, and her voice was so low that its whisper could reach no farther than his ear.

"Jonny—Jonny, I'm frightened!"

JONNNY'S arms tightened convulsively about her and above her head his jaw hardened in a grim line and his eyes flashed.

"Frightened, Clare?" His voice was scarcely louder than hers had been. "Of Alec, sweet?"

"Oh, no, no, no! Jonny, how could you think that?" Such sharp protest was in her voice, such shock in her eyes that Jonny grinned wryly.

"Then of what, pet?"

"Oh, I don't know, Jonny," she confessed miserably. "It's all so different. I've looked forward to having Alec home for so long. I've thought and planned and dreamed, and now—well,

Jonny, he—he's changed. I'm all confused."

And, looking across his shoulder, she saw Alec standing silent, inscrutable, his face set and white above a white dinner jacket, looking straight into her eyes. For a long, startled moment she met that odd, accusing, curious gaze from eyes that were no longer blue but now a steely gray. Then Alec turned, without a word and went back into the living room and away from her sight.

Jonny sensed the shock that sent her rigid, and looked down at her, puzzled, frowning.

"Alec," she whispered faintly. "He was in the doorway, watching. I don't know how much he heard. I didn't want him to hear, to see, to think—"

Jonny's face tightened a little but he made himself smile ruefully and give her a little friendly shake, and tried manfully not to let his hands cling to her as they were trying to do.

"Snap out of it, infant," he ordered her sternly. "I'm old Jonny—remember me? Good old Jonny, your adopted brother. The one you always run to when you've smashed your dolly, or fallen down and hurt yourself. Alec couldn't possibly be jealous of me."

"Couldn't he, though?" said Clare through her teeth, and before he could be quite sure he heard that, she had slipped past him and with her head high, her wide, long skirts rippling about her, walked into the living room.

## CHAPTER IV

### "BROTHERLY" LOVE?



UNCLE JEM looked up from the cocktail tray, looking younger and happier than Clare had seen him since the terrible news of the plane crash had come almost two years ago. Alec stood near by, a cocktail glass in one hand, his other hand in his jacket pocket, one shoulder leaning negligently against the corner of the big handsome mantel.

He greeted Clare with an almost mocking smile, said hello casually to Jonny, and as Jonny bent to accept the cocktail Uncle Jem extended, Alec said lightly, "By the way, old man, that shade of lip stick is more becoming to Clare than to you, if you don't mind my saying so," and offered a handkerchief politely.

Jonny straightened and for a moment a look flashed between the two men that had in it the naked sword of enmity. Appalled, Clare saw it, and her heart sank. Such a look never had passed between the two men before. They had been such close friends that during schooldays Alec had been nicknamed "David" to match Jonny's "Jonathan."

"Thanks," said Jonny, and refused the extended handkerchief.

Producing one of his own, he brushed it against his cheek, and regarded the infinitesimal smear of geranium red with an almost preoccupied air.

"You really should use the kiss-proof sort, my dear," said Alec drily, and before Clare could answer he had turned to Uncle Jem, for a refill of his glass, and plunged immediately into some subject they had been discussing before Clare and Jonny came in.

When dinner was announced, Alec turned to Uncle Jem and, with a hand on the old man's arm, walked with him toward the dining room, keeping up the discussion, leaving Clare and Jonny to follow. Jonny looked down at Clare.

"Don't mind so much, honey," he said softly. "He's nervy and on edge and everything is strange to him. He'll be all right soon."

Dinner was polite, pleasant. Alec ate enormously of Mam' Lindy's famed shrimp jambolaya, and sent back compliments through Mam' Lindy's delighted son, Amos, who was the butler. The windows were wide to the velvet fragrance of the night, as warm as a Northern June. The scent of the night-blooming jessamine was almost too sweet. The little soft night sounds to which Clare had so long been accustomed that she would have noticed only their absence, crept into the room.

It was a dream long held in her heart that had come true at last. Alec was

back home again in his accustomed place at the table. Good-looking, making her heart do acrobatics by his slow, almost teasing smile that always had had its own special significance for her. But tonight when he looked at her his blue eyes were cool and gray and slightly mocking. All because he had come out into the hall and seen her resting for a moment in Jonny's arms.

How could he possibly think there had been any meaning in that? Jonny was like her own brother. At the thought, as though Jonny had called to her, she looked up and met his eyes upon her. Unguarded for a moment, and there was nothing in the least brotherly about that look.

Startled, her eyes widened a little and color flowed into her face. She all but wrenched her eyes from his, and found Alec watching them both. There was a little moment in which Alec looked straight into her eyes, and then at Jonny. Then deliberately, as though brushing them both from his mind, he turned back to Uncle Jem.

So the meal to which they had all looked forward, Alec's first at home after his long, heartbreaking absence, was strained and tense. Afterwards, when they were having coffee in the living room, Jonny moved to Clare's side as she poured the coffee. He carried the fragile cups to Uncle Jem and to Alec, and the tension endured.

For the first time, Jonny's departure was something Clare secretly welcomed. She walked with him to the door, and there he smiled down at her and said under his breath, "Don't give up, honey. Everything's going to work out."

She nodded, smiling despite the mist of tears in her eyes. And when he had gone she turned and went back to the living room, to find Uncle Jem alone, sitting rather heavily in his big chair, his face tired, his eyes dark with pain.

"The boy's—changed, Clare," he said sadly.

Clare sat on the broad arm of his chair, her arm about his shoulders, her cheek against his hair. Glad that she could hide her own face from him in this way, she made herself speak steadily, strongly the words of comforting

assurance that her heart cried out to accept at face value.

"Of course he is, dearest. We have to expect that. All the boys who have come back from the war have changed, you know. And it's twice as hard for Alec. We have to be patient, darling. It will all work out. He'll find himself."

UNCLE JEM looked up at her, a pathetic gleam of hope in his fine old eyes.

"You really think that, pet?" he asked anxiously

"Of course, you darling silly!" she answered him firmly, and kissed his cheek. "Now you be off to bed like a good boy and I'll come and tuck you in. It's been an exhausting day and you'll feel ever so much better in the morning. We all will."

Immensely cheered by her specious comfort, Uncle Jem obeyed her docilely. When he had gone upstairs she walked to the long French window that opened on to the terrace above the azalea garden and stood looking out.

The scene was one of which she never tired, no matter what the time of day or night. For that azalea garden was like a shrine. Alec's mother had planned it and coaxed it into perfection. It had been her favorite spot. And after her death, three years after Clare had come to live at Sundown, the place had been kept exactly as she had planned it and left it.

Immediately below the flagstone terrace the grass was thick and soft and green. Beyond, white azaleas had been planted in a thick semicircle, with a border of low-growing white petunias in front of them. Beyond the azaleas, there was the glimmer of the river. On either side tall ancient live-oaks formed a sort of protecting canopy, and even on a night like this when the tired old moon was ragged and uneven, as though Time had been nibbling bites out of it, the white flowers were like an immense flight of butterflies held captive. They seemed ready to flutter off at any moment, stirred a little by the always-present faint breeze from off the water.

The fragile scent of the flowers, that of the petunias stronger than the

azaleas but mingling a little, and with the faint scent of salt to give it tang, crept to her. As though it drew her she stepped out on the terrace and walked across the dew-wet grass to where a big flat stone bench half-smothered in the low-growing white azaleas gave a beautiful view of the river.

Not until she stood within a few feet of the bench did she see that Alec was there. In the darkness, she saw only the white glimmer of his dinner jacket, but even the low sound of her caught breath as she turned to go, caught his ear. He stood up and turned to face her.

"Don't go," he said, and his voice was odd and strained. "Don't be afraid."

Something in his tone more than in the words caught her to stillness.

"Afraid? Why should I be afraid?"

"I don't know. I thought perhaps of me."

"But that's crazy—that's silly! Afraid of you? Alec, I love you!" She spoke swiftly, and was instantly and absurdly shy of him, and the feeling added to her mental discomfort.

She could only guess at his expression for the shadows here were so thick that his face was only a blur.

"Really? You seem to pass from my arms to Jonny's and back again so easily that I think one might be forgiven for wondering."

"Jonny has been a tower of strength to Uncle Jem and to me, Alec. He's our best friend—and yours. We couldn't have managed here without him. He's a genius at farming, and places like Sundown and his own place aren't just ordinary farms. Drainage ditches to restore lands the swamps have taken, the type of crops that do best in mucklands, marketing—it's a terribly complicated business, and neither Uncle Jem nor I could have managed—" Her voice broke as Alec made a little gesture of dismissal.

"Oh, I suppose so," he said wearily. "I'm a fool; perhaps worse. I wouldn't know. But I keep having the craziest feeling that in spite of everything—fingerprints, Army records, Jonny's identification, your own, Uncle Jem's,

that weird old Negro woman's—in spite of all of you who assure me this is my home where I've spent most of my life, I can't believe it. I can't see how any man under any circumstances could ever forget—" His voice broke and he dropped back on the stone bench and put his head in his hands. His whole attitude was one of such utter dejection and misery that Clare was beside him instantly, her arms about him, her cheek against his, murmuring little words of endearment, of comforting assurance.

**A**FTER a little, he lifted his head and his two hands closed on hers. His tone was thick and desperate when he spoke.

"There's something I have to tell you, Clare—you more than any one else in the world. It's a dream I've had several times. Not always the same dream, but there's always the same person in it. A woman."

Clare caught her breath and was very still. Almost as though he spoke his troubled, anxious thoughts aloud, Alec went on, slowly.

"She's the most beautiful woman I've ever seen in my life," he said, and a small, sharp knife thrust itself deep into Clare's heart and twisted. But she set her teeth hard and let her hand remain clasped in that painfully taut pressure between both his own. "She has dark hair, black, I think. And eyes that are as green as emeralds. And a gorgeous figure. Once I dreamed of her sitting at a piano singing. Her voice was like—oh, like thick yellow cream, like velvet. And then there was a dream in which she was furiously angry, smashing things, screaming like a virago." He shuddered.

There was a taut silence, because Clare could not have spoken if her whole life had depended on it. Who *was* she, this spectacularly beautiful woman out of the hidden reaches of his past?

This woman he remembered, if not consciously, then in his subconscious dreams? He must have known her well, he must have loved her deeply to have remembered her even in fragments of a dream. He had not remembered the sweetheart of his childhood, his adolescence, his young manhood.

"I told the medics about it in the hospital. They looked wise and nodded solemnly and said that was a fragment of memory coming back, not a dream at all, and that soon the whole thing would be clear." His tired voice went on and suddenly he was saying almost savagely, "I've a feeling that there was something ugly and bitter and painful about it. I'm not even sure I *want* to remember, even though she is so beautiful."

Once more his head was in his hands. Clare mastered her pain and confusion and hurt, and tried to comfort him. At last he turned and drew her into his arms and held her closely, as though her slim body in its cool, thin frock was a sort of shield against dark and ugly things. And Clare relaxed against him. The old lovely magic of his touch did things to her. She lifted her face for his kiss and knew that there were tears on her soft lips as his own claimed hers.

All about them the exquisite white garden seemed to stir and to whisper softly, tenderly, of things that were yet to be. Comfort and hope were re-born, and Clare gave Alec back his kiss with a tenderness and an abandon that made him suddenly put her a little away from him, though with hands that wanted to cling.

"And *that*, my lovely little person, will be enough of that," he said flatly, "until such time as I can come to you with a whole memory and a true story of the darkness that masks the past. You're too sweet and too lovely to be involved with a man as mixed up and as confused as I am. You'd be much wiser just to wipe me out entirely and take Jonny, who is so obviously yours for the taking."

And before she could move or speak to stop him, he had turned and gone swiftly across the dew-wet grass, and into the house.

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## CHAPTER V

## OUT OF THE PAST



FOR a long time that night, Clare lay awake unable to get out of her mind the beautiful dark-haired, green-eyed woman who had made such a terrific impression on Alec that even in his clouded memory she could project herself into his mind—and his heart. Clare's own heart twisted a little at the memory of his words—"the most beautiful woman I have ever seen"—but there was a small measure of comfort in remembering that he had added grimly, "I've a feeling that there was something ugly and bitter and painful about it. I'm not even sure I *want* to remember."

It was hard to be patient, hard to be hopeful that life here at Sundown would bring back his memory so that all the past would be an open book. And he had said at the last when he had kissed her, as though he had been saying goodbye for always, "That will be enough of *that*," and her response had shown him how completely, how utterly she was his. And he had said she should take Jonny.

Her pillow was wet with tears before she fell asleep, for all that she had the healthy, normal feminine attitude of contempt for a woman weak enough to cry herself to sleep over love and its problems. That is, until the healthy, normal woman faced those problems herself.

But late as it had been when she fell asleep, habit was strong. For years Clare had risen every week-day morning at six. She had dressed in riding breeches and shirt and boots, breakfasted, and gone out to find her horse saddled and waiting. She had ridden off to supervise the work on the vast acreage. To which every spring more acres were being added as engineering marvels—at a terrific cost, of course—drained more and more of the swamps.

She came down to breakfast this

morning, moving softly lest she disturb Uncle Jem. In the doorway of the breakfast room, she paused, wide-eyed. For Alec was already there and as he turned to greet her her heart did a nip-up because he, too, wore riding breeches and boots. His shirt was open at the throat and he was, she decided breathlessly the most disturbing vital, good-looking man she had ever seen.

He seemed in excellent spirits as he greeted her.

"I take it I ride?" he suggested, indicating his attire. "I had a most illuminating hour in that rather impressive clothes closet in my room, once I had been assured that the clothes in it were mine. I decided I was a man of parts. There seems to be everything the well-dressed man should wear from pajamas to soup-and-fish, including these."

"You had your first riding lesson, according to Uncle Jem, when you were five, on a fat little pony named Claramel!" Clare told him lightly. "By the time I met you, you seemed as much at home on horseback as though you'd been born there."

"Good for me," he applauded himself shamelessly. "Then if I say 'pretty please' may I have a morning gallop with you?"

Clare laughed and seated herself at the breakfast table.

"I'm afraid it won't be just a morning gallop, sir," she told him gaily. "It's a day-long stint with me, though I'd be happy to have your company. I come back to lunch at noon, get a fresh horse, and am out again until dusk."

Alec sat opposite her, sniffing hungrily at the fragrance of the coffee she was pouring.

"Hi, that's illegal, or something," he said protestingly. "A twelve-hour-day for a girl like you? When do you frivol, for Pete's sake?"

"In mid-summer, when it's too hot to be in the fields. Unless, of course, there's an emergency. There usually is." She added that demurely.

"Well, I'm taking over," he said firmly. "That is, as soon as I can learn what it's all about. And the first lesson will be conducted this morning, Teacher. I'll bring you an apple every day and

you can see how much you can teach me and how fast!"

Her heart was singing for joy. The black mood of last night in the azalea garden was gone. The bitter jealousy—*had* it been jealousy she hoped?—of Jonny was gone. He was more nearly the old Alec than he had been since his arrival. And he had been here only a few hours.

Maybe, *maybe* the cure was beginning to work! She could wait, she could be patient, she could be happy if only now and then some small rent in the dark curtain would part and some small shred of memory come back.

Deliberately she closed her mind to the one memory, that of the exquisite, green-eyed woman who haunted his dreams, that had already emerged from the darkness.

IT was a glorious day, and Clare was never to forget it. They rode along bridle trails cut out of the ancient forest; they rode along hard-packed narrow walks above the dikes that held back the river in its Spring and Autumn floods. They inspected fields carved literally from the heart of the swamp, fields that were black-soiled, their beds raised above the narrow, deep ditches that were draining off the water, leaving their rich, incredible fertility to man's disposal.

Fields where small armies of men, women and children were working and where green shoots marked growing crops, seeded beds marked crops yet to be seen. Other fields where harvest was already in process—ice-berg lettuce, celery, tender crops heretofore thought the exclusive property of the Florida Everglades region.

Alec showed a keen appreciation, a deepening interest as Clare explained the work to him, and the day sped. Back home to lunch, an hour's rest, fresh horses, and then out again.

Riding home in the lovely afterglow of sunset, Alec said wearily:

"I don't know, but it seems to me that if a man put in twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for the next fifty years, he might hope to learn a little something about running a place like

this. But that's pretty optimistic."

Clare laughed and leaned from her saddle to give his hand a comforting pat.

"Oh, it's not really so difficult," she told him lightly. "It's just a matter of plodding along, day after day. At first it's all a mass of confusing detail and pretty bewildering, but suddenly it begins to clear up and there you have it."

"How long did it take you?"

"I grew up with it."

"And what was I doing?"

"Going to college to learn more and better ways of draining swamps, breeding throughbred cattle—and then to war," she reminded him quietly.

They had come by now into the drive leading up to the beautiful old house, and they rode in a contented friendly silence, each of them filling his or her heart with the lovely picture the house made, in its exquisite setting of grass and trees and the soft flames of azaleas.

A grinning half-grown boy was waiting to take their mounts.

"And now the most important thing in the world," Clare said lightly as they slid from the saddle, "is a hot shower, followed by cold, and some fresh clothes."

The sound of a car turning in at the wide-open gates some distance away caught her attention and she paused at the foot of the steps, to wait for the car.

"Now, who in the world can that be?" she murmured.

Watching her, his mouth suddenly a little taut, Alec said drily:

"Jonny's early tonight."

Color flowed into her face. "Jonny's gone to Jacksonville for a couple of days on a marketing problem," she said, almost shortly.

Alec nodded, and his smile loosened the taut lines of his mouth a little. The car was in sight now.

"Why, it's a taxi from the village down at the other end of the island," Clare said, startled.

"Ah—then we have guests from the outside world?" asked Alec lightly, his eyes still on her puzzled, lovely face.

The taxi swung up to the steps and the gnarled, grizzled old man behind the wheel called out cheerfully:

"Hiya, Miss Clare! I brung you some comp'ny."

The taxi door swung open, and a woman stepped out into the full light of the sunset's afterglow. And Clare's heart turned over, for the woman was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen—tall, voluptuously built, superbly dressed in a silver-gray suit with a green-gray tweed topcoat slung over her shoulders. An impertinent green hat crowned hair black as midnight, and there was laughter and mockery in her eyes that were as green as emeralds.

CLARE could not tear her eyes away from the woman to look at Alec. But she heard the smothered exclamation that he gave, as the woman laughed.

"Alec, you *bad* boy!" she said, in a voice like thick cream. "I could shake you! The idea of wiring for me to come and then not meeting me! I could have torn you to pieces when I got off the train in that weird little town on the mainland and they said the only way to get here was by taxi! And such a taxi! But now that I'm here—" She

turned and looked at the scene before her, and then back to Alec, her lovely face glowing. "But, Alec, how utterly beautiful! It's—why, it's like something in the movies and so much more beautiful because it's real. Though I don't believe it."

Alec was standing perfectly rigid, not speaking, his face white and set so that the cheekbones stood out in high relief beneath eyes that were the steely gray of silver coins.

"Who the devil are you?" he rasped at last, in a tone harsh and stinging as a whiplash.

The woman started, and her emerald-green eyes widened. She stared at him, shocked to the core.

"Alec!" she gasped, incredulously. "Alec, are you mad?"

"I don't know." Alec brought the words out with a terrific effort and one shaking hand went over his white face. "I asked, who the devil are you? What are you doing here?"

"Where else would I be, Alec?" said the green-eyed woman in a tone so quiet that its very simplicity held a terrible conviction. "After all, I'm Lissa, your wife."



Does the sudden arrival of Alec's wife bring back his memory? What is the mystery of Lissa—and what does her advent mean to the Carroll household? Does Clare step aside and try to forget Alec—or does she continue to love him? Does she ever find happiness? For the answer to these and other questions, continue this soul-searing novel of queuing hearts! Look forward to the next installment of—

## *Never to Be Forgotten*

By PEGGY GADDIS

Coming in Next Month's Issue!

# Romance



FRANK SINATRA  
Artist of the Month

**F**RANK SINATRA, regarded just a few years ago by psychologists as a "Passing American Phenomenon" has become a household word not only in America but virtually in every country of the world. He has not as yet reached his acme; he is destined perhaps to roll on like "Old Man River," one of his best selling records.

Sinatra's rise to fame was so spectacular and unprecedented in show business, that many people thought it would not last. His best selling records, his motion picture schedules are all indicative that Frankie is to be with us for some time to come. He doesn't attribute his fame to any particular rabbit's foot, having come up the hard way. His first ambition was that of becoming a newspaper reporter. He was well on his way in achieving his goal, when he saw a Bing Crosby picture. It was then and there that he decided to make show business, his business.

A Major Bowes Amateur hour served as Frankie's springboard to fame. After receiving favorable notice on his singing with the Major Bowes traveling unit, he started on several sustaining radio shows. He finally got a paying job at the Rustic Cabin in New Jersey, where he met Harry James and accepted a featured singing assignment with the band. Six months later he was singing with Tommy Dorsey and it was here that the young baritone began to attract the attention of music critics and the public.

His recordings of "I'll Never Smile Again," "Night And Day" and "This Love Of Mine" pushed him up several rungs higher on his ladder of success. Hollywood soon beckoned, and with his debut in "Las Vegas Nights" and "Ship Ahoy," he soon became a matinee idol as well.

The turning point in his career came in October, 1942, when he left the Dorsey band and ventured on his own. His fame preceded him and Theatre, Hotel and Concert engagements all came his way. He shattered attendance records everywhere he appeared and he soon became one of Broadway's fixtures.

Call it luck, call it anything you will. The fact remains that Frankie Sinatra is more than an American phenomenon, he's an American Institution.

**MEET THE ARTIST OF THE MONTH—**

# On Records



*The latest platter patter  
brought to you right from  
Broadway's Tin Pan Alley!*

**"Give A Broken Heart A Break"** . . . Vaughn Monroe  
RCA Victor . . . Vaughn Monroe in his most melo-  
dious and tuneful mood for RCA Victor, highlights the  
waxing with some smooth singing and lilting band back-  
ing. This ditty is flavored with a wistful pathos as  
Vaughn sings of the rocky road to love, putting strong  
emotion into his plea for another chance. The customary  
lush Monroe strings and pungent brass backing add  
sparkle to the plaintive spinning.

**"Laroo Laroo Lili Bolero"** . . . Vic Damone . . . Mer-  
cury . . . Vic Damone's latest has all the rich Latin  
feeling which has made many of his biggest successes.  
Patterned in a folk song style, this ditty still has a  
unique quality completely its own. Singing leisurely and  
with a tender, caressing treatment as he tells of a  
search for love and romance under Italian skies, Vic  
has chalked up another heartwarming hit with a repeti-  
tious title phrase that is extremely catchy.

**"I Bring You Spring"** . . . Johnnie Johnston . . . MGM  
. . . This is strictly for those who know that Spring and  
love go together. The Crew Chiefs provide the har-  
monious background in the first chorus while Johnnie's  
gilt-edged voice almost whispers the swaying ballad. The  
second chorus spotlighting Johnnie and the Crew Chiefs  
make this tops for romance on wax.

**"My Fair Lady"** . . . The King Cole Trio . . . Capitol  
. . . Remember the old song recital in childhood days—  
"London Bridge is falling down, my fair lady?" Thence

by  
**JOEY  
SASSO**

cometh the inspiration for this new song. However, Nat  
Cole sings in his heart-stirring fashion a song of two  
who found love on London Bridge. He tells also of  
dreams filled with fog, mist, and "My Fair Lady." It  
is Nat Cole at his emotional best.

**"Fella With An Umbrella"** . . . Frank Sinatra . . .  
Columbia . . . Frank brings us a charming love song on  
this side, telling the tale of the fella with an umbrella,  
looking for the girl who's been saving her love for a  
rainy day. This is a number with a simple charm that  
will entrance the singing, playing, dancing American  
public, and the triumph in recording it with Sinatra  
assures this song a strong potential.

**THE FAMOUS, FABULOUS FRANKIE!**



# Listen Girls!

## A CHAT WITH THE EDITOR



**J**ANGY as brown October ale are the new shoes seen in the brand new copper color—and bronze, too. You all went overboard for the gold colored shoes this past summer and we can promise the same all-out enthusiasm for these two shades in your Fall footwear.

For shoes seen on the campus, there is a new feeling, too. There's a rugged quality about the old campus classics—an added lift to a heel; gilded buckles on an otherwise simple shoe; pinked edges; and kiltie tongues and ghillie ties. More sueded leathers will be seen and the newest touch will be the ankle-high boot reminiscent of an after-ski boot.

From one end to the other, shortie gloves become conversation pieces when linked to the new Fall coat sleeves—and the tendency is decided femininty! It's worked with tiny leather cuff frills, braided cuffs, button trimming, contrast piping and cuff vents. Very, very fetching!

### *From Head to Toe*

Stockings made fashion headlines recently by appearing in a new length. Clocked and knee length stockings are being shown for evening wear. These are seamless and have an elasticized top to hold them snug.

There's going to be a know-how about wearing your Fall bonnet. You'll put it straight on the head, like Pop's, level with the brow—and we think you're going to like the look of a hat sitting on the head with perfect balance and with a forward line level with the brow.

They're going to be super-feminine in structure—coquetry is stressed. But softness is the entire mood, with many hats turned up at the back to reveal your hairdo. Best news of all is that millinery prices will be within budget reach—and colors will be very

delicious—Nostalgia Green, Dahlia Red, Parfait Beige, and Jewel Blue.

From the tip of your toes to the top of your head, you should look lovely!

### *Bang, Bang!*

When small bonnets, sailors and rounded silhouettes swept into fashion, the revival of bangs was inevitable. And what a difference a bang makes! By covering the forehead, it changes the shape of the face and actually your whole appearance.

The wide-waved bang, ends turned under, requires no haircut—and looks well if you have a large forehead. Also for uncut hair, try a side-swirled bang, with one wave and ends rolled under.

If your features are irregular, have your hair cut short in front and wear a bang in soft, diagonal curls. And a long face looks best with flat bangs with waved ends turned up. Most flattering!

### *Kitchen Safety*

Vital statistics show that your kitchen is a combination factory, bakery, cannery, laundry, workshop and playground. And the sole responsibility for this hubbub of activity falls upon the woman of the house. It's up to the little woman to guard against the dangers that lurk in her kitchen.

Burns and scalds are the most frequent type of kitchen accident. Women and children suffer most in these accidents, because they are in the kitchen more than men. In addition, women's more inflammable clothing adds to the danger.

Falls rank second. Be wary of waxed or wet floors, worn floor covering, unanchored small rugs, pails or other objects left around the floor. Do be sure to mop up a spot of

moisture or grease as soon as it is dropped.

The men come in for their share of hazard, too. They have a way of popping off to sleep while heating tea or coffee; the fluid boils over, the gas escapes—result, one case of gas poisoning.

Do be careful in the kitchen!

### *As Others See You!*

Do you see yourself as others see you? Of courage not! It can't be done. But you can come up with the right answer by analyzing yourself and experimenting.

Draw your lipstick on in a new line, try your hand at a new method of eye makeup. Experiment indefinitely with hair lines and



styles—try putting it up, try parting it in the middle or in the back. Try buns, try curls, try it straight.

You can experiment with necklines, too. Does a V neckline look better on you than a rounded one?

Naturally, you won't be able to do all of this by yourself. You need a collaborator. Get together with a friend or neighbor and do the analyzing for each other. It's a grand way to spend a quiet afternoon. And if you can enlist the services of friend husband, the better for all concerned, my dear!

### *Beautify While You Work*

Are you a busy housewife? Find it difficult to set and keep a beauty routine for yourself? You can make it part of your regular work schedule—so that you won't feel guilty about taking time out for glamour.

Perfect your posture while you work, also take inches off your waistline and thighs by picking things up properly. Bend knees

deeply and rise slowly, keeping your spine in a straight line from behind your ears. Takes no extra time but works wonders.

Bed making can be beauty making and help slim the waistline. Stand at the center of the bed. Don't move the feet at all. Tuck sheets in by s-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g, pulling ribs away from the hips. Open windows wide and inhale, exhale, too. Airs the bed and makes you fit!

The vacuum cleaner is fine for rugs—also for strenghtening chest and tummy muscles. Hold chest high and back straight as a rod. Your middle should be perfectly flat, knees relaxed and slightly bent. Any body bending should come from the hips.

Feet bother you? Been on them since the first crack of dawn? Remove your shoes, place book on floor between feet. Place outside edge of feet on the floor along edge of book. Grip front of book with toes. Separate knees as far as possible without losing toe grip. Relax and repeat.

Stretch for beauty whenever possible—while dusting, hanging clothes, putting dishes away. Make each stretch count. Work with rhythm and swift clean strokes. Feel the pull in your waistline. Feel, too, how much peppier you are doing things the right, balanced way.

For a beauty rest, lie on the floor, hips resting on two pillows, feet up on a chair. Fifteen minutes of this will rest and relax you. You'll be fresh as a daisy and ready with a bright, gay smile to greet the man in your life at the end of the day.

### *Stepping Out*

If you're a bobber or a wobblor, or you are guilty of other ungainly walking habits, maybe it never occurred to you that the length of your stride and walking with knees wide apart is causing your lack of grace. It's true, though. The length of your stride definitely controls the bobbing movement of your walk.

Shorten your steps if you're a long stepper and extend them if you are the short, jerky little one.

If you walk with your legs too far apart, you can't stop your weight from shifting sideways on each forward step, and that makes a bobber of you. The knees should just graze each other in passing. Walking with your legs close together streamlines your appearance. You won't believe quite

how much until you make a test before a full length mirror.

We're always surprised, too, to see gals heaving along with their toes turned out widely. Makes your feet look big and ungainly. Train the toes to answer the command: "Straight ahead."

Until you get these basic stance elements aligned correctly, you're not going to be able to do much about giving the torso, the head, and the chin the distinctive air that's due them.

### *Ah, That Fragrance!*

Perfume, yes—but at the right time and in the right place. And we can really sympathize with the male protestors against the use of heavy odors during office hours. Only the faintest scent should be used in the close quarters of a business office.

If you have any doubts as to what may be a heavy, disturbing odor, we'd suggest that you use none at all. Your safest bet is a light dusting powder or a very faint cologne.

After all, perfume is supposed to inspire romance not business and you can't blame the male for asserting his rights when a heavy, heady scent interferes with the wheels of progress.

If perfume you must, go in for the very delicate scents—and save those gift bottles of siren stuff for cocktail, dinner and dance dates.

### *Honey Pie*

"Come to Coffee". It's a delightful way of entertaining. Inviting guests to coffee and dessert is novel, money and time saving. And you can play games or just have lots of good conversation afterward.

And what grand talks you can have! No jumping up and down to change courses. The whole evening before you with no unpleasant visions of heaps of dishes and a disordered kitchen to dim the glow of friendship.

For that special coffee date, try Honey Pie:

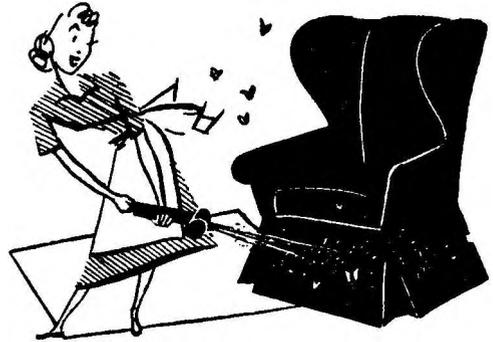
1¼ cups flour	4 tablespoons cream
1¼ cups sugar	¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking powder	½ cup strained honey
1 tablespoon shortening	Rind ½ lemon
5 eggs	1 teaspoon cinnamon
3 cups cottage cheese	½ cup finely chopped almonds

Mix 1 cup flour, ¼ cup sugar and ½ teaspoon baking powder. Work in, until mealy, 1 tablespoon shortening and add 1 egg, beaten. Roll ¼-inch thick and line a large oblong pan with this. For the filling, press cottage cheese through a sieve, add ¼ cup flour, cream, salt, ¼ cup sugar, honey and the yolks of 4 eggs well beaten.

When this is smooth fold in the grated lemon rind and 4 egg whites beaten stiff. Spread this over the crust and sprinkle the top with ¼ cup sugar mixed with cinnamon and almonds. Bake in a moderate oven, 350 to 400 degrees F. until the filling is firm and the crust well browned.

### *First Aid for Rugs*

Consistent good care of your rugs will repay you with good service. A daily once over lightly with a carpet sweeper to pick up surface dirt, crumbs, etc. keeps the dirt from



grinding back into the rugs. And the vacuum cleaner should be used twice a week.

Be a moth watcher. Moths like to hide in dark corners. If the furniture is too heavy to move for frequent rug cleanings, spray underneath furniture regularly with a good moth killer.

Your floor covering will get more wear where most of the walking is done so change it around once or twice a year. The life of your rug can be greatly increased by the use of a good pad underneath.

Quick action is in order when something is spilled on a rug. For ordinary stains, wring out a cloth in cold water and sponge off the spot before it has a chance to set.

If you are tempted to take up a rug and give it a good beating, resist the impulse. The dirt will come out, but so will the pile tufts. Don't shake your rugs, either. You are likely to weaken the backing, break the threads or strain the fibers.

### *Eggactly*

No longer can it be said "she knows just enough about cooking to boil an egg". There's more to it than plopping the egg into water. It's an art.

Did you know that high temperatures make egg white tough? The best cook

doesn't boil eggs. Instead she puts the egg in cold water, brings it to a boil, covers and turns off the heat. The egg should stand in the water for 3 minutes (soft cooked) and 20 to 25 minutes (hard cooked).

Scrambled eggs are best cooked in a double boiler, instead of directly over the heat. A moderate oven should be used for such dishes as custard, souffles and cakes.

Eggs are one of the "must" foods. Even when budgets are limited, at least three or four eggs a week are needed for each person. If possible, one egg a day for each child and each groupup is recommended.

### *Fresh as a Rosebud*

Want to get that fresh-as-a-rosebud look about your skin? Here's how. The first step is to dip a face cloth in comfortably warm-to-hot water, wring it out and press it close against your face. Then, while the skin is warm and moist, apply cold cream in up-and-out spirals. Remove it carefully with tissues and apply a second creaming for the twice-clean look. After dashing on cold water, pat on skin freshener with a cotton pad wrung out first in cold water. This treatment cleanses and at the same time acts as a stimulant.

Another very important point: make-up should be creamed off not only at night but each time before a "fresh face" is applied. Your skin is one of your most precious beauty assets. Keep it that way by using this program twice a day.

### *A Short Bit of Advice*

If you're five foot five or under, nothing is going to make you look five foot seven—but wearing clothes in the right proportions is going to make the most of your smallness. Don't try to borrow trappings that rightfully belong to the taller set. Here are the points you should bear in mind when you select your clothes:

Keep the shoulders narrow and natural looking.

Wear narrow belts.

Beware of too-full skirts. Make sure the flare is moderate.

Wear one color from hem to neckline. You break up your silhouette by wearing a jacket of one color and skirt another.

Keep necklines simple—unless you have a long neck. In that case cover it up with

chokers, scarfs or high rising necklines.

Avoid voluminous sleeves—keep everything in the silhouette sleek and moderately narrow.

Select small patterns in prints.

Keep the hipline fairly smooth.

You're the type who will look best in bonnets, off-the-face Bretons or small profile hats. And never mind the platform shoes—neat, uncluttered pumps do better on your dainty toes.

### *Special Note to Blondes*

The yolk of egg rinse will do much to keep your hair golden-tinted. Beat the yolk of a strictly fresh egg and add to it a cup of cool



water. After the hair has been washed and rinsed thoroughly of all soap, pour the egg mixture over the entire head and hair. Rub it well into the scalp and on the hair. Rinse it off with clear water.

Some girls who use this egg treatment get even more highlights by giving it a final rinse with witch hazel and some just substitute half a cup of witch hazel for the cup of water when adding it to the egg yolk.

### *Harmony Comes First*

Bobby sockers, keep your costumes harmonious! It's just impossible to be elegant in bobby socks. Have you ever seen a sweet young thing all tricked up in an ultra-feminine hat, complete with feathers and veiling, but spoiling the whole picture with bobby socks and loafers?

It must be one way or the other. The hat hasn't been made that goes with bobby socks. If you wear loafers and bobby socks, the rest of your costume should have the same care-

free air. Hair should be hatless, dresses should be simple, the complexion free of heavy makeup.

But if, one day, you want to act grown up, do an all out job of it and wear an outfit that is in complete harmony, from your hat right down to your shoes.

### *The New Look in Nails*

Have you noticed that nails are beginning to look more lady-like—less like claws?

New colors in nail enamels are a soft, feathery pink. And moons are in evidence again for the first time in many years to further the more delicate, feminine look. Your nailtips, too, will show more than just a hairline of white.

### *Chit Chat from Here and There*

For the young man in search of a wedding band in the lower price brackets, we have news from a matrimonial band specialist of some new designs. One of the new ones, a symbol ring, had three-petaled flowers in white palladium mounted on wide yellow gold band. The petals stand for Love, Honor and Obey. Another new one is a simulated expansion watch bracelet brought down to finger size.

Another delightful one revives an old victorian fan design of gold, laced together with six palladium ribbons.

Betty Lou Holland, lovely young ingenue in the popular musical revue, "Make Mine Manhattan," can't bear a date who picks out an attractive girl and then proceeds to tear her to pieces. Instead of flattering her, it makes her uncomfortable—as though he's trying to cover up her faults.

Wonder what kind of orchids to wear with what? All right—so nobody ever sends you orchids. But maybe, someday, somebody will and you want to know how to do right by them. With tailored suits, wear the brown orchid. With casual dresses, little yellow sprays of orchids go very nicely; costumes in gray, navy and mauve make perfect backgrounds for orchids ranging from pale pink to deeper purple.

And very superior for your smart black outfit is the simply lovely white orchid with deep purple center.

It's the butt of many a joke—but in spite of all the fooling around "Nature Boy" made

the number one spot on the hit parade of songs. We love it!

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### NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

"I must have been a silly kid the way I mooned after him! And he didn't even know I was alive!"

Danielle Belden smiled at her recollection of Clive Gaynor, on whom she'd had a childhood crush. Her father was a Kentucky veterinarian then—and now that her father had passed away, Danny had taken over his practise. The neighbors had accepted the girl veterinarian. Nothing disturbed her unruffled self-confidence. But now—Clive was returning. . . .

Almost the very first question he asked was: "How did a girl like you ever decide to doctor animals, Danny?"

Danielle explained that it was her work, the life she knew, and that she had a living to earn. And then:

"You're like a little Cinderella. Only, you rode off in your career instead of a pumpkin coach. Look—how about Prince Charmings? Who has the inside track?"

"Not a single Prince Charming!" Danielle confided. She smiled. There was Matt Amory, of course—who had been asking her to marry him for months, with a regularity which was almost monotonous. Yes, there was Matt. And a stag line was something she never had to worry about, at any party in the Bluegrass. Still, until this very moment—

Her eyes were starry as they lifted to Clive Gaynor's. She felt as if she were walking two inches off the ground. Her heart was singing.

"I'm glad there's no Prince Charming," said Clive softly. "Though it's hard to believe."

Danielle swayed slightly. Was there really a halo shining around Clive's handsome, proudly carried head? No, of course not. Yet she could swear she saw one. Silly! What would Clive Gaynor be doing, wearing a halo? She'd heard about his life in the city. He was supposed to be a gay blade, a play-boy, an expert in champagne blondes!

Danielle's heart was racing wildly. There it was again—after all these years, she loved him again! She tried to tell herself it was only a throwback to her childhood, when

(Concluded on page 112)

"Did you enjoy telling me?" he asked Sally as he tossed the cigarette away



## *A Night for* **PRETENSE**

*by Dorothy Daniels*

**I**T was a typical New York summer night. Warm, sultry, with not even the hint of a breeze or an encouraging flash of lightning foretelling of a break in the weather. At eleven o'clock

the tall buildings were throwing off the heat they had absorbed that day. The few pedestrians on this side street might have been robots, so slow and mechanical were their movements, with

*Sally and Allan Make Believe They're Sweethearts!*

the effects of the heat clearly visible on their exhausted features.

But to Sally Palmer, who had just left the restaurant where she was employed, the depressing night was of small concern, for only a short time ago she had received a call from Eve Sinclair. Eve and Sally were waitresses, but for three days now Eve had been absent.

Tonight, however, Eve had phoned and said it was most important that Sally meet her outside the restaurant. So Sally, tense with nervousness, was awaiting her friend. It wasn't as if Eve were really a friend. They had nothing in common except they were both in love with the same man. Only that was Sally's secret. No one knew, no one would ever know. But so far as Sally was concerned Allan Manley was tops in her book.

Allan was studying to be a doctor and was about ready to graduate. To help with his living expenses, he worked as a waiter in the bar side of the restaurant. Sally worshipped him from a distance. He wasn't even aware she existed. But he was most definitely aware of Eve.

Several times tonight Sally had noticed him look searchingly toward Eve's station. But Sally was working Eve's station along with her own. It helped to soothe the ruffled temper of the manager. He wasn't one to put up with absenteeism very long, and Sally didn't blame him.

A car pulled to the curb and a tall blonde girl stepped from it. It was Eve. The girls saw each other at the same time and met midway on the sidewalk.

Sally said, "Gosh, Eve. What happened? Where have you been?"

Eve laughed gayly. "A surprise, Sally. I'm married." She extended a hand and showed a wedding ring and above it a large, glowing solitaire. "I eloped three days ago. He's very nice to me. Met him in the restaurant a couple of weeks ago. Lots of money."

Sally sobered. "But, Eve. What about Allan? He's been eyeing your station for the last three nights. I thought—"

Eve nodded wisely. "That I was going to marry him. I know I said that. He

seemed the best bet at the time. But I couldn't wait that long. I wanted security and in three years he might change his mind about me."

SALLY'S gray eyes clouded. "It's going to hit him pretty hard. Tell him gently, Eve."

"I'm not going to tell him at all." Eve smiled mischievously. "You are."

"Oh, no." Sally's hand went to her throat and her fingers massaged it gently. The thought of her even speaking to Allan Manley, much less breaking the news of Eve's wedding, made a hard constricting lump in Sally's throat. "I—I couldn't, Eve. You must see him and tell him yourself."

"I haven't time," Eve said impatiently. "The only reason I came back to town was to purchase some clothes. But I did get to thinking of you and Allan, and for once in my life, I thought I'd do something nice for someone."

"Something nice," Sally flared. "Jilt a swell guy like Allan, and you say that's something nice. Something you can be proud of."

"Oh, stop being so dramatic," Eve said with a trace of irritation. "You know perfectly well you're in love with him." She laughed at Sally's shocked look, the quick lowering of her lids. "I've seen those adoring glances you gave him when you thought no one was looking. So now is your chance, Sally. Make the most of it."

Eve turned to go. Sally caught at her arm. "Please, Eve. I—I can't. He'll be hurt and angry and he'll hate me. He'll end up by blaming me."

Eve shrugged off Sally's grip and patted her arm. "Take the risk, honey. Now I must run. And you might at least wish me happiness."

"Oh, I do, Eve! Honestly I do!"

But Eve was already in the car. She waved carelessly as, with a clash of gears, it swept down the street and turned onto the avenue. Sally's tortured glance followed it until it disappeared from sight. Her mind was begging Eve to return; not because she wanted Allan to have her. It was too late for that. But she couldn't bear to see him hurt.

She moved out to the curb and leaned against the bar support of the canopy. Allan would be coming out at any minute. It was her chance. And how she wanted it. Yet at the same time dreaded it.

She wondered about the best way of telling him. He had to know because she knew he was puzzled about Eve's disappearance. But before she had a chance to figure out a tactful way of revealing Eve's marriage, he appeared in the doorway.

He paused to light a cigarette. Sally studied him as if he were a stranger. Tall, broad-shouldered, with dark, serious eyes and even darker hair; a firm mouth and square, determined chin.

He stepped from the doorway and turned east. Sally straightened, took a deep breath and followed him.

She raised a hand to touch his arm, then thought better of it. She said, "Mr. Allan Manley?" as if she weren't certain.

His head moved sideways. He said, "Yes?"

"I'm Sally Palmer." She spoke with a confidence she didn't feel and pointed a finger at the restaurant. "I work in there."

He nodded. "I know. We're part of the personnel of Fuller's restaurant. May I help you?"

"No." Sally gulped. "Uh—it's about Eve."

He looked interested. "You've heard from her?"

"Tonight," Sally said softly. "She's married. I—I hope it won't upset you too much."

"What?" the word came forcefully. The cigarette dangled forgotten between his lips.

Sally repeated, "She was married three days ago. She asked me to tell you."

Mechanically, his hand raised, took the cigarette from his mouth and tossed it into the gutter. He smiled grimly.

"Did you enjoy telling me?" he asked her.

"No," Sally replied softly. "I—really didn't want to tell you."

"But Eve convinced you." His nostrils constricted as he breathed deeply. His

hands tightened and he thrust them deeply into his pockets. He eyed her with ill-concealed contempt.

SALLY noticed and her pity ebbed. Just as she suspected, he was blaming her. Sally tensed. Her head scarcely reached his shoulder, but she raised it upward until their eyes met and exchanged hostile glances.

She said, coolly, "Yes, she convinced me. I felt sorry for you. I've been watching you for the last three days casting worried glances at her station. I know you love her. I—I thought she had let you down rather badly. Now I'm not so certain. I think you're very rude. Also very stuffy."

His eyes widened in surprise. "Spunky, aren't you?"

"Perhaps," Sally challenged him. "But at least I no longer feel sorry for you. And I don't like being insulted when I'm trying to do a favor. You can bet it will be the last time, Mr. Manley. Sorry I had to learn this about you."

She turned abruptly and her high heels made swift clack-clacking sounds along the deserted street. She was going in the wrong direction, but she could detour around the block. She was darned if she wanted to walk along the street with him, even though his long legs could easily outdistance her.

She wondered what she could ever have seen in him. Loving him secretly, feeling a tight band of worry around her heart when Eve told her the shocking news a few short minutes ago and then ending up by being slapped down verbally.

Her mouth compressed bitterly and tiny beads of perspiration broke out on her brow. It was much too hot to be walking so fast. But Sally knew that her inner fuming had as much to do with overheating her as the weather.

She had turned the corner when she heard quick steps behind her. Then her name was called. Sally walked faster. A strong hand gripped her arm. Sally paused, but didn't look up. She knew who it was.

"Miss Palmer—Sally—please!" The coolness had left Allan's voice. It was

warm now and pleading. "I—I want to apologize."

Sally studied a crack in the sidewalk. It was wide and one side was higher than the other, a treacherous spot for a particularly high heel. Sally mentally patted herself on the back. It was almost amusing that she could have such an inconsistent thought when Allan's harsh grip sent a warm glow through her. Stuffy or rude, he was still her number one man.

She sighed in a bored manner. "It isn't necessary, Mr. Manley. But I'll accept your apology if you'll just let go of my arm."

He released her and Sally walked on. He set his pace to hers. He said, "Look, Sally. I'll admit I'm everything you say I am. But be kind. Blame it on the fact that I'm tired. Blame it on the heat. It's been a devilish week and it makes for short tempers. But, please . . . give me a break."

Sally could feel his eyes on her. Her head held high, she continued to study the pavement with eyes downcast.

She said wearily, "I'm tired, too, Mr. Manley. And you sound as if the heat had affected your brain."

"Look, Sally—" He paused.

Sally, caught off guard, glanced up. It was what he wanted. He smiled whimsically. Sally's brows raised and she averted her gaze, but not before he had caught the faintest quiver at the corner of her mouth.

That was the nicest part about Sally. Her smile. She was not particularly good looking but she possessed a pair of lips that were beautifully curved. When they parted in a smile that lighted up her entire face, the effect was startling.

Allan said, "You're lovely when you smile, Sally."

She sobered quickly. "Shall we dispense with the compliments?"

"It's a fact rather than a compliment," he said reasonably. "Besides, I figured that if I could get you to smile, I could convince you I'm not crazy from the heat."

Sally stopped so suddenly that Allan was a few paces ahead of her. He backtracked quickly.

"You know I've been jilted tonight, Sally," he said.

She nodded coolly.

"Well, what I'm trying to say—to ask you—is if you'd help to console me. By that, I mean—"

**I**NSTANTLY Sally stiffened. Here it was, the moment she had dreamed of, and she was going to turn it down.

She said huffily, "Allan Manley, if you think for one minute I want second best, you're crazy."

"Oh, nothing like that." He looked amused. "It's just that it's such a hot night." He gave her a concerned look. "Have you a cool apartment?"

"I have one room, and it's plenty hot," Sally said firmly. "But I'm anxious to get back to it—alone, thank you."

"Please, Sally." He moved a step closer. She stood her ground. His arms raised and touched her shoulders lightly. She felt a smothery feeling in her throat and a fluttering in her heart that rendered her speechless.

Allan continued, "I only meant that it's too hot to go home. Let's go somewhere. It will be just for fun. We'll go for an hour where we can pretend that I haven't been jilted and we haven't quarreled and you haven't worked up a remarkable hatred for me. Be a sport. A drink, a few dances, something to eat if you'd care to, then I'll take you home."

He was very earnest and his eyes sought hers hopefully. But if Sally had tried to speak, her voice would have been a hopeless quaver. Allan mistook her silence for refusal.

He loosened his hold on her and stepped back. "Well, I tried anyway. I thought it would be rather fun. And I suspected you and I could be like two strangers meeting and finding they had a lot in common. Just for an evening. When it was over, we would part with nothing but happy memories."

Sally's eyes misted. His voice was soft and coaxing and it did the same strange things to her that his merest touch did. He was truly sincere. No doubt he was trying to atone for his boorishness. A sudden recklessness and daring possessed her. Why not? At

least she could have one evening of pretending he cared. And she could laugh and be gay and even flirt a little. He would think she was just a good sport. Nothing would come of it. He had made that quite clear.

And that was exactly what Sally did—with Allan's help. He brought her to a cozy restaurant that had a small orchestra composed of stringed instruments. The place was lighted softly and she was seated across the table from him in a booth that gave them just the right amount of privacy.

They drank Tom Collins from tall, frosted glasses. It was cool and stimulating. There was no strangeness between them now. Allan spoke of his work, his ambitions. He wanted to be a doctor in a small town with a little cottage and an understanding wife.

Sally said daringly, "Do you think Eve would really have fitted into that picture?"

"No." Allan reached across the table and caught her hands in his. "You would be more the type, Sally."

She laughed in amusement. "The dull, dependable type."

"No," he contradicted smilingly. "Just dependable. Don't forget this is an evening of pretending, isn't it?"

"Of course." Sally released her hands from his and toasted him with her drink. She said daringly, but with a hint of laughter, "To my beloved."

When she had sipped, he said, "I'll drink to the dearest, sweetest girl I've ever known. Also, the spunkiest."

Sally said, "Thanks. Now I'd like to dance."

"So would I." Allan arose and led her on the floor. He had her close while they kept step to a dreamy waltz. His head lowered and touched her chestnut curls. Sally let her arm slip further around his neck. It was heavenly, and miraculous, like a dream come true. A Cinderella dream.

Allan murmured, "Wonderful, isn't it, Sally? Just the two of us—a small town, that little white cottage—with you waiting for me to come home."

Her eyes closed wistfully. "And wondering if it will be tonight or tomorrow morning because a doctor in a small

town never knows."

"That's right, angel." Allan's arm tightened around her waist. "Do you think if I bribed the orchestra they'd continue playing? The evening will be over shortly."

THAT brought Sally back to earth. She had forgotten for a moment it was a game of just-pretend. Forgotten that Allan wasn't really serious. She had to be a good sport about it.

She moved her head and smiled up at him. "Don't bribe the orchestra, Allan. You see, if it lasted too long, we'd get tired of pretending. The evening might end the way it began with a quarrel, and each of us bored with the other."

He laughed shakily. "You're right, Sally. A sensible little girl. You'll never get moon dazzled, will you?"

Her head moved negativey. "Only girls with beauty can afford that."

His tender smile left her breathless as he said, "You're lovely, Sally. And those words aren't part of the evening of pretense. Your eyes glow as if you were the happiest creature on earth. You've been wonderful about tonight."

"I made a bargain," she spoke with a lightness she didn't feel. "I kept it."

He nodded, released her and led her back to the table.

He said, "Would you like to go before the evening loses its magic?"

Sally busied herself with lipstick and powder. There was nothing she wanted less than to have the evening end. It had been wonderful, but much too short. Only it was apparent Allan was ready to leave.

She gave him her gayest smile, slid from the seat and they went out to the darkened street. They took a cab to the rooming house.

Sally said, "You needn't get out, Allan."

"Oh, yes." He paid the driver and dismissed the cab. "I'll walk back to the apartment I share with my mother. It's a good night for walking."

"It's hot," Sally reminded him.

"I'd forgotten."

Sally walked to the foot of the stairs leading into the house. Allan was by her side. She extended a hand.

"Thanks, for everything. I enjoyed every moment of it."

"So did I, he replied quietly.

There was a moment of embarrassed silence between them. Then Allan grasped her hand, holding it tightly. Sally bit at her lips to still their trembling. Then she jerked free and ran up the stairs. She let herself inside the door and pressed her body tightly against the side wall, torn with suppressed sobs. Her nails bit deeply into her palm. Finally she regained her calmness.

It was senseless to go upstairs and spend the evening weeping. She moved toward the door, opened it and went outside. Her eyes widened in surprise. Allan was still standing there.

He ran up the stairs to her. He said, "I knew you'd be out. I hadn't meant to let you slip away from me."

Sally said painfully, "Allan, this is so ridiculous. You know I couldn't take Eve's place. Not even tonight—while we were playing that silly game."

"What has Eve to do with it?" he asked, puzzled.

"Everything, of course." She smiled ruefully. "You loved her, remember?"

He gave her a chiding look. "Sally, you're crazy little minx. I never loved Eve."

"What?" Sally shook her head, wondering if the heat was playing tricks with her mind.

"Sally, I have something to tell you." Allan scraped at the step with his toe and he avoided her gaze. "I had a paper to write—psychology. We had to get a real person to study, to find out what makes folks do the things they do." His head slowly raised to meet her glance. "Anyway, I chose Eve as my specimen. I suppose it wasn't fair to her. There was never any romance between us. If she thought so, it was only in her mind. I took her out, let her do all the talking and from what I found out about her, she is definitely not the person I would want to spend the rest of my life with."

"You—wouldn't?" Sally looked completely dazed.

"Of course not," Allan said scathingly. "She's a gold-digger. No doctor

starting out in practice could support a woman like her. And in a small town, his life's earnings probably wouldn't keep her in clothes and jewelry for a year."

SALLY recalled the large solitaire gleaming on Eve's finger and silently agreed. She smiled as she realized how she had mistaken Eve's brilliance for out-and-out conceit. And the laugh was on Eve, but she need never know.

Sally spoke quietly. "Is that why you waited? To tell me I was mistaken about Eve and—you?"

"No." Allan sighed. "But I want to explain a little more. I wasn't provoked at you tonight, nearly as much as I was at Eve. I was amazed that she had such confounded nerve as to think I was in love with her. And I thought you were as giddy as she was for wanting to tell me."

"But I didn't want to tell you, Allan," Sally remonstrated gently.

"I know." He smiled reminiscently. "You were cute. Made me feel like a fourteen-carat heel."

He took her hand in his. "Sally, we wasted tonight—with pretending."

"Wasted it?" she repeated wonderingly.

He nodded. "If I had it to do over, I'd have taken you to my apartment to meet my mother. She's sweet. Sort of old-fashioned. She'd fuss over you. She'd become very fond of you, Sally."

Her hand tightened around his. "Thanks, Allan."

He closed the distance between them. Cautiously, he asked, "Could we start over tomorrow night, Sally? That is, if you have the patience to wait for me to hang up my shingle."

Sally's smile was brilliant. She said firmly, "I have the patience, Allan. And tonight wasn't wasted. Really, it wasn't. I never pretended—even for a moment."

His arms enclosed her. He spoke huskily. "You are a little minx. But then, neither did I. I'd noticed you in the restaurant, only I had to wait for graduation. But always remember, Eve was nothing—nothing more than—" He paused helplessly.

(Concluded on page 111)



# The Friendly Set



**T**HE FRIENDLY SET invites you to receive interesting letters—and find new friends who are sincere and worthwhile.

To introduce yourself write to me—addressing your letter to Mrs. Elizabeth Elder, care of **THRILLING LOVE**, 10 East 40th Street, New YORK 16, N. Y. 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 me a nickname under which you want your letter to be published. It will be only under this name that other readers will know you. They will write to you in my care—and I 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 me, or in requesting me to forward your letters, do not neglect to give the following particulars: Your name, address, age, sex. 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 should be received by readers, I would appreciate your forwarding them to this department.

*Elizabeth Elder*

## FOND OF WESTERN SONGS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a 19-year-old boy who would like to hear from everyone and about anything at all. I am fond of western songs. All letters will be welcomed and answered at once.

BILL No. 7602

## LONELY VETERAN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a veteran 36 years of age. My hobbies are the movies, writing letters, and meeting people. I would like very much to correspond with broadminded fellows under 40. So come on, fellows, write to a lonely veteran.

LUCKY No. 7603

## MISS NEW YORKER

Dear Mrs. Elder: Here is a Miss New Yorker who desires pen friends. My hobby is mainly that of writing. My age is 27 years. Will send snapshots, providing you will all do the same. May I hear soon?

LILLIAN No. 7604

## NEW FRIENDS WANTED

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of 19 who is a lover of many hobbies. Such as collecting snapshots, movie star pictures, singing, roller skating, music, writing, fishing, horseback riding, and traveling. Would like to make new friends from all parts of the states.

CLARA JANE No. 7605

## ENJOYS RECEIVING LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young married woman of 19. My hobbies are dancing, movies, post cards, reading, and music. Would enjoy receiving letters from anyone, and I promise to make my letters frequent and interesting.

TESSIE No. 7606

## EAGER FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl with red hair and blue

eyes. I love to dance, ride horses, and most of all I love to write letters. Would like to hear from anyone in the age bracket of 16-18. I promise to answer promptly to any girls who write to me.

VERDA No. 7607

## WANTS TO TRAVEL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl whose favorite sports are bicycle riding and swimming. My hobbies are reading, receiving letters from friends, playing the piano, and others. Also, I would like to travel all over the world.

FLORDELIZA No. 7608

## VETERAN OF THE AIR FORCE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a veteran of the AAF, who attends school and majors in Geology. This subject does not narrow my interests as they are just about everything: art, music, drama, and outdoor life. I am interested in many hobbies. Please write soon.

MILTON No. 7609

## SINCERE WOMEN

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am 36 years old, and would like to hear from pen pals whose interests coincide with mine, such as: business, automobiles, roller skating, dancing, good movies, and books. I would like to hear from women my age who would be sincere pen pals.

JERSEYITE No. 7610

## YOUNG BERMUDA GIRL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young Bermuda girl who is very fond of dancing, music, writing letters, and all kinds of sports. But, best of all, I like swimming and cycling. I also love to collect movie star photographs. Very eager to write to anyone, anywhere.

PATRICIA No. 7611

## CANADIAN LAD

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am 19-year-old fellow who lives in Canada. I love meeting people and making new friends. I spend my spare time either hiking, swim-

ming, or taking long walks. I am very fond of music. Hope to hear from fellows my age soon.

MARTY No. 7612

enjoy having some pen pals. I love most anything, such as athletics, music, art, and writing letters. So come on, fellows, and write soon.

JOSEPH No. 7622

### SENIOR IN HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am 18-year-old girl and a senior in high school. I like all sports, but swimming is my favorite. I also love to write letters and I promise to answer all who write.

ALICE No. 7613

### DROP ME A LINE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young 18-year-old girl who would like to have pen pals from everywhere. I enjoy writing and promise to answer all letters promptly. Will also exchange photos with all who are interested. My favorite pastime is reading and going to the movies. Please drop me a line soon. I have lots of time for answering letters.

LOUISE No. 7623

### FAVORITE HOBBY IS DANCING

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a Canadian girl going on 18. I have finished high school and took a 1 year Special Commercial course. I am now working in an insurance office. My favorite hobby is dancing. I love receiving letters from all over the world, so please write, one and all.

HELEN No. 7614

### LOOKING FOR PEN PALS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a married woman, 32, who is very lonely. I am looking for some nice pen pals that I can write to. I enjoy dancing and all kinds of sports. I would like to correspond with women my age.

SYLVIA No. 7624

### COLLECTS MINIATURE HORSES

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am married woman 21 years old, and have a 7-month-old-son. I'm a horse collector; gathering miniature horses is my hobby, books on horses also. I also like other things such as fishing, all sports, movies, and reading. Would like to correspond with girls my age.

MRS. H. No. 7615

### FOND OF DEEP SEA FISHING

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl who has always enjoyed outdoor life. Am interested greatly in deep sea fishing, also swimming and ice skating on Lake Superior. Would like to hear from girls all over the world. I promise to answer promptly.

CAROLYN No. 7625

### ANXIOUS FOR FRIENDS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a 17-year-old girl who would like to hear from girls my age, anywhere. My hobbies are music, movies and sports. I also want to travel.

SARAEMILY No. 7616

### ANYONE, ANYWHERE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am an 18-year-old girl, and I love to sew, cook, dance, and have good, enjoyable times. I would like to hear from anyone, anywhere. Please don't disappoint me. I have lots of time for writing interesting letters.

BARBARA No. 7626

### WILL ANSWER PROMPTLY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of 16 who would like to hear from girls all over the world. I enjoy dancing and roller skating. My hobby is collecting movie star pictures. I love to receive lots of mail, and I promise a prompt answer to anyone who writes to me.

COLLEEN No. 7617

### YOUNG FILIPINO GIRL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a 16-year-old Filipino girl. My hobbies are singing and playing and the outdoors. I also like going to the movies. I would like to hear from girls my age from all parts of the world. Please write soon.

ETTA No. 7627

### IOWA FARM GIRL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am an Iowa farm girl, and I would like to hear from pen pals all over the world. I like dancing, roller skating, and ice skating, and my ambition is to learn to fly airplanes. I promise to answer all letters.

EVE No. 7618

### ANXIOUS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a 52-year-old bachelor who is deeply interested in art, unusual discussions of topics of all kinds, and who has also had art training. Have written for newspapers and magazines. I am very anxious to correspond with men whose interests coincide with mine.

PAUL No. 7628

### YOUNG MOTHER

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a mother of 23 and have 3 children. My favorite hobby is receiving letters and writing letters. I love making new friends, especially other mothers of my own age.

BLANCHE No. 7619

### COLLECTS FLOWERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a girl of 16 who loves to dance, take long walks, and most of all to collect flowers. I would like to hear from girls my age from all over the world.

ROSIE No. 7629

### EAGER FOR PEN PALS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a 25-year-old man. I am looking for someone to write to. I like tennis and boating, and photography is my main interest. Am also fond of dancing. Please write soon.

KENNY No. 7620

### INTERESTING LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a young girl whose hobbies are dancing, sewing, bowling, collecting movie star pictures and going to the movies. I live in West Virginia in the winter and Alabama in the summer (my home) and in the summer I live on my grandfather's farm. Please write. I promise interesting letters.

NELL No. 7630

### LOVES WRITING LETTERS

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a mother of 30, with 4 small children. One of my pet hobbies is letter writing but have very few pen pals to write to. I like to hike, dance, and see movies when I find time. Would like to hear from women my age.

BERTHA No. 7621

### YOUNG INDIAN GIRL

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am an Indian girl of 18. My hobbies are doing crochet work, tatting, and embroidery. I would like to hear from people interested in writing to me.

PEARL No. 7631

### VERY LONELY

Dear Mrs. Elder: I am a fellow going on 20. I sometimes get very lonely for friends, and I would

## WHAT YOUR STARS REVEAL

(Continued from page 10)

enjoyable hospitality is indicated for you and your relatives.

Saturn will be in your solar Third House which rules buying, selling, correspondence, and transportation. This new transit indicates that you will become methodical in looking for bargains, and you may become interested in a new course of study. The pursuit of a time-saving hobby can prove rewarding.

The combined influences of these Planets are fortunate for the attainment of personal success that requires the use of mental ingenuity and manual dexterity. Use your imagination freely, and feel confidence that your ideas are practical as well as clever.



*Sun in the Sign Leo—birthdays between July 23rd and August 22nd.* Wisdom is likely to come to you in manifold forms because it will be derived from hidden sources while the Planet Uranus transits your solar Twelfth House which rules behind-the-scenes activities. You will learn to be more observant, and to depend on your instant impressions of what you see and hear.

You will need to be alert, however, to the motives of people who are underhanded and secretive. Do not permit yourself to become involved in nefarious schemes, nor discuss your plans with anyone whom you meet casually. Confide only in those whose integrity is above question.

While this transit dominates your horoscope you might feel under the compulsion to help people who are confined to public institutions. This can prepare you for an important executive position later on by enabling you to acquire valuable first-hand knowledge of conditions with which the underprivileged have to contend.

The sextile aspect that is being formed by Uranus with Saturn in your solar Second House, which rules money, can make you competent as well as realistic in the management of your income. Fortunately Saturn will be in trine aspect with Jupiter in your Sixth House which rules work. Therefore, you will contribute time and effort rather than hard-earned cash to any welfare project in which you are interested.

The next few years can bring you many

[Turn page]

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*Sun in the Sign Virgo—birthdays between August 23rd and September 22nd:* Friendship and ambition will be accented in your life during the next seven years while Uranus occupies your solar Seventh House which rules aspirations and companionship. Friends, who are interested in you, are likely to be very helpful in your efforts to get what you want.

Also you probably will be expected to assist your friends in a sort of mutual exchange of favors. Therefore be prepared to be of assistance in the matter of reference. Perhaps you will be able to recommend someone whom you admire to a well-paying position.

While this transit is in effect you probably will become acquainted with people who have original and creative ideas. This is an excellent influence to join a large organization which is comprised of people who are interested in art, literature, and music. You might be instrumental in working out some unique ideas through such a membership.

Your personal persistence, augmented by the transit of Saturn through your Sun Sign, can prove a valuable addition to any project. Therefore, the things you can accomplish that bring you sustaining confidence by people who trust your sense of discretion, and your fortitude.

What will do more than any other fact to establish your reputation for honor and honesty is your insistence on others keeping their promises to you because you always keep your word to them. Knowing your unswerving determination to be inflexible, you will be trusted by everyone who needs a trustworthy and reliable friend.



*Sun in the Sign Libra—birthdays between September 23rd and October 22nd.* The tendency to be domineering, in direct ratio to the attempt by others to restrain you, may bring you into conflict with people of author-

ity for some time to come while Uranus transits your solar Seventh House which rules your reputation and career.

This influence can be most pronounced in your attitude toward the public, especially if you hold a position that entitles you to manage others. Without intention you might arouse antagonism because of your dictatorial attitude. However, your ability to originate and invent new methods of doing things is likely to bring you admiration and respect rather than censure.

Do not assume that you can force others to obey your commands, even if what you want appears reasonable to you. The fact that Uranus is in square aspect with your Sun Sign can cause others to regard your requests as untimely or impractical.

Not being able to get your way in all things might incline you to withdraw behind a self-erected mental and emotional barrier due to the transit of Saturn through your solar Twelfth House which rules seclusion. This inhibitive restraint will not be permanent. In fact it can prove a useful purpose by making you self-controlled and serene.

These planetary transits in your horoscope can activate your fine attributes. Since Uranus, which typifies progress, occupies the most elevated position in your birth chart, the way is open to make spectacular advancement in your career. Before making any changes, however, consider every possibility. Try to make headway slowly for the sake of your future prestige.



*Sun in the Sign Scorpio—birthdays between October 23rd and November 22nd:* The long transit of Uranus through your solar Ninth House, which rules ideals, can bring you a welcome revival of optimism. This part of your horoscope is associated with long distance travel, philosophy, and advanced education. Uranus is the symbol of inspiration, freedom, and originality.

Therefore, the vibratory influences that are being generated in your behalf are favorable for any type of endeavor in which you can combine imagination, intuition, and trained experience. The fact that Uranus will be in trine aspect with your Sun Sign is cosmic assurance of harmonious support and probable success of your efforts.

Another beneficial influence is represented

[Turn page]

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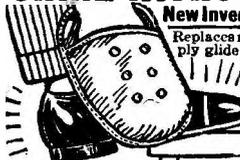
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oy the transit of Saturn through your solar Eleventh House, which rules ambition and friendship. Your ideas are likely to sound convincing to others, and it probably will be easy to obtain the aid and encouragement that you need to enhance your confidence.

The sextile aspect between Saturn and Uranus is favorable for the use of tact. Therefore your diplomacy can pay exceptionally high dividends. It is one of the most fortunate configurations for international arbitration. Therefore, if you travel abroad you may have several opportunities to serve as an emissary of good will.

Wish fulfillment can have new and wonderful meaning for you while Saturn is in favorable sextile aspect with your Sun Sign. The hopes to which you have aspired for a long time may come true of their own accord during this transit. What is most important about this influence is that your desires are for substantial and enduring benefits—and each attainment can match your wish!

*Sun in the Sign Sagittarius—birthdays between November 23rd and December 21st:* Accumulating possessions, for the mere sake of being their custodian, may lose its appeal during the current transit of Uranus through your solar Eighth House which rules savings. Your entire philosophy of security might undergo a drastic change while Uranus occupies this position in your chart.

At the same time the necessity of building up and maintaining your reputation for sagacity and dependability will become imperative as the result of the placement of Saturn in your solar Tenth House which rules fame. You will need to observe the rules of public integrity because all your actions will be subject to strict scrutiny.

You will have to give an account of yourself at the public tribunal, as it were, during this transit of the Planet Saturn at the peak of your solar birth chart. There will be no way for you to hide nor to excuse any divergence from established customs.

Inasmuch as Saturn represents time and duty, no leeway will exist for a compromise between what you wish to do, and what you must do according to a specified schedule. While this configuration is in force, do not struggle against enforced restraint, nor attempt to throw off the shackles of discipline. Whether you like it or not, you may have to

conform with regulations.

Eventually everything may work out for the best as the result of the favorable relationship between Saturn and Uranus in your horoscope. An older or more experienced person might help and inspire you with useful advice, and thereby save you from making some irrevocable mistakes. Watch where you are going, figuratively and literally.



*Sun in the Sign Capricorn—birthdays between December 22nd and January 19th.* The new planetary alignment in your horoscope brings Saturn into favorable trine aspect with your Sun Sign. For more than two years it will occupy your solar Ninth House which rules philosophy and long distance travel. The influence created by this transit should be regarded as a fortunate cosmic gift.

Saturn typifies substance and durability. Therefore, the things and the opportunities that you consider as being worth while to your success and happiness may come in gratifying abundance. Either through enrollment in a school for a special course of study, or through other advanced instruction, you may learn how to make the most profitable use of your opportunities.

These benefits can be shared by you enthusiastically with your lifemate or an associate inasmuch as Saturn will be in sextile aspect with Uranus in your solar Seventh House which rules personal and business affiliations. Success in some rather unusual directions may come through constructive mutual assistance.

Someone on whom you are accustomed to depend for advice or inspiration may try to influence your opinions. The suggestions can be interesting, but do not allow the advice to swerve you from your own viewpoint because the opposition of Uranus to your Sun Sign can cause you to become exuberant about theories that are not in accord with your usual beliefs.

There is no need to be arbitrary when you are obliged to discuss personal or business

[Turn page]

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plans. Unless you are alert, however, you might sanction changes with which it will be difficult for you to conform later on. Avoid this result by following a middle-of-the way road when you make plans that involve others.



*Sun in the Sign Aquarius—birthdays between January 20th and February 18th:* Work and more work is signified by the new transit of Uranus through your solar Sixth House which rules labor. However, because this Planet typifies inspiration, there is the promise of inspired interest in the assignments you have to carry out voluntarily or as the result of your regular job.

Some of the work you do may bring you renown because Uranus will be in trine aspect with your solar Tenth House which rules fame. Therefore, give each task serious consideration. Do not be diverted from this purpose during the next few months while Uranus is opposed by Jupiter in your solar Twelfth House which rules seclusion.

Instead of being indifferent to occupational demands during this opposition, think of the future in terms of financial security. You can substantially add to your bank balance, if you so desire, inasmuch as Uranus will be in favorable sextile aspect with Saturn in your solar Eighth House which rules savings.

Creative and inspired work can prove exceptionally compensatory. Inasmuch as the Sixth House rules hygiene and health, you might use your skill in finding out all you can about new methods of producing and distributing the latest types of vitamin foods. This type of service can have a special appeal to you inasmuch as you are a born altruist, due to the basic influences in your horoscope.

The reason you can be so responsive to the vibratory action of Uranus is due to the fact that it is the planetary ruler of your Sun Sign. Each new zodiacal transit of Uranus brings new experiences into your life. The new seven years' cycle can open wonderful vistas for success and happiness.



*Sun in the Sign Pisces—birthdays between February 19th and March 20th:* Consider yourself the recipient of great cosmic bounty

now that the Planet Uranus is the dominant occupant of your solar Fifth House which rules love and popularity. While this transit is in effect you may attract a new circle of social acquaintances, and find great joy in romantic episodes.

Your emotional exhilaration can be shared by your lifemate because Uranus will be in favorable sextile aspect with Saturn in your solar Seventh House which rules marriage. Inasmuch as this part of your horoscope is opposed to your Sun Sign, you may have to modify some of your enthusiasm. The vibrations of Saturn have a restraining power.

You might have to devote a great deal of time and attention to your lifemate during this Saturn transit. This devotion can increase your mutual love since the influences of Saturn have an enduring quality. Moreover each of you can be inspired to exalt the other due to the inspirational factors that are activated by Uranus.

Due to these combined vibratory influences you might become the recognized authority among your friends and relatives as the best informed about social procedures. Helping with party plans can become an almost full time occupation for a while. However, do not allow your friends to burden you with social details during the next few months while Uranus is opposed by Jupiter in your solar Eleventh House which rules friendship.

Although the opposition of Saturn to your Sun Sign represents a certain amount of restraint, there are so many excellent opportunities for enjoyment of pleasant companionship and social pastimes that you can have a very happy time for quite a while.

## A NIGHT FOR PRETENSE

(Concluded from page 102)

"Homework," Sally replied contentedly.

Her face raised for the embrace she knew was coming. The ecstasy she had never dared hope for had been within reach all the time. That was evident when he said he had noticed her in the restaurant.

As their lips touched and Sally's dream of heaven came true, she knew they were meant for each other and that fate, in the form of Eve, had only hastened things along. Some day she would tell Allan of how long she had loved him. But now, talk was needless.



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**LISTEN, GIRLS!**  
 (Concluded from page 96)

she'd thought of him as a dashing hero. She tried to attribute her rapid pulse to the surprise of seeing him again. But it was no use. She was in love, and she might as well accept the fact!

Follow the romance of Danielle Belden in **HALO FOR A SINNER**, the fascinating novelet by Jean Francis Webb featured next month—a romance that will hold you spell-bound as it meets unexpected snags and bewildering obstacles. You'll adore every bit of it, from the first word to the last!

Also in next month's issue—**LOVE SONG FOR A LADY**, by Ruth Anderson, a delightful novelet of romance and music. It's the story of Jean Bickford, who runs a music shop in a small town—and how she meets a pianist who strikes a strange chord in her heart. Gay and refreshing, **LOVE SONG FOR A LADY** will "send" you like the latest hit tune!

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The second installment brings some amazing revelations that will take your breath away!

In addition to the above, there will also be a fine batch of short stories by your favorite writers, plus oodles of other interesting features in our gala next issue. Look forward to it. And meantime, do glance at my Charm Column on the opposite page for my personal answers to readers' queries, won't you?

Thanks—and *au revoir*.

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**Vicky, Gilsum, N. H.:** Smile, smile and smile some more. That's the beauty trick for keeping your mouth corners from drooping. Here's an exercise for getting rid of the droopy lines: pretend you are chewing gum—in the privacy of your bedroom, of course, making great, wide motions.

**Alma, Vancouver, B. C.:** Massage warmed oil into your elbows to help soften callouses. To bleach discolored elbows, use lemon juice. Whenever you use hand lotion, include the elbow area, too.

**Dishpan Sue, Des Moines, Iowa:** Instead of cutting the nail cuticle with a scissors, try softening it with cuticle oil. Each time you wash your hands, push back the cuticle with the towel. Also try pushing it back with cuticle oil or cream every night before you hop into bed.

**Corinne, Honesdale, Pa.:** Whiteheads are a sign of a lazy skin. Arm yourself with a good complexion brush and tone up the circulation. Use the brush together with a mild soap at least twice a day. You'll be amazed at the improvement in a very short time!



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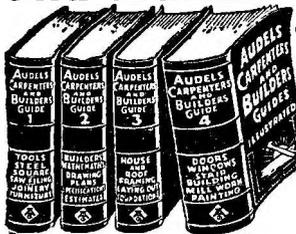


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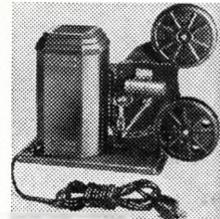
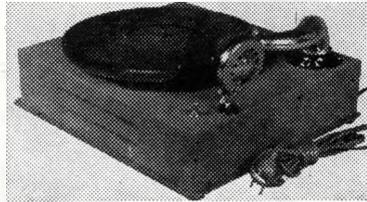
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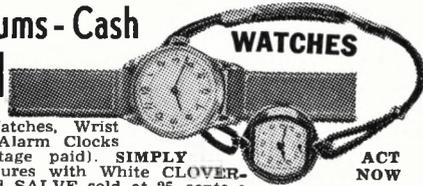


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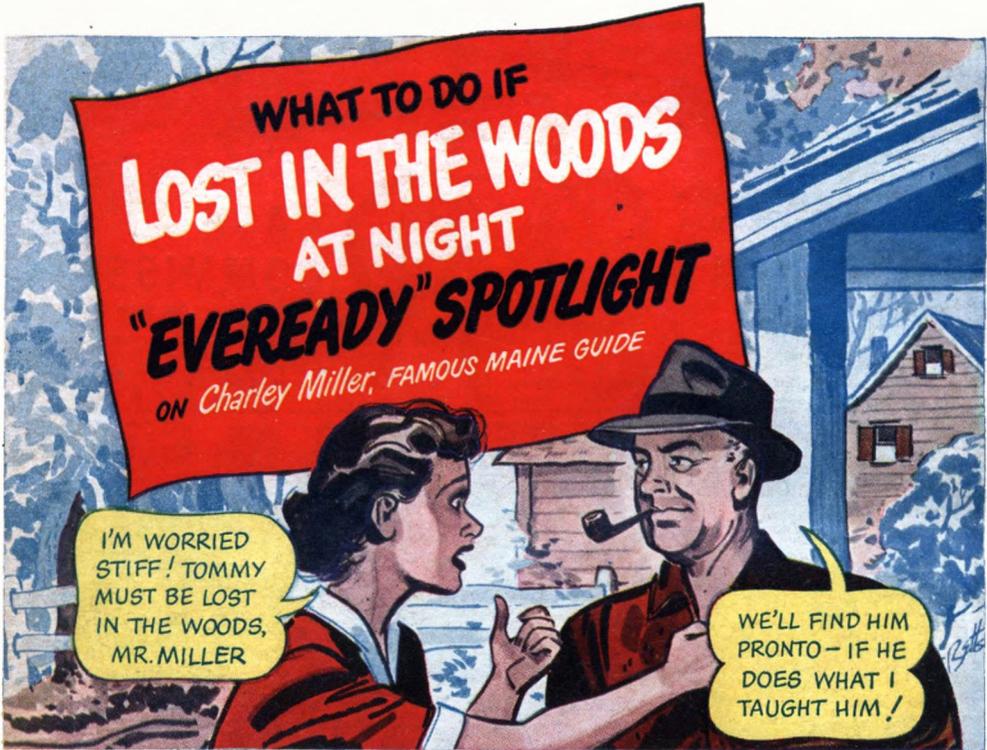
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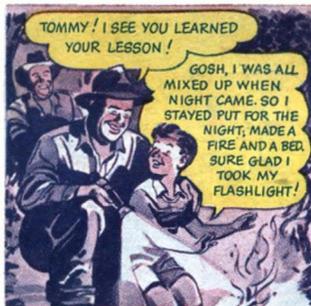


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