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LOVE STORY

EVERY WEEK

MAGAZINE

NOV. 3

ILLUSTRATED

THE
CAPTAIN'S WOMAN

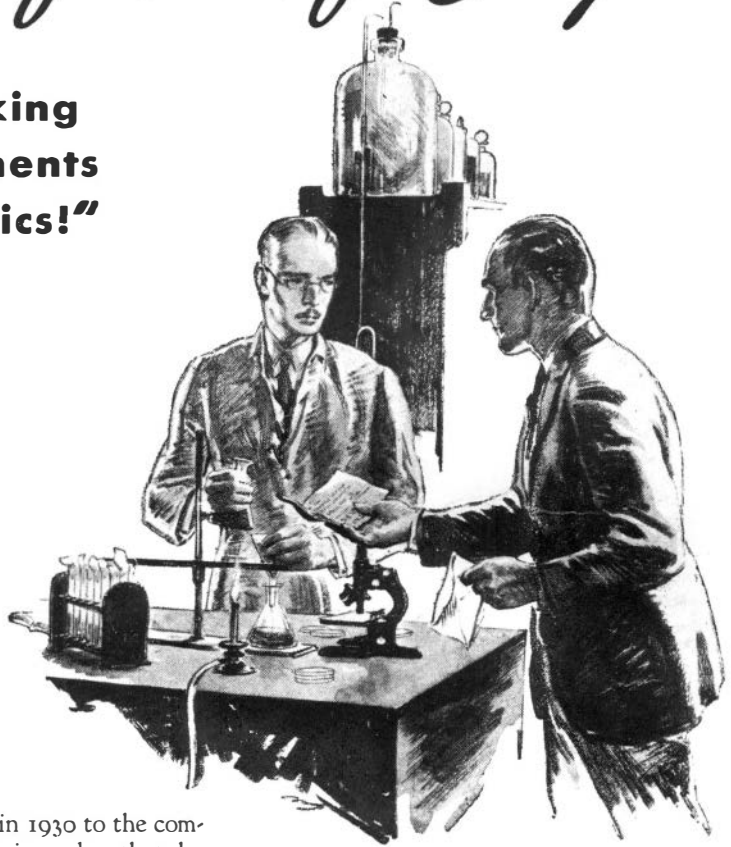
by

Ruby laVerte Thomson



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What would you do if, on the morning after your wedding, you discovered the marriage ceremony had been a frame-up? Don't fail to read "Married Before—" by B. Virginia Lee, in next week's issue.

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THE CHOCOLATED LAXATIVE

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Nearly everyone is likely to suffer from poorly functioning Kidneys at times because modern foods and drinks, weather changes, exposure, colds, nervous strain, worry and over-work often place an extra heavy load on the Kidneys.


But when your Kidneys need help, don't take chances with drastic or irritating drugs. Be careful. If poorly functioning Kidneys or Bladder make you suffer from Getting Up Nights, Leg Pains, Nervousness, Stiffness, Burning, Smarting, Itching Acidity, Rheumatic Pains, Lumbago, Loss of Vitality, Dark Circles under the eyes, or Dizziness, don't waste a minute. Try the Doctor's prescription Cystex (pronounced Siss-tex). See for yourself the amazing quickness with which it soothes, tones and cleans raw, sore irritated membranes.

Cystex is a remarkably successful prescription for poorly functioning Kidneys and Bladder. It is helping millions of sufferers, and many say that in just a day or so it helped them sleep like a baby, brought new strength and energy, eased rheumatic pains and stiffness—made them feel years younger. Cystex starts circulating through the system in 15 minutes, helping the Kidneys in their work of cleaning out the blood and removing poisonous acids and wastes in the system. It does its work quickly and positively but does not contain any dopes, narcotics or habit-forming drugs. The formula is in every package.

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City Health Doctor Praises Cystex



Dr. W. R. GEORGE

Doctors and druggists everywhere approve of the prescription Cystex because of its splendid ingredients and quick action. For instance, Dr. W. R. George, graduate Medical Dept., University of Indiana, former Health Commissioner of Indianapolis, and Medical Director for insurance company 10 years, recently wrote the following letter:

"There is little question but what properly functioning Kidney and Bladder organs are vital to the health. Insufficient Kidney excretions are the cause of much needless suffering with aching back, weakness, painful joints and rheumatic pains, headaches and a general run-down, exhausted body. This condition also interferes with normal rest at night by causing the sufferer to rise frequently for relief, and results in painful excretion, itching, smarting and burning. I am of the opinion that Cystex definitely corrects frequent causes (poor kidney functions) of such conditions and I have actually prescribed in my own practice for many years past the same ingredients contained in your formula. Cystex not only exerts a splendid influence in flushing poisons from the urinary tract, but also has an antiseptic action and assists in freeing the blood of retained toxins. Believing as I do that so meritorious a product deserves the endorsement of the Medical Profession, I am happy indeed to lend my name and photograph for your use in advertising Cystex." Signed W. R. George, M. D.

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32x4.75-20	2.50	34x4.25	3.85
29x5.00-19	2.50	32x4.50	4.15
30x5.00-20	2.65	34x4.50	4.15
32x5.00-19	2.70	36x4.50	4.15
30x5.25-20	2.90	38x4.50	4.15
32x5.25-20	2.95	38x4.75	4.45
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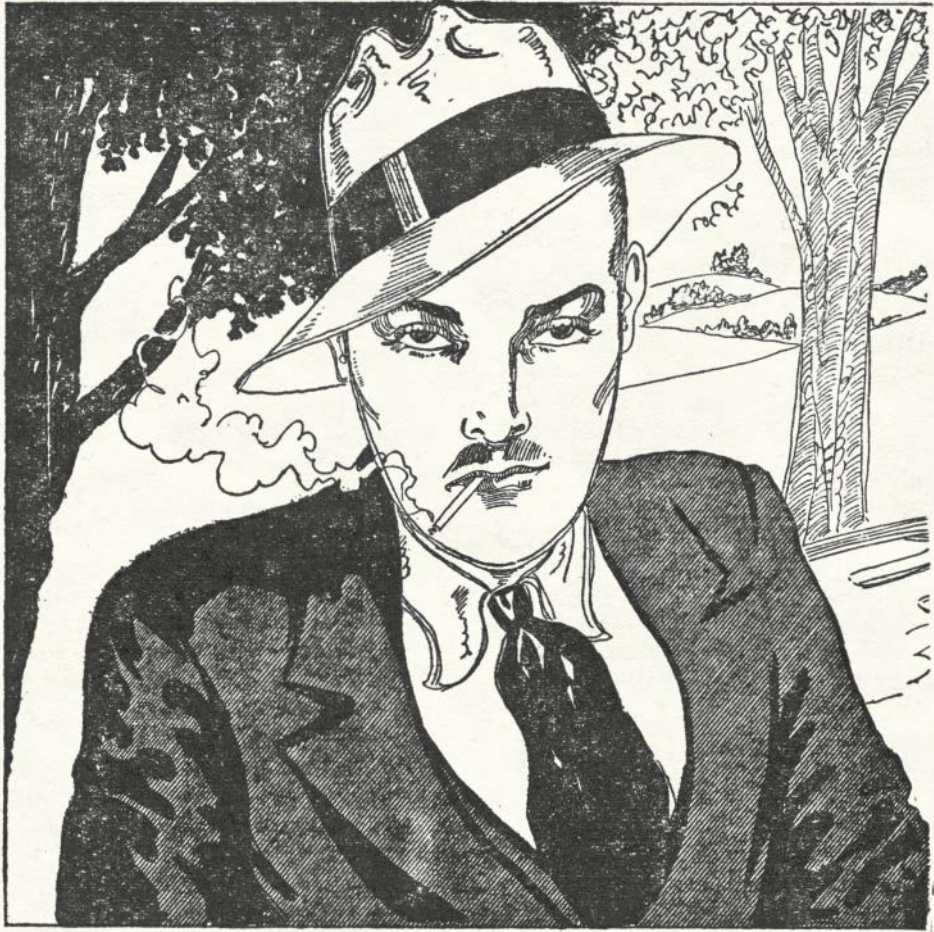
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Honeymoon Trouble

By Peggy Rutherford

A Two-part Story—Part I.

CHAPTER I.

THE night was hushed except for the faint whisper of rubber tires sweeping the giant gray-and-silver roadster up the steep mountain road. In the

summer darkness, the pungent scent of pines was fragrant on the air rushing over the lowered windshield, bathing Isabel with cool, exquisite perfume that seemed to whisk away everything in her life until this moment



Clara Fane, Season & Style

She lay, slim and lovely like a bride's pale lily against the dark leather cushion, her blue eyes wide and misty as she stared wonderingly up at the man beside her and tried to realize she wasn't dreaming. That sensation always came over her, just looking at Jeffrey Thorpe.

But now, everything was poignantly, breath-takingly different. In the pale-violet starlight, his bronzed profile above her made her tremble with a new, possessive joy that was like pain, sweet and sharp and tingling, deep inside her.

She knew he was thrilling to the same riotous emotions. For the

hundredth time, he dragged his gaze from the road a moment. The breeze tore his crisp hair as his dark head bent to her.

"Can you believe it, Isabel? You're my wife, at last! We're actually on our honeymoon!" His deep voice, warm and tender as a kiss, softened wistfully to a note of eager yearning while his dark, adoring eyes flamed down into hers. "Happy, dear?"

Isabel caught a quick, shaky breath. "Happy! Oh, Jeff——" Her low, tremulous whisper was smothered between her half-parted lips as his hand left the wheel and

pressed her, slim and soft and yielding, against the virile strength of his big body.

"Sweetheart!" For one reckless instant, his mouth was hard and sweet on hers, firing her to the tips of her toes with swift, quivering delight.

Isabel closed her eyes and wondered if one could die of joy. How she loved him! How desperately she had longed for this hour! Yet she had never quite dared to let herself contemplate how glorious it would be, for fear she might be destined never to become a bride. Now she never need be afraid of that any more. Jeff was her husband. The miracle of that was so new that it was still a mystery—a tenderly thrilling secret which his kisses were promising to reveal.

It seemed he couldn't tear his lips from the red flower of her mouth. But the wheels bumped warningly beneath them, and he had to release her.

"Safer not to look at you till we reach camp." Jeff gave a husky little laugh, steering the heavy car out of a rut and driving more carefully with his left hand while his right arm returned to the slender warmth of her waist. "Can't have any accidents on our wedding night, can we, darling?" he added, and suddenly sobered.

For Isabel had stiffened as though an icy wind had struck her.

"Jeff! Oh, don't mention such a thing!" With an uncontrollable shudder, she hid her face against his chest, her body taut as a wire.

Jeff didn't need to ask her what was troubling her. He understood. Impulsively, his arm tightened around her, wordlessly begging her to forgive him for inadvertently stirring up the past. He could have bitten off his tongue for his un-

guarded words which he knew called up the thoughts she had been fighting out of her mind ever since they had stood at the altar three hours before and become man and wife.

His warm touch calmed Isabel a little. But it couldn't stem the flood of memory that surged over her then, sweeping aside her desperate struggle to forget, carrying her relentlessly back to another night two years before.

Against her closed eyes rose a nightmare in which she saw herself standing at the rail of a small coast-wise steamer bound from Norfolk to New York City. She was waving good-by to a beaming group on the pier below, her only living relatives, three widowed aunts whose shabby boarding house had been the only home Isabel had ever known, and whose aim, as far back as she could remember, had been the grim duty of getting her married early and well.

Unfortunately, their obscurity and genteel poverty had prevented them giving her any social advantages. By the time Isabel was nineteen, a radiant, blue-eyed and golden-haired nineteen, her aunt's anxiety had reached the point of panic, until a new and unexpected boarder, an unmarried man named Waldo James, had come for a temporary stay with them. He was, it developed quickly, the answer to all their prayers. Not only had he unlimited money at his command; he was almost young, and rather good-looking in a thin, darkly smooth way that instinctively repelled Isabel when he began surprising her in out-of-the-way corners and tried to make secret love to her. When, inevitably, one of the aunts caught him at it, he had been given no chance to prove his intentions were other than sincere.

Isabel, finding herself engineered promptly into a wedding, had protested in futile terror that she couldn't marry a man she didn't love. To which her aunts had retorted bluntly not to be an ungrateful idiot. They could no longer afford to keep her; this would undoubtedly be her only chance ever to repay them, now that they were old, for all they had done for her. What if he was a total stranger! She'd get acquainted with him soon enough after she was no longer Isabel Matthews but Mrs. Waldo James. It was her duty to marry him. Duty! Duty! The word was a whip that lashed the bewildered girl into marriage before she realized what was happening. But, standing on the boat beside her new husband as they started North on their wedding trip, she had known, horribly, that it was all a ghastly mistake. When Waldo James, not even waiting for the boat to leave the dock, had impatiently pulled her from the rail and started below to their stateroom, Isabel had broken away from him and hidden, frantic with fright, behind some draperies in one of the public salons.

There, after the boat was hours at sea, a stewardess had found her and hurried her up on deck where the captain was waiting for her with a note some one had discovered near the rail under a coat and hat which the dazed girl found herself identifying as those her husband had worn on board. The note was addressed to her in his familiar scrawl, accusing her of destroying his happiness so unbearably that her actions had driven him to jump overboard and end his life. Paralyzed with horror, she had watched the sailors lower boats and search the ocean for his body, futilely.

The captain made official report

of one less passenger when the steamer docked at New York the next day, carrying a white-faced girl who had come aboard a terrified bride, who disembarked a conscience-stricken widow. It was unthinkable for her to return to her aunts, even had she had the money. But there was less than a dollar in her purse, and not a cent in her dead husband's coat pockets. The ship's doctor, taking pity on her, had found her a position in the dispensary of a great New York hospital.

There, months later, she had met Jeffrey Thorpe when he joined the staff as assistant to the head surgeon. They were thrown together so constantly in their work that Isabel could never be quite sure when it was Jeff made her confide in him the secret in her beautiful, tragic blue eyes. And, impulsively, yet with a true understanding of human frailty gained from his profession in which he already was becoming famous at the age of twenty-eight, Jeff had convinced her she was in no way responsible for Waldo James's suicide. The man had undoubtedly been suffering from mental illness, or else had deliberately blamed her to hide some secret reason of his own.

Isabel felt like a prisoner set suddenly free of bars—only to find herself in a new, glorious bondage. For her close companionship with Jeff had swiftly bound their hearts together in flaming bonds of mutual love. To-day, in the hospital chapel, they had been married.

After the wedding reception which their associates had given for them, they had driven out of town, bound for the Poconos where Jeff owned a hunting lodge in which they were to spend their honeymoon.



They were thrown together so constantly in their work that Isabel could never be quite sure when it was Jeff made her confide in him the secret in her beautiful, tragic blue eyes.

That thought swept Isabel back to reality in a whirl of consuming happiness. Her breath quickened as she became aware that the powerful car had begun climbing more steeply in second gear.

"Open your eyes, darling. We're almost there!" Jeff's deep voice rumbled gently through her head.

The vibration caught up her heart, made it turn over with a quick, breath-taking thrill. Trem-

bling, she looked up at him. As she met his eyes, so dark and glowing and warm with love for her, she saw his very soul was in his glance, pleading with her to forget the past which they had promised each other never to mention again. And Isabel knew her own eyes answered his, renewing that vow.

With a sigh of contentment, she raised her hot face to the cool breeze, and in that instant it seemed all her torturing memories slipped away like a torn garment which the clean wind tore from her shoulders and flung away down the dark mountainside. The past was dead, forever gone. For her there was only this man beside her, holding her so tenderly close that she could feel his pulses leaping. Hers were leaping, too, clamoring for the moment when they would reach their destination and she could surrender herself eternally into his keeping. Then heaven would begin for them.

Now that they were almost there, she was breathless with fear that she would never be able to express how much she loved him, loved him so utterly that she knew she would gladly die for him, if thereby she could show her adoration more completely. How had he ever come to choose her, instead of any of the wealthy, socially prominent girls he could have married? That was beyond her power to understand. All she knew was that he was hers, hers to give all the happiness that lay within her power.

Breathless, frightened now that she was on the verge of the tremendous adventure of beginning life with Jeff, she reclined trembling in the deep seat as he slid his arm out from behind her and carefully swung the long car around a narrow twist in the private lane that

seemed to soar straight upward through the darkness, then emerged abruptly before a wide, picturesque bungalow set in the midst of a clearing on the summit.

"Well, how do I rate as judge of a honeymoon place?" Jeff flung her a quick, eager smile as he stopped the roadster in front of shallow flagstone steps leading to a rustic entrance so lovely that it might have come out of a storybook.

For a moment Isabel couldn't answer. She could only stare, wide-eyed, about her, breathless with delight. All around, on every side, trees crowded in a dense dark wall, thrusting sharp black points against the dusky sky. At the very tip of the huge towering chimney rising from the side of the rambling lodge, a pale-yellow moon peeped down over the long sweeping roof, wrapping everything in still, enchanted beauty.

Isabel drew a deep, quivering breath and raised shining eyes to Jeff. "It's the loveliest place I've ever even dreamed of. Like—like paradise." She pressed her hand to her heart in a tiny gesture of inexpressible joy. "I feel all shut away from the rest of the world."

"We couldn't be more to ourselves. Not another house on Indian Rock Mountain." With a low laugh, Jeff leaped out onto the gravel drive and strode around the car. "Just you and I, dear. All alone."

His eyes were aglow above her as he opened the door and lifted her bodily out of the seat. Very gently, he carried her, trembling and warm, up the steps. He held her in one powerful arm while he fumbled in his pocket for the key and flung open the massive oak door.

Inside, the silent shadows seemed to wait for them with a sort of ex-

pectant hush. Isabel's heart was beating so madly that she could scarcely breathe as Jeff carried her over the threshold in the age-old tradition of a man with his bride. She could feel his arm trembling beneath her as he found his way through the echoing darkness and laid her down on something deep and low and soft.

It was a huge divan, she saw a moment later as he switched on twin lamps on a long narrow table behind it, drawn up before a massive stone fireplace piled high with logs. Jeff knelt and held his cigarette lighter between the andirons. Instantly, red crackling flames leaped up, dispelling the chill of the mountain night, sending a flickering glow over the big, low-raftered room.

Isabel had a dizzy impression of great chintz-covered chairs beside small tables laden with magazines and books, thick rugs strewn over the shining floor, walls of dark polished wood decorated alternately with mounted heads of game, and racks holding guns and other hunting paraphernalia. Then the long, luxurious room faded away to mere vagueness as Jeff turned from the fireplace and towered above her.

Breathless, trembling, she gazed up at him from the cushions where he had placed her. For the space of an instant it seemed the world stood still while he hesitated, his dark eyes searching the sapphire depths of hers that were half veiled beneath the tangle of thick black lashes. The stillness of the room seemed to echo with the wild pounding of her heart.

Then, slowly, almost reverently, Jeff was down on his knees before her, as though worshiping at a shrine that was too sacred for him to touch. For a moment that seemed like eternity, there was no

word spoken as he knelt there, just adoring her with his shining, transfixed gaze, while her lips quivered and began to part like soft scarlet blossoms opening beneath the sun.

"Isabel!" Jeff's whisper was only a breath, deep, tense. "Are you really here with me as my bride? Or is it just a wonderful dream?"

Her eyes were luminous pools of misty blue light reflecting his adoration. "If it's a dream, I never want to wake up!" she breathed, her lips unconsciously straining upward in restless yearning.

"Darling!" His arms closed about her at last.

In the onrushing tide of longing that half bewildered them both with indescribable delight, the heart-hungry ardor of his embrace sent her small felt hat rolling unnoticed to the floor. The unsheathed masses of her uncurling ringlets were like soft scented fingers on his skin, thrilling him through and through. With a caught breath, he buried his face in its golden glory while she hid her eyes, suddenly shy, against his collar. She could feel his heart thudding with great, pounding strokes against hers, each one a single and delicious pain.

He lifted his head a little and gently raised her flushed, heart-shaped face between his warm palms. "I wonder if I can ever be half worthy of you," he breathed huskily against her quivering lips. "I love you so much that it's made me selfish."

"You! Selfish!" Isabel echoed, breathless with the languorous thrills his arms were sending over her. "Why, you couldn't be selfish if you tried a thousand years."

His unsteady laugh fanned her upturned face.

"But I am, dearest! Didn't I insist on coming here to camp instead

of going to some smart resort or taking a boat to Europe? We're going to do all that later, only first I wanted you all to myself for a little while. I want to do things for you. That's why I gave the servants a vacation, so I could look after you and wait on you myself. They've left everything ready for us—provisions enough to last as long as we stay. We won't need to go away for a thing unless we want."

Isabel trembled in his arms. "Oh, Jeff, I'm glad you arranged it that way. Nothing could be more perfect than just to be here with you all alone."

"Sweetheart——"

His arms crushed her tight to him with tender passion. His breath was hot and rapid on her cheek as his lips throbbed over her small, lovely face. They caressed the white flower petals of her eyelids, laid a path of kisses over her smooth fragrant skin to the tiny pulse leaping more and more wildly at the base of her white throat. Then, at last, they found the maddening softness of her mouth again and again until Isabel thought she was going to faint from the mounting waves of painful sweetness surging through her.

Breathless, trembling, she drooped against him, suddenly, overwhelmingly weak with utter ecstasy.

Jeff bent over her, his dark eyes anxious with swift self-reproach.

"You're tired, darling, aren't you? What a brute I've been, forgetting that long trip! It's time I got our bags out of the car." With an unsteady laugh, he laid her back on the cushions and, rising, strode across to the open door.

He was back again almost in a moment, one hand carrying her two suitcases, and the other his own huge pigskin bag which he set down beside the divan as he bent over and raised her small, trembling hand.

"Come, dear, I'll show you your room. I've had it all done over for you."

Heart pounding wildly, Isabel allowed him to lead her across the huge living room, through a short hall that opened into the bedroom wing. Opening a door, Jeff reached past her and turned on the lights.

They revealed, amazingly, a suite that might have been transported from some Park Avenue penthouse. Isabel gasped as she came to a halt, staring at the luxurious semimodern furnishings, ultrafeminine in this unbelievable white-and-silver room

before her, and equally masculine in the neutral-toned one adjoining which she could glimpse through an open door communicating at one side.

An overpowering shyness came over her as she hesitated there in the doorway. She had never before quite realized just how



wealthy Jeff must be, to be able to command all this beauty and luxury in an isolated mountain camp. That thought brought home to her more vividly than ever before that she had never dreamed what wonderful surprises her life with him was going to hold. She was bewilderingly conscious of him moving past her into the intimacy of their exquisite suite, as he set her bags down on the velvet rug. The peach-shaded lights gleamed over his dark hair as he bent to unstrap them for her. How utterly masculine he looked silhouetted against the dainty silver-and-crystal appointments of the mirrored powder table!

Would she ever get used to the dark, lithe bigness of him? Would she ever become accustomed to the breathless thrill of him, now that he was her husband? Wondering that, she went weak with delirious joy as he moved about the room, adjusting the Venetian blinds. Then he opened another door into a black-and-chromium bathroom beyond. Over his broad shoulder Isabel could see him tinkering with the glittering array of dials on the tiled wall that operated the shower.

"There, I've started your bath for you," he said, coming back across the room. "By the time you're finished, I'll be back."

She stared at him. Oddly, a cold hand seemed to touch her heart.

"What do you mean? You're not going away, are you, Jeff?"

He caught her close with a low, unsteady laugh. "Don't look so startled, dear! I'm only going around to the garage to put the car away for the night."

"Oh!" Her voice was a small happy sigh of absurd relief, silenced against his descending lips.

She could feel a tremor go through him as he pressed her close, one

minute raising his head to gaze deep in her dream-filled eyes, the next whispering incoherent little words of love while his kisses, hot, passionately tender, sent liquid fire racing through her veins.

It seemed he couldn't bear to leave her, even for a few minutes. Even after he finally tore himself away, he turned in the doorway and gazed back at her, then impulsively returned to hold her slim, lovely body against his heart for still another moment of rapturous kisses.

Afterward, she would have given half her life if she had never let him leave her. As it was, it seemed like tearing the heart from her body as he took his arms away reluctantly, and left the room.

"I won't be gone five minutes, darling," his deep warm voice flung back over his shoulder as he strode quickly out through the hall.

Dreams like angels' wings fluttered about Isabel as she swayed trembling against the door where he had left her. Then she started up breathlessly, hearing his brisk steps leaving the house, crunching over the gravel outside. A tremulous haste came over her. Mingled with her quivering desire for him to return was the clamor of innate girlish modesty, urging her to finish dressing before he came back.

Closing the hall door, she flung off her tweed traveling clothes feverishly. As she stood under the shower, the sound of Jeff's roadster rounding the end of the house roared above the steaming water splashing into the sunken black marble tub. Breathlessly, she finished her bath. The rug was thick and soft under her rosy toes as she ran back to her open suitcase and lifted out dress after dress, carefully folded with tissue paper, until she came to her lounging pajamas. They were of

tea-rose satin, heavily encrusted with hand-run lace. As their soft silken caress slithered on over her skin, she was glad she had dared spend the last cent of her savings for lovely bridal things. There were satin mules to match the pajamas, with foolish, extravagant feathers that she kissed her slim white ankles as she slipped into them.

At any moment now, Jeff would open that door! Every nerve tense with quivering expectation, she laid out the toilet articles from her fitted bag, then sat down at the mirror and brushed her hair. Her red lips, still throbbing from Jeff's kisses, curved dreamily as she struggled with the rebellious curls, remembering that his eager hands had tangled them so. Soon she had them subdued into wide, shining waves that ended in a cluster of soft ringlets at the back of her head, like a golden halo about her wide, excited eyes.

There! She was ready before he came! With a tremulous laugh she stood up, a ravishingly lovely bride—gleaming rosy satin rippling over young curving slenderness; restless feather-bedecked, tiny feet; all breath-taking allure. She was shivering breathlessly, and she wondered if it was because she was nervous and shy, now that the greatest moment in her life was at hand, or if she was impatient for its arrival.

She busied herself with hanging up her clothes in a cavernous closet she discovered next to the bath; she arranged her shoes in a neat row underneath the dresses, set her emptied bags back in the corner. And still Jeff didn't come.

What was keeping him? Probably he had to give some unexpected attention to the intricate mechanism of his big imported car after the hard drive up the mountains. Yet

surely he wouldn't stay away from her this long, just tinkering in the garage on their wedding night! Could it be he had sensed her natural nervousness and was staying outside till she got over it? The very idea of that swept away her shyness. Darling Jeff! Didn't he guess that all she really wanted was for him to conquer her reserve and make her surrender to him?

Again she laughed, tenderly. She crossed the room and opened the blind. The cool breeze outside fluttered the curls about her face as she leaned through the unscreened window.

"Jeff!" she called in her soft, low voice.

There was no answer. She called again, louder. Only the wind caught up her voice, carried it high into the dark sky overhead.

A chill of apprehension ran over her. Where was Jeff? She didn't stop to think an answer. Hastily she ran to the closet, snatched down her polo coat from the hook where she had hung it only a moment before, flinging it over her shoulders as she opened the door and went quickly through the corridor to the living room where the logs still blazed cheerily on the hearth. Their rosy warmth seemed to bolster up her courage as she opened the front door and went outside. But her foreboding returned to clutch at her heart as she stood on the steps, calling Jeff's name, without result. Oh, he couldn't have gone!

She began running frantically around the driveway. The moon was so bright that she had no trouble finding the unfamiliar way as it curved past the end of the cabin and came to a circular sort of court in front of the garage wing at the rear. It was hard going over the gravel in her fragile mules that

slipped on the tiny pebbles and turned her ankles painfully as she stumbled on faster, calling Jeff's name more loudly at every step.

Then her voice failed her as she neared the garage. It was dark.

The great double doors were yawning wide. Through them she could see the dull gleam of the roadster which Jeff had evidently backed in. But where was Jeff?

Heart knocking frighteningly in her side, Isabel started into the dark garage, then suddenly stopped, her breath frozen in her throat. At her feet, just inside the door, lay Jeff! Horribly still, his face down on the cement floor.

With a smothered scream, she knelt swiftly, and nearly lost her balance as her knee struck a piece of lead pipe lying beside him in the darkness. Hurling it to one side, frenziedly, she slipped her arm under his shoulders to turn him over, and her brain reeled as her fingers felt something hot and wet. Blood was trickling from a jagged gash on his forehead. Evidently it had been made by the piece of pipe. It must have fallen off the shelf she could see above the rolling doors, probably jolted off and striking him.

Even as her horrified eyes constructed the only possible cause for this unforeseen calamity, her fingers were frantically slipping under his coat, groping above his heart. It was beating, feebly! A sobbing groan burst from the girl as she bent above him. To think he had been lying out here, helpless and bleeding, all the time she had been preparing herself for him!

But there was no time to waste grieving over that. Panic-stricken, she fumbled through his pockets and found a couple of big linen handkerchiefs. One she doubled over the bleeding wound, weeping brokenly

as she bound it securely with a bandage of the other. Then, grimly, she started the almost impossible ordeal of getting him back to the bungalow.

How she accomplished it, she never quite knew. It seemed like a terrible nightmare that would never end, although fear and love gave her a superhuman strength she had never dreamed she could possess. His low, unconscious groans mingled with her choking sobs as, half dragging, half carrying him, she managed somehow to get him as far as the front door before her arms gave out. Then, wondering hopelessly how she could ever get him the rest of the way, she bent to take a better grip under his shoulders, and suddenly gasped, her heart leaping.

For his eyes were open. He was staring up at her, suddenly, completely conscious.

"Isabel!" His voice was unbelievably steady. Low, but quite firm. "What's happened, dear? Why are you crying?"

"Oh, Jeff, darling!" She was on her knees beside him on the wide top step. Her tears fell on his puzzled, upturned face as, breathlessly, she told him how she had found him. "Oh, I can't believe you're all right so soon! I'm so glad, so——"

"But I'm not all right," he interrupted, his mouth tightening.

She stared at him. "What do you mean?" she finally asked.

A grim, haunted look spread over his face, drawing it into haggard lines. "I hate to tell you, Isabel, but——" he hesitated, his dark eyes searching hers desperately. Then he went on, his voice roughening a little:

"That blow on my head gave me concussion of the brain. That's

why I came to myself so abruptly. I know my symptoms. I've treated other people for them often enough! In a few minutes I'm going to lapse into a coma that will last for hours, maybe days, depending on the extent of my injury. While I'm con-

scious, we'd better work fast. Help me up, dear? There, that's fine," he muttered dully as she managed, somehow, to steady him to his feet.

As he started into the house, so straight and tall, it seemed impossible that this was only an interlude



A sobbing groan burst from Isabel as she bent above him. To think he had been lying out here, helpless and bleeding, all the time she had been preparing herself for him!

ending in—what?—Isabel asked herself, her heart dragging heavily.

"Now, I'll have to get to bed as quickly as possible." Jeff put his arm about her slim, straight shoulders, but he scarcely rested any weight at all on her as they walked side by side through the living room, down the short hall to his bedroom where Jeff opened the door himself.

Isabel would gladly have carried him again, if that could make him unsay his words that rang like a death knell to their happiness. With an effort that cost her more than she knew, she forced herself to talk and even laugh about the situation. But, inwardly, she was faint and sick with terror as their meaning whirled in her brain. She hadn't worked in a hospital for two years without learning how serious, often fatal, an injury such as his could be unless there was perfect care. A sense of inevitable failure swept over her. Oh, she couldn't do it alone!

"Listen, Jeff." Desperately she struggled to keep the panic out of her voice as she turned down the covers of his bed. "Please tell me where to get a doctor," she panted piteously.

"That's the catch." Jeff smiled at her with his mouth, but his eyes were sober. "You can't. There's no telephone. And it would be dangerous for you to try reaching a neighbor. You'd get lost. The nearest one is miles away. Anyway, there's nothing any one can do for me"—he stopped a moment, steadying himself against a chair while her heart stopped—"nothing that you can't do for me. I don't need medicine. Nothing but absolute rest. After I'm in bed, I'll have to lie perfectly still for a few days. If noth-

ing disturbs me— Well, everything depends on that."

CHAPTER II.

Trembling, heartsick, Isabel stood beside the bed where her husband lay. How still he was under the covers! Even before she had gotten the pillow adjusted under his dark head, his eyes had closed. Would they ever open again?—she wondered, pressing her hand against her mouth to choke back the frightened sobs strangling her.

Then her heart leaped up for an instant. His lips were moving! With a gasp, she bent over him swiftly. "Yes, Jeff!" she breathed. "What is it, darling?"

"Poor little girl!" he whispered, without opening his eyes. "Don't be worried, dear. Everything's bound to be all right. Sorry I've got to delay our honeymoon like this." He smiled faintly while her heart twisted. "Only a few days, and I'll be fine. Just love me enough to be brave—" his voice trailed off. He lay still, as though in heavy slumber.

But Isabel knew it was the dreaded coma he had predicted. A terrible sense of helpless loneliness swept over her as she stood in the silent room, gazing down at him while her bitter tears fell, unheeded now. She could hardly keep from flinging herself down beside him, crying out to him to open his eyes and not leave her alone. But it was wrong to even think of herself. This was his only chance to live. And he had asked her to be brave. There was nothing for her to do but try and get a little rest herself so she would have endurance for the coming uncertain days.

Tenderly, she drew the soft blanket about his broad shoulders.

She tiptoed about the room, adjusting the Venetian blinds so the moonlight would not fall across his face. Then, fearing the stiff breeze blowing in at the window might create too strong a draft, she went over to close the door leading out to the hallway.

Her hand was on the knob, when suddenly she thought she noticed something move just outside the room. Cautiously, she stepped into the doorway, then stopped short, her blood curdling in her veins.

What was that standing in the shadows of the corridor?

As she stared, her dilating eyes made out the unmistakable form of a man.

He stood motionless, watching her out of furtive black eyes. His face—a thin face with hollowed cheeks covered by a stubble of ragged beard—showed no surprise at seeing her, and it flashed over her, uncannily, that he had been there watching her movements for some time.

Heart drumming in fright, she shrank back into the bedroom. But before she could close the door, he stepped into the light. He grinned. A slow, sly grin that made her flesh crawl.

"Hello, Isabel," he drawled insolently. And his voice was somehow hideously familiar.

Isabel stood paralyzed, her hands at her throat. Her eyes were starting from their sockets, as though she were face to face with a ghost. Was she going insane?

"Who are you?" she gasped with stiff lips that barely moved.

She shrank, trembling, against the wall as he took another step toward her.

"A dead man come alive," he chuckled softly, and thrust his face closer to hers. "Don't you recog-

nize your husband, Waldo James?"

Isabel reeled with cold horror. Had she gone mad? Or was this just a hideous nightmare? But she couldn't get away from those awful eyes that hypnotized her so she couldn't get her breath. For they were the eyes that had haunted her memory!

"Waldo James is dead," she panted, in a voice that sounded far away. "He—he died at sea—two years ago."

"And he did a good job of it, didn't he! Nobody guessed he was hiding up on the top deck in a lifeboat, laughing to himself while he watched the sailors search the water for his body. Look here! If you won't believe that Waldo James is not only alive but right here before you, here's something that will identify me." Chuckling, he held up his right hand. It was thin and dark, and the thumb was bent crooked. "Ah, I see you haven't forgotten!" he added, with a leer.

For Isabel had given a violent start, her face blanching as she recognized the unmistakable identification. She had forgotten it. But now, with hideous clarity, she remembered how she used to shudder when he had tried to caress her with his left hand. For an instant, everything went black about her. She thought she was going to faint.

But the coarse, chuckling voice brought her back to reality like the lash of a whip. "You don't know how I hated cutting off our honeymoon like that, baby. But something came up I hadn't expected, and I had to make a quick fade-out. You see, it was like this: When I went to that awful place of a boarding house your three aunts ran, I was trying to lie low for a while because of a little trouble with the police. They thought I was making



Isabel stood paralyzed. Her eyes were starting from their sockets, as though she were face to face with a ghost. The man chuckled softly. "A dead man come alive," he said. "Don't you recognize your husband, Waldo James?"

money too easy," he explained with a meaning leer that Isabel, frozen to the floor, failed to comprehend.

A spasm of revulsion shot through her as his words confirmed the ghastly truth that he was, beyond

the slightest doubt, Waldo James.

"When your aunts were so keen to get us married, I figured the easiest way to keep from attracting attention was taking that boat to New York. I'm telling you, you'd never have given me the slip like you did if I hadn't spotted a couple of dicks on board. I just happened to see them before they saw me. There was only one way to save my skin. After the passengers were off the boat, I slid down the baggage chute into the hold and got away."

Isabel gave a tortured gasp. "But you were reported officially as drowned! Why didn't you let me know you were alive?"

"And run a chance of getting stuck in jail?" Waldo James sneered. "I managed to skip that till six months ago, then they got me on a counterfeiting charge. But last week I broke jail. I was on my way to Canada when I saw in a newspaper that you were marrying some doctor who had a camp on Indian Rock Mountain. I managed to find the place easy enough, since it's the only camp on the mountain. I figured that if you came up here, I'd be safe from the police. I knew they'd be watching the border for me, and I thought you'd be glad enough to hide me, so you wouldn't make yourself out a bigamist. So that's why there was a reception committee waiting in the garage when your newest husband drove in."

Isabel was sick with horror. "You mean—you attacked him?" she demanded.

He shrugged, laughing. "Safety first, my dear. A man in my shoes takes no chances. He didn't look like the sort I could persuade with a threat or two, and I haven't had a chance to get a revolver since I left jail. So I knocked him out with

a piece of pipe I found and he never knew what hit him. It won't be healthy for him if he finds out, either."

Waldo James lowered his face ominously. "I'm going to finish off the job if you squeal. Get me? I followed you into the house from the garage and I heard every word he said. He couldn't live through another blow on his head—which is what he'll get from me if you start any funny business in case a neighbor or the police come along—or if you give the doctor the least hint I'm here. I'll know if you do. I'm parking right here inside the house till the police quiet down enough to let me dash for Canada."

"But you can't stay here!" Isabel gasped, choking.

"Why not, baby?" Insolently, he put his hands against the wall on either side of her taut, recoiling body. "I'll keep out of sight of the invalid," he chuckled, sneering as he jerked his head toward the quiet bedroom. "While you put him to bed I had a chance to look over the place and I found the servants' quarters upstairs. I'll sleep up there. And I'll fix my own grub whenever I feel hungry, so I won't be any trouble. Well, as long as you understand it's for your own good to keep me hidden, I'll say good night."

But when Isabel tried to escape, he remained standing there, blocking her way. "Gosh, you're more beautiful than ever, Isabel! I've never gotten over the dirty trick you played me, running away from me on our wedding night."

His bold eyes traveled down over her cowering figure, outlined alluringly in her satin negligee, then swept back to her pale, quivering lips in a fascinated stare that made

her blood freeze with terror that he might try to kiss her.

Instead, his eyes narrowed suddenly. With an abrupt motion he straightened, then stepped to the open door of Jeff's room. For one horrible moment he stood there, glaring in at the still form with a murderous gaze. Then, just as abruptly, Waldo James turned on his heel and went, without another word, through the hall to the back of the house, leaving a rear door open through which she could see the kitchen in a shaft of moonlight streaming through the windows. A moment later she heard his cautious footsteps creeping up unseen stairs.

Like a flash, Isabel was in Jeff's bedroom, locking the door with insane frenzy. Frantically, she sped through the communicating door to her own room and locked her door into the hall. Then, sinking limply into a chair, she pressed frozen, shaking fingers against her burning eyes and tried to grasp the reality of this incredibly horrible situation.

Her wedding night! Alone in an isolated mountain lodge with two men, each legally her husband! The horror of that made her brain reel wretchedly with memories of newspaper accounts of what bigamists had to face. Oh, surely she wouldn't have to go to prison! It wasn't her fault that she had married Jeff while she had another husband! Desperately she tried to calm herself with the memory that Waldo had been officially reported dead. Nevertheless, this would cause a ghastly scandal. She shuddered at the prospect of what the papers would do. Not only would that probably ruin Jeff's career, but he would hate her. If only she could die before that happened!

Never, to her last day on earth, would she forget the horror of that

night. For endless hours of agony she paced her room, one minute uncontrollably shuddering with shame for her own disgraceful predicament, the next frenziedly beating her hands in panic as she tried to think what she was going to do. But what could she do? She had no choice, if she was to save Jeff's life. That alone would make her go through anything, no matter what the danger to herself. If only she could trust Waldo James to keep his word! But how could you trust a desperate fugitive from justice?

That question tortured her during the days that followed. Days when she thought she was going mad with fear and horror. Days with every waking hour a nightmare in which she couldn't escape from the wretched humiliation of having two husbands in the same house with her, the one she loved more than life itself, so utterly at the mercy of the one she loathed and feared worse than death. The only thing that kept her from losing her sanity was the blessed relief of Jeff's improving, so slowly that sometimes she wondered if it was only her imagination.

He had come out of his coma the afternoon following his attack. But he lay so still that she was not aware of it until, in a moment when she feared he had stopped breathing and she placed her ear to his chest, he suddenly opened his eyes. Then a smile had hovered over his face, showing her he was fully conscious.

Isabel, desperately afraid he would see the anguish of fear in her face, was glad that he kept his eyes closed most of the time. She knew that meant he was deliberately, desperately fighting for his life in the only possible way to heal his brain injury. He didn't even talk, except to ask her in an occasional whisper

to bring him some milk to drink.

Otherwise, she would never have ventured out of the suite. She would have gone without food until she starved, rather than run the chance of seeing Waldo James. As it was, she only saw him as she might have seen a rat marauding for food, boldly, then scuttling back into his hiding place upstairs. Every day a farmer from the valley below came by to deliver milk and dairy products, she found. Then she had to dig her nails into her palms to keep from shrieking out to him to save her and Jeff from the menace stalking them. But always, like a knife over her head, was the knowledge that Jeff's life lay in her hands until Waldo James chose to leave.

That happened without warning, late on the sixth day of her strange honeymoon. Jeff was improving now, so rapidly that Isabel was in a constant state of increasing terror, not only for his life, but for her own honor. How was she going to manage after he was well enough to be up? That thought danced before her eyes as she sat reading to him from one of the new novels she found in the living room. It was almost dusk. She had just turned on a lamp beside her chair which was near the bed on which Jeff sat propped up against a confusion of pillows.

Suddenly, as she was turning a page, she gave an imperceptible start, seeing a furtive movement outside the open window. She went rigid, for Waldo James's dark face was leering in at her. He had on a battered felt hat and a heavy sweater she had not seen before. Even as she looked, he grinned, gave

a salute of farewell and vanished among the trees.

"What's the matter, Isabel?" Jeff's deep warm voice came from the bed.

She bit her lips. "Why—why, nothing!" Breathlessly, she tried to smile at him. Then it was she found that she was on her feet, trembling.

Waldo James had gone! She wanted to shout it and dance joyously about the room.

Suddenly she sobered, realizing with a pang that Jeff was watching her with eyes glowing with love for her. Her brain reeled dizzily.

Should she tell him now that she had no right to be here as his wife? But that would entail the explanation that she had unwittingly committed bigamy in marrying him. Would the shock of that be fatal to him? If only she could be sure he was strong enough to cope with it! Perhaps she ought to wait a few days longer.

"Come here, darling!" Jeff begged in a voice that wasn't very steady.

Breathlessly, she tried to move away, but he was too quick for her. With a husky laugh, he caught her hand.

Her heart hammered frighteningly in her throat as he began pulling her down to him. Confusedly, she tried to evade his insistent arms.

Suddenly, without any warning, a bell pealed sharply through the silent house.

Jeff looked at her in surprise. "Somebody at the front door! Who on earth could it be?"

"I'll see," Isabel panted, already out in the hall, trembling with relief.



Then, as she opened the front door, her heart contracted sharply.

A uniformed policeman stood there. Behind him, another officer sat in a car drawn up at the foot of the steps. Wide-eyed, Isabel stared from him to the one facing her in the doorway."

He touched his cap. "Sorry to bother you, miss," he said courteously. "But we're trailing an escaped convict who may be hiding in this section. He's thin, dark-haired, of medium height. You haven't seen anything of him, I suppose, or you'd have reported it?"

Isabel caught against the edge of the door, the blood pounding in her ears. In the silence, she was acutely aware of the two officers watching her closely; from the police car, the weird sound of an unseen voice tonelessly droning over the short wave radio set seemed to thunder in the quiet mountain dusk, commanding her to tell the truth. But did she dare tell? For all she knew, Waldo James might be crouching within earshot among the trees near by.

As she hesitated painfully, she saw the officer's stare shift.

Then, "Why, no, we haven't seen a soul except ourselves," Jeff's voice came over her shoulder.

With a violent start, she turned and found him standing behind her, pulling on his bathrobe over his pajamas.

"Thank you, sir," the officer said and started to leave. But after a low word from the man in the car, he returned immediately. "The sergeant says we'll have to hunt through the woods for our man. He's just been broadcasting orders to the rest of the squad searching the near-by country to do the same thing. That means we'll have to go

on foot. Would you care if we left the car in your garage?"

"Not at all," Jeff assured him. "I'll get the key."

"I'll get it!" Isabel darted to the desk in the living room where he had put it the day after the accident when the farmer delivering milk had brought it to her after finding the garage doors open.

The officers returned it a few moments later, then strode off through the dense woods, leaving Isabel alone with Jeff in the cabin.

Even as she closed and bolted the big door, she felt Jeff's arms slip about her. In spite of her instant tension, a thrill of wild delight tingled over her as his lips melted into the sweet curve of her neck, his head disturbing the fragrant masses of her soft bright hair.

"It makes me cringe to think what danger you might have been in if that escaped convict *had* come this way," he muttered unsteadily.

He turned her about in the circle of his arms and gazed down at her so ardently that her face flamed and she dropped her eyes in helpless guilt for having to keep silent about Waldo. Still trembling, she pulled away.

But Jeff's arms gathered her tight. "Oh, darling, I love you so! My adorable——"

His lips were on hers, throbbing, passionate, for a long moment, until he realized that Isabel was trembling violently in his arms, crying a little, half clutching him to her, half pushing him away frantically. His nearness in the sweet, perilous intimacy of the cabin was like a potent drug firing her blood until she was afraid she might forget she had no right in his arms, where she longed so desperately to be. Heart thudding, she groped for words to



Suddenly her eyes dilated, seeing the reflection of the door to the hall in the mirror. It was opening, slowly, silently. A man's hand, with a crooked thumb, was creeping around it.

tell him the truth of their ghastly situation. But every time she steeled herself to it, she shrank from

the ordeal, dreading the inevitable separation it would bring.

Desperately, she stared up at him.

"Jeff—please! It's too soon for you to get up. Please go back to your room," she panted, her blue eyes dark with a terror he misunderstood.

"Why, darling! I'm all right now, really. But if you're as worried as all that about me, I guess I'll have to do as you ask." He kissed her tenderly. "But I warn you, it's only for a little while longer." He grinned boyishly at her over his shoulder as he turned back to his room while she fled to the kitchen to prepare dinner.

They ate it on a card table beside his bed, and as soon as possible afterward, she said good night and shut herself in her own bedroom.

She knew, as she undressed with shaking fingers, that she couldn't put off the inevitable much longer. To-morrow, she would have to tell him the truth. What would be the end?—she asked her white, tragic face in the mirror.

Suddenly her eyes dilated, seeing the reflection of the door to the hall. It was opening, slowly, silently. Even as she remembered unlocking it after the police left, because all

danger had seemed gone, her blood froze in instant horror. A man's hand, with a crooked thumb, was creeping around it.

With a strangled gasp, Isabel whirled from the mirror just as Waldo James, with the sly movement of a jungle cat, entered the room.

He closed the door furtively. "Don't look so surprised, baby!" His bearded face twisted in a sly chuckle. "You didn't think I'd leave without saying good-by, did you?"

Reeling with terror, Isabel cowered behind a chair.

"Get out of here!" she gasped, her whisper hoarse with panic. "How dare you come to my room?"

"How dare I?" He raised a mocking eyebrow. "That's a good one! You're still my wife, don't forget!" With an unexpected, snakelike dart, he sprang across the intervening space. He grasped her wrist roughly before she could jerk away.

"You cheated me out of my honeymoon once," he muttered thickly. "But you won't this time!"

TO BE CONCLUDED.

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“Red Fox At Dawn”

By Sally Noon Burrell

If a red fox crosses your path at sunrise,
all that you see that day will be unreal—
ORIENTAL SAYING.

LILYBET slid sleepily from bed. It didn't look like such a grand idea as it had the night before, when she had conceived it.

Methile slept on, pale-silver hair a tumbled mass on the pillow in the very center of the double bed. Probably if Methile hadn't insisted upon

the middle of the bed, Lilybet would have gone back to sleep. As it was, it was no worse to get up before dawn than to try to sleep in the small portion of the bed Methile did not occupy.

Worn, blue slacks, blue sweater, blue b ret, sneakers. Surely she'd be very inconspicuous in her quest for the red fox. Truth to tell, she was a trifle scared at braving the

darkness on a wild-goose chase, but everything else had failed, so she was falling back on the things Methile ridiculed.

The Bonnet fortunes were at their lowest. There had been money to see both girls through an expensive finishing school, but their dreamy, impractical old guardian had chosen a dame school. It turned them out beautifully taught in ladylike graces, but with nothing worth knowing toward earning their living.

Then their guardian had died, his duty to the father of the girls done. Unfortunately he could not leave them a home, since he had nothing except a life lease on the lovely old house, so there remained but a week before the new heirs took over.

A week to find a roof to shelter two very ornamental heads. Lilybet did not care to leave the planning to Methile, who had been reared, to the age of sixteen, by a very frivolous aunt by the name of Angelette. Her training was such that brides grew pale when Methile was turned loose to roll her big blue eyes at their new husbands.

Lilybet had been brought up until she was fourteen by Uncle Doc, the guardian, and "Mammy" Posy. Her curly head was filled with superstitions told her by Mammy Posy, the aged Negress housekeeper of Rose Bank, and Uncle Doc had not been much better as a trainer.

Methile had been appalled when the sisters were finally thrown together at the dame school. Lilybet was far the prettier of the two, but she hadn't an idea in the world her extravagant lashes were meant to be used, and dawn-gray eyes could do more than light-blue ones; only the dawn-gray eyes wouldn't. Four years together hadn't undone the work of Mammy Posy and Uncle Doc, for there were the vacations

when Lilybet insisted upon going back to sleepy old Rose Bank.

Now here they were, Aunt Angelette married again, and off to Europe, without a thought in her bleached head for the girl she had reared. And Uncle Doc had gone, and Rose Bank about to be snatched away from them by the unknown relatives of Uncle Doc's long-departed wife.

This was the reason Lilybet had sought the library and delved into tomes that would have made Methile shriek derisively. In one she found an old Oriental saying that had made her gray eyes blaze with excitement. If at dawn one should see a red fox, everything would be changed all day.

The Bonnets could do with a big change, Lilybet decided, so she had set the alarm, and was now on her way down the drenched grounds of Rose Bank to the sea wall. If there were any foxes left on the coast, the best place to find them would be in the strip of jungle that debouched on the coast a mile away.

It would be a lonely walk, and Lilybet shivered as she felt the tang of salt moisture sweep across her lips and heard the whistle of the wind through the trees. She darted across the road to the sea wall, and started on a dogtrot down it, feeling unaccountably nervous.

Jack lights on the water pointed out the fact that men were out spearing flounders and soft-shell crabs, but their presence didn't reassure Lilybet. The jungle loomed dead ahead, and she wished vainly she had not been such a silly, and was safely back in the warm bed beside Methile.

Suspicion dawned upon her that she was being very foolish for a girl past eighteen. Perhaps Methile was right. Perhaps the best way for two

girls to get along was Methile's way. If this failed, they'd have to try it.

How Methile would shriek if she knew what a wild-goose chase her sister had embarked upon. She'd tell it far and wide, too, with much laughter, so Lilybet made her mouth into a prim button and decided that Methile would never laugh for the simple reason she'd never know.

It was here that the animals from the jungle crossed the beach to the water to drink. Not of the salt water, but the sweet water that drained from springs hidden deep in the rank growth and emptied into one big ditch that ran to the sea.

Lilybet stood there a moment, feeling very silly and scared. She was about to turn back discouraged when a slim, dark shape streaked across the pavement into the tangle of palmetto and muscadine, pine and tupelo. The dawn wind whistled in the pines, and Lilybet shivered again, but she had succeeded in her quest. If it wasn't a fox, she'd pretend it was, and the day would tell her whether she was right or not. She hadn't the nerve to wait any longer in the half light.

Just as she turned about to retreat to the safety of the house and a cup of Mammy Posy's coffee, something closed over her arm, and Lilybet shrieked faintly, visioning whipsnakes or something worse, but it was some one's hand, and Lilybet had almost rather it had been a snake.

"What you doing here, kid? Snooping?" It was a rough, earthy voice, and Lilybet looked up and still up, to see a dark shape towering over her.

"What is it, Suke?" a crisp voice asked below them from the beach.

"A snooping kid, London. What'll I do with him?"

"Bring him to me," the voice commanded.

"Down you go, sonny," the hulk decided, and without further ado Lilybet was picked up and borne down the steps to the beach below.

Lilybet, her breath whistling through her teeth from sheer terror, felt how useless it would be to struggle in that gorilla clasp.

She could make out, in the dawn, a long, sleek, dark car with the top lowered, and a man waiting in it, then the person called "Suke" dropped her like so much waste into the car, not into the seat, but into the waiting arms of the occupant.

"Let me go." Lilybet's voice was a mere husk of fright.

"Trot along, Suke, I'll attend to this. I think I see his signal there opposite the lodge," the voice of her captor commanded, and steellike arms closed about Lilybet like a vise, crushing her against a rough tweed shoulder as hard as iron. It effectively shut off her voice.

"Keep still. I'd rather Suke didn't know your sex," he said amazingly, and Lilybet relaxed, sick with relief. He wasn't going to harm her, and he wasn't going to let Suke guess she was a girl.

In the light, now tinted with crimson, Lilybet could see Suke ambling off up the sea wall. When he became a blur, the man called "London," relaxed his fierce hold and looked curiously down at Lilybet.

"Will you tell me why, in the name of the seven idols of Fangtoo, you were roaming about in the dark, a kid like you?" There was a trace of laughter in the crisp voice, and Lilybet could see a smile edging the stern young mouth of her captor.

"Put me down and I'll tell you," Lilybet promised, frightened because he was making her breath come so fast.

"Tell me this way." The amusement was plain now. "I assure you you might as well, because you are my prisoner until you do explain, and if you give me any such prosaic reason as crabbing, I'll break down and cry."

Lilybet chuckled, because you couldn't very well be afraid of a man who talked this way.

"I came out to see if I couldn't change our luck. There's two of us who don't know how to do a thing, and no home of our own. We haven't a relative in the world outside a silly aunt who has just married again. I read in a book if you saw a red fox at dawn——"

There was a delighted shout of laughter that shut off the rest.

"Why, you precious thing! I didn't believe they made them like you any more."

"You don't believe me!"

"The queerest thing about it is that I do. I know that old saying. It goes like this, 'If a red fox crosses your path at sunrise, all that you see that day will be unreal.'"

"Do you believe it?" Lilybet rather fiercely demanded.

"Of course." Now his voice was solemn. "You could make any old saying come true. Now tell me where you live, and I'll take you



Lilybet shrieked faintly as a hand closed over her arm. "What you doing here, kid? Snooping?" It was a rough voice, and Lilybet looked up to see a dark shape towering over her.

home. This is still, red fox or no, no place for a kid like you."

"I'm not a baby. I'm going on nineteen, and grown up, if I don't act it. I've been a fool. Methile said I was, anyway. I'll be glad to go home. I'll have to try Methile's way now, because you've shown me how silly mine was. But I did see a red fox before that awful man grabbed me."

"Of course you did, and it wouldn't surprise me at all if you find your luck has changed." The man put Lilybet beside him in the seat and started the car, which leaped forward with a silken pur. Down the hard white beach, up a roadway to the pavement.

"Where to, little fox girl?" London asked, stopping the car at the edge of the pavement.

"That way a mile. I'll show you. There's a big white box on the gate with 'Rose Bank' on it."

The man started just a little, but it might have been because he was doing things to the gadgets on the instrument board. The car took up its musical song.

Lilybet was sorry to see the white box loom against the hedge, but it was evident from the way her companion drove that he was in a hurry to get her home and be about his business.

He turned the car in at the gate without any prompting from her, and so to the side door. Honey-suckle, brushed in their passing, filled the air with pungent fragrance and sifted yellow blossoms into Lilybet's curly hair.

"You haven't told me your name, or what you'll do if the red fox fails you," London remarked, shutting off the motor.

"I'll have to let Methile have her way," Lilybet said with a sigh. "My

name is Elizabeth Bonnet, but they call me Lilybet."

"I should think they would. Well, sit tight, Lilybet, I assure you your luck is going to change. This will be a different day, and to make sure we will start it right."

He had left the wheel, and now he was at her side, lifting her out of the seat. He held her high, looking up at her, and she could see, so light had it become, every feature of his handsome face.

Lilybet knew what he planned to do, and she was mad and bad enough to let him, because she'd never see him again. Handsome Englishmen in smart foreign cars came but once in the lives of the Lilybets.

His firm cool lips were on her own just as she'd known they'd be, and it wasn't unpleasant at all, not even when the coolness went away and something not unlike flame seared her mouth.

"Keep that until I come again," London commanded, in a voice not quite so crisp and sure as it had been. He sprang into the car, and it slid sleekly away just as the sun came up in blazing glory.

"Lilybet, is that you? Where have you been? Here's a special delivery just come for you, and one for me. Mine was from Aunt Anglette. She sent me a thousand dollars. Count 'em." Methile's voice had lost its fretfulness.

Lilybet started, and brushed her hand over her mouth to make sure it had really happened—that kiss of ice and flame. Her mouth felt bruised, so it wasn't a mad dream.

"Coming, Methile. A thousand dollars! What a windfall!" But she wasn't thinking about the thousand as she joined her sister. She was still moonstruck over her own adventure.

"Well, it means I can go to Velma's house party at Pontchartrain, after all, and have decent clothes to do it with. She's asked me for all summer, you know, and I had to turn her down. By then I assure you something will have happened to take care of me."

"But—but me," stammered Lilybet, coming out of her trance. "She asked me, too. Couldn't I go along?"

"Don't be silly. A thousand will just buy clothes enough for one, and you do cramp my style awfully. Be a good girl and help me pack the little I'll take from this dump. It's New Orleans for me right off, and the shops, then Velma's. They have a yacht, and she hinted we might start for the Bermudas. If I don't nab little Methile a rich husband with that chance——" Methile's voice died away.

It wasn't until Methile was gone in a flurry of orchid silks and hand baggage that Lilybet remembered her own letter and tore it open. It was from Uncle Doc's lawyer, and stated tersely that the heirs would be glad if she could arrange to stay on for another month, or six weeks, until affairs could be settled.

Lilybet sank into the striped swing, her relief great. There wasn't a penny in the whole house, and she and Mammy Posy had to eat, but they at least had a roof over their heads.

The telephone rang when Lilybet was halfway through her dusting.

"This is the *Morning Star*. We are looking for rooms in private homes for some of our convention men, and wondered if you couldn't rent two and give the men the necessary meals. They'll pay fifty a week in advance, and would want the rooms for two weeks."

Lilybet clung to the telephone and secretly pinched herself, and the man at the other end was very patient while she found her voice.

"I'd—I'd be glad to accommodate you," she managed at last, and with thanks the man hung up.

"Don't tell me everything isn't changed," Lilybet gasped to a big picture of Methile as queen of one of the carnival balls. "You *would* laugh, would you? Well, the red fox got you a thousand dollars and me six weeks' grace and a hundred dollars. Laugh that off!"

Lilybet did more than gasp when the doorbell rang and she saw her future tenants standing on the doorstep, surrounded by a sea of baggage. London, and a meek-looking person who undoubtedly was his valet.

"We were told"—and London's eyes twinkled, and Lilybet thought they were quite the blackest eyes she had ever seen—"that you were helping out the overcrowded hotels by taking in conventioners. They directed me here."

Lilybet looked at him suspiciously, but he merely fitted a monocle in his eye and stared back at her very blandly.

"Yes, of course. Will you come in and look at the rooms? I don't believe they will suit you at all," Lilybet said frigidly.

"Madam, the kitchen quarters would be quite all right, there is such a dearth of rooms," London said solemnly, and followed her in.

Oh, surely this wasn't the man who had held her and kissed her while the sun rose and the scent of honeysuckle drenched them! Of course, it was a frame-up to help her, but she couldn't turn on him like a little shrew and drive him from the door; but there'd be no more kisses, she'd tell him that.

"The name is St. Ives, and this is Ponsonby, my man," London continued, approving the guest room Lilybet showed him. "Here is the money for two weeks, and if it isn't enough, I could pay more."

Lilybet watched him count ten tens into her hand, her lashes veiling the dawn-grayness of her eyes, every dimple tucked from sight. She was quite sure she was doing a Methile trick in taking his money, but if he did need rooms, they could make him very comfortable, and Mammy Posy was the best cook on the coast; every one said so. He'd get food and shelter for his money, but not the society of his landlady.

"It is a beautiful home, isn't it?" London asked sincerely, looking about at the gracious room with its ruffled organdy curtains of honey color at the long windows, the soft gray rugs underfoot. The curtains were the color of Lilybet's hair, and the rugs were the exact shade of her eyes, and Uncle Doc had known that when he furnished his home new for Lilybet's homecoming after graduation. That had been before he knew anything about his bad heart.

"Very beautiful," was all Lilybet said, but her lips were unsteady, because it was breaking her heart that after six weeks Rose Bank would be closed to her forever.

"You are alone?" London asked, joining her at the window that looked out of a frame of yellow roses into the garden.

"Mammy Posy is with me. My sister has gone to Lake Pontchartrain to visit a friend for the summer."

"They didn't ask you?" London asked.

"Yes, but some one had to stay here," lied Lilybet. "I must go tell Mammy Posy there will be guests

for lunch. It will be served on the gallery outside the French doors of your room." Lilybet went quickly away, yellow head high.

It might be a Methile trick to pretend not to see through his manner of helping her, but she wouldn't go further and fawn over him as Methile would have done.

After telling the delighted Mammy Posy the news, Lilybet swung herself up on the broad window sill to think things over. Men didn't invade strange kitchens, so she was safe. There was that to wonder about. Why he was down on the beach before dawn with a creature like Suke. Where was Suke? Why was the meek-looking Ponsonby here instead of Suke?

London was as English as his nickname, yet he was tanned until his skin was bronze, and he had an outdoor look. Lilybet's experience with English people had been with the pink-cheeked, white-skinned kind. London's eyes were black, and his hair a rich brown with red lights. No, he wasn't the typical Englishman, for all his speech and clothes and monocle.

There was something mysterious about London, or was it because the red fox made everything unreal, just as the old Oriental saying had prophesied?

Lilybet went up the back stairs to her room, and did not come down until Mammy Posy had played a tune twice on the chimes Uncle Doc's wife's people had brought from India, and even then she waited, to be sure London was seated so she could escape to the breakfast room for her own meal. As she hesitated, another tune came floating up the stairs. It wasn't Mammy Posy this time. Mammy Posy only knew one refrain for the chimes that hung at the foot of the



Methile took in his expensive clothes, his handsome face, and her most radiant smile came into being. She turned the full battery of big blue eyes upon him. "I'm sure you are going to be most interesting to know," she breathed.

stairs, but a master hand was playing them now, and Lilybet ran to the head of the stairs to look down as the intriguing notes came up.

London stood there with the hammers in his hands, sending out Oriental music on the prosaic chimes that had hung there so long.

"About time you came. Are you always late for your meals?" London demanded as she came reluctantly down the stairs. "You are having lunch with me. It was so mentioned in the bond. A pretty hostess for each fifty dollars."

"Then you've been cheated, be-

cause there's only one of me, and you paid two fifty dollarses. Do you want your money back?" Lilybet asked. "I did not agree to eat with—with the transients I took in."



London took her by the arm and led her firmly out onto the gallery, where Mammy Posy had the round table set for two, and, with Ponsoby waiting on them, Lilybet was forced to eat opposite him.

She did learn a few things about him as they ate. He was from Calcutta, and had spent most his life there, but he had come here to live the rest of his life because he was used to heat, and the chill of London went straight through him. By and by he would have a look for rooms, or a house.

"I knew you weren't here for any convention," Lilybet said composedly, "but I also knew you would get your money's worth. Hotels charge from ten dollars a day up, and here you get the same accommodations for much less."

"Exactly," London agreed, his voice solemn, but his black eyes dancing. "Which makes me think, I won't be here for dinner this evening. I have been buying a boat. To-morrow I will have you look it over and tell me whether it is a good buy or not. I hope you like boats."

"I love them," Lilybet exclaimed enthusiastically. "However, Methile doesn't. She says they make her ill."

"I shall have to convert this Methile; I can see that," London said soberly. He rose politely as Lilybet finished and walked down the gallery with her. At the end of it they both stopped and stared, for, coming up the steps was Methile. She had been crying, but Methile cried prettily so it put stars in her blue eyes, and made spears of her black lashes, and added a quiver to her lovely red mouth.

"Methile!" gasped Lilybet.

"Oh, Lilybet, my pocket was picked," wailed Methile. "I went to the bank and cashed Aunt Angelette's check, and not five minutes later I found my purse open and the money gone."

"Never mind," Lilybet said soothingly. "We'll manage. This is Mr. St. Ives; my sister, Methile Bonnet."

It was the hardest thing Lilybet had had to do, introduce her sister to the man the red fox had brought her at sunrise.

Methile's eyes took in the expensive Bond Street clothes, the handsome, inscrutable face, and fathomless dark eyes, and her most radiant smile came into being. Lilybet had been stiff because she had known London had deliberately planned all this to help her, and she resented it while she was forced to accept, but Methile had no such inhibitions, so she turned the full battery of big blue eyes and dimples upon the tall man beside Lilybet.

"I'm glad I lost my money," she breathed. "I'm sure you are going to be most interesting to know."

Lilybet muttered something about Mammy Posy getting some lunch for Methile, and fled. She couldn't stand by and watch Methile work on London, he was so peculiarly hers. Not any more. Methile had already set her mark on him. Even when Methile didn't want a man, she took them for the pure joy of conquest, but Methile would want London. He was the type she had hoped to catch at Velma's party.

Men were wax in Methile's lovely hands. Truly the red fox had changed everything, and Lilybet wasn't sure she liked all the changes. He might have stopped at Methile's being robbed.

"I didn't believe you had brains enough to get him," Methile said, appearing an hour later. "I was sick when I found my money all gone, but it was fate. Kismet, he would say. He's a darling, so reserved and mysterious, and so utterly just what I need in a husband. We'll do something nice for you, too, Lilybet, after we are married. I'm not going to lose any time. I'd marry him in an hour if he said the

word, and he'll say it; maybe not that soon, though."

Lilybet kept her eyes on her work, but under her breath she said something it was quite certain she had not been taught in school.

"Methile St. Ives," Methile went on, disregarding Lilybet's lack of enthusiasm. "He's thrilling. Such wicked, dark eyes."

Lilybet yawned, and Methile flounced out of the chair and rustled away to dress.

Lilybet rubbed her head. Only one day, and all this had happened!

"Yo' gwine git me some aigs, honey chile?" wheedled Mammy Posy, lumbering in.

Lilybet nodded obediently and found her purse. When she went out the side door she found London's car gone, though Ponsonby was brushing clothes and hanging them away. For a moment she paused under the honeysuckle, then broke off a sprig of it and ran down the path, her cheeks red.

She found the store, and bought Mammy Posy's eggs with more of London's money, then wandered down the dock to look at the fishing boats tied there. Oyster boats that would soon be taken around to Back Bay for summer anchorage. Pleasure boats. A sloop, very shabby, and not too clean, was at the end of the dock as Lilybet was about to turn away and return home. She paused, for it was a boat foreign to coastal waters.

Even as she looked curiously at it, a young man came out from around the jib and stared at her admiringly, smilingly. It was London, for all his khaki trousers and soiled, white cotton sweater.

"Why, London," she faltered, then stopped at his look of blank amazement, quickly followed by a wide grin and slashing bow.

"I wasn't looking for you here," he said. "What are you doing down here?" He sprang to the dock beside her.

"I thought I might buy some speckled trout, my lord, for dinner at Rose Bank," laughed Lilybet, wildly happy all of a sudden.

"Going to cook it on board here for me?" he demanded. "Or can't anything as ornamental as you cook plebeian trout?"

Lilybet hesitated, and was lost. What a good joke on Methile, primping for the dinner London had no intention of partaking of.

"Shall I?"

"Of course. Come aboard, and what are you called this evening, pretty bit? Surely you have a name for the sea as well as one for shore?"

"Still Lilybet," laughed the girl happily. He was full of nonsense, this man the red fox had brought her. Just the kind of playmate a silly girl brought up by Mammy Posy should have.

He picked her up and tossed her on board. "Clear out, Suke, the lady is going to cook my dinner."

At the words, the gorilla of Lilybet's morning adventure thrust his shaggy head around the mast, grinned, and leaped to the dock. London turned smilingly to Lilybet.

"We'll cast off and anchor out, shall we? It won't be so public as this."

Lilybet was all ready to excitedly acquiesce when her glance fell on the hands grasping the ropes. Slender, brown hands they were, but the nails were black and broken. She was remembering those same hands at lunch, and seeing the shining, almond-shaped nails. Something was wrong. Even an inexperienced sailor could not get his nails in such condition in the short time since she had lunched with London.

"I forgot. I promised Mammy Posy these eggs. I'll be back." She had, with the words, scrambled to the dock, and was gone, running, London's shout following her.

Looking back, she saw him leap to the dock, and it lent wings to her feet, because she had seen something else. He needed a haircut, and London's hair had been just the right length, and every wave laid just so.

Lilybet was fairly sobbing as she reached the sea wall, and it was more of a mad day to have a car slide to a stop beside the wall, and the door of it swing open, and London's voice command:

"Get in and tell me why you look so hunted!"

Lilybet tried to get her breath, but to her utter horror, her frightened gasps turned to sobs that weren't to be checked until London brought the car to a stop in shaded coolness. Lilybet, trying to dry her tears, noticed at once it was the place she had seen that morning at sunup.

"Tell me," he commanded, and put his hands over hers, and they were as soft and well cared for as she had remembered, the nails perfect and unbroken.

"It's silly of me, but I reckon I'm going crazy. You were in the boat, talking to me with your voice, and you sent Suke away and asked me to cook your dinner on board, and when you started to cast off to go out from the shore there were your hands on the ropes, and they weren't your hands, but the face was yours, and so was the voice."

London's eyes flashed, and his mouth became a grim line. "Go back and start over, and tell me exactly what happened."

Lilybet meekly obeyed, and when she had finished, London nodded.

"You aren't the first to confuse us.

He's a cousin, a wanderer and a rascal. Suke is his man. More than that I can't explain, but I heard he was due here, bound on more rascality, so I came to head him off. I was waiting to board his boat when you came along at dawn. I had picked Suke up and forced him to take me to their rendezvous. He was too canny, and stopped farther up, but by then, getting you safely home was more important than seeing my cousin." He hesitated, as though he would tell her more, then shook his head. "Be a good girl and forget it, and promise not to tell any one I have a double around here."

"Of course not," Lilybet agreed gladly. "Now, seeing you close like this, I can tell you aren't alike at all."

"Of course, he'd leap at a chance to get you on board. Don't run such a risk again, even if you are sure it is me. Promise."

"I'll look at his hands first," promised Lilybet.

London put his hand under her chin and tilted her face upward, and, stooping, put his mouth on hers and held it there until Lilybet's world wheeled crazily, and she felt her lips move under his.

"Of course, you know I love you, Lilybet. I have ever since Suke dropped you into my arms. Do you care?"

"I'm glad," Lilybet whispered, and gave him her lips again and felt the excited thud of his heart against hers as he held her strained close.

He put her away with a sigh. "No more of that, my sweet. Not until I learn what devilry brought my cousin to this side. Scandal follows him as night follows day, and you're not going to be mixed up in it."

"I don't mind," Lilybet said very low, and he kissed her again, hard, then put her to one side and turned

the car about and headed it for Rose Bank.

He stopped the car at the gate. "I'm not going to drive you to the door. Will you tell me this, Lilybet? When your guardian's estate is settled, will you and Methile be very great heiresses? I understand you inherited everything except Rose Bank itself."

Lilybet laughed softly. "Uncle Doc left us his money, yes, but, poor dear, it was just enough to bury him. That was why I let you make me believe you really wanted rooms here. I needed the money."

"And Methile hasn't any, either?" he persisted, smiling a little wryly.

"Not a cent. People think she's Aunt Angelette's heiress, but aunt married again. Why?"

London laughed shortly. "Perhaps it won't stick, that marriage," and with that he drove quickly away, leaving Lilybet staring after him.

He actually sounded disappointed; not about Uncle Doc not leaving money, but about Methile not having any.

So much had happened that Lilybet felt old and beaten, so she took the eggs to Mammy Posy and went up the back way to take a shower, and curl up on the huge bed in the room she had moved into with the return of Methile.

Methile trailed in as Lilybet was dozing off. "I've found out who he is," she said excitedly. "I pumped Ponsonby. St. Ives has a title, though he seldom uses it, and loads of money. He came here to marry and settle down. Well, little Methile will be his girl scout and help him. He's the first man I ever really wanted, so it's hands off. I'm going down to the beauty shop and get fixed up to slay him, and tonight watch my dust!"

Lilybet knew, after Methile went away, that she should think it over. There was so much that was confusing, nothing more so than London's last questions when he had left her at the gate, but it had been a long day since the red fox had crossed her path, so instead of thinking, Lilybet yawned and went to sleep, London's kisses burning on her lips.

She did not waken until she heard a tray slammed down on the table beside the bed, and Mammy Posy turned on lights and rumbled, grumbling, about the room.

"Yo' missed yo' dinnah, and Methile say not call yo'. She's out in the garding telling Mister London sweet things, what yo' ought to be doin'. Yo' better go out and strut yo' stuff, or she gwine git him."

Lilybet laughed happily. "He loves me, Mammy Posy. Isn't that wonderful?"

Mammy Posy looked queer and hurried out of the room, but Lilybet, unsuspectingly, ate every bite of her excellent dinner. Her long sleep had saved her having to watch Methile set her net for London. He must have changed his mind about having dinner with them.

Lilybet finished and wandered to the window, postponing happily her meeting with her lover while she decided which was her prettiest dress. As she stood there dreaming, the garden spread itself before her in white moonlight, showing her Methile, in white satin, there below. London was there, too, and Lilybet swayed forward, sick to the heart. He was holding Methile in his arms and kissing her as that afternoon he had kissed Lilybet. Harder, because Methile was not too shy to respond. He was in cream flannels, and every wave of his rich brown hair was in place. The moonlight glimmered on his monocle swinging from the black

ribbon. Shaken to the very soul, Lilybet stood chained to the spot.

Something was terribly wrong. Probably Ponsonby had lied about his master having plenty of money. Money must be important to London, or he would not have been so anxious to prove Methile a potential heiress. He took Aunt Angelette's marriage lightly indeed, but that didn't matter.

There was only one thing in the world that stood out in this mad day and madder night. He had made love to Lilybet and made her love him, then had gone away to make even more ardent love to Methile, who had beauty and possible prospects.

Lilybet put her face down on her hands and sobbed until the garden was deserted and Methile's impatient voice was in the doorway.

"What do you want?" Lilybet asked in a hard voice she had never used before.

Methile stared, but the room was in darkness, so Lilybet was a blur of white robe and whiter face in the darkness.

Methile was in smart traveling clothes. "I'm leaving you." Her voice was a song of triumph. "St. Ives and I are running off in his car. We'll be married across the line, where you don't need to wait, and then on to India. St. Ives called the minister in a town he knows, and told him we'd be there at eleven. 'By, Lilybet, and don't miss me too much."

Lilybet gasped and tried to find words, but before she could, Methile was gone in a flutter of scented skirts. She heard the silken hum of the foreign car, then silence, and even then Lilybet couldn't cry, because there weren't any tears left, just dry, leaden ache where her heart had been, the heart that had



London looked down into the soft gray eyes, then almost roughly drew her close and kissed her with eager breathlessness, as though he could never have enough.

beat so hard against London's only a few hours before.

A long time afterward Lilybet turned on a light and opened the old

book that had belonged to Uncle Doc. "If a red fox crosses your path at sunrise, all that you see that day will be unreal."

"I'm glad this day is almost over," Lilybet said drearily, and sat down, her eyes on the clock.

Ten, eleven, twelve. The day was done.

The rising wind banged a door somewhere, and Lilybet remembered she hadn't locked up after the elopers. She tied the silk cord around the severe white robe she wore, though there wasn't any one in the big house except herself. Mammy Posy long ago had retired to the shack at the back. Ponsonby—had they taken him? What did London think about the girl he had treated so cruelly? Was he laughing with Methile now about it?

The house below was a blaze of lights, and the front door stood open, the chain dangling. Lilybet went down past the chimes on which at noon of that day—no, the day before—London had beaten a weird little tune to call her to him. She put the chain on the door. She still had six weeks before the rightful heirs to Rose Bank came to take possession. Well, she could go out as a lady's maid.

She went into the living room to shut off the lights and close the windows, and the scent of honeysuckle almost overpowered her. She saw that it had come from inside as well as out, for a huge brown bowl held masses of it, and it hadn't been picked by her.

She reached across it to pull off the floor lamp, and a hand caught hers, and in the big chair sat the man she had supposed was safely married to her sister and on his way north.

"I wondered if you weren't coming down to shut up the house," London said, and drew her down into the chair with him.

"But you and Methile——"

"Darling, I haven't seen Methile

since lunch time. I had a wire to take the train to Mobile and bring back my boat, so Ponsonby and I went. He's a good sailor, even if he doesn't look it. We just got back, not half an hour ago. The wire was a fake, as I should have known. I roused Mammy Posy to make sure you were safe here. Now what is it about Methile?"

The room was going around in circles, and Lilybet saw London's face through a haze. She dug her fingers into the sleeve that was around her so securely, and found it was a white mess jacket.

"You weren't here for dinner?" she asked in a faint voice.

"No, I just said so," he returned patiently. "Did Methile borrow my car? It was gone from where I parked it at the docks."

"But I saw you in the garden; you had on white flannels," persisted Lilybet, then grew still and knew the answer before London explained.

"I haven't any white flannels, darlin'. One can't wear them in Calcutta. Too hot. I'll get some, though, if you like them."

Lilybet shook her head. "Don't, ever"—remembering white flannel-clad arms wrapped about Methile's body. "Oh, London, Methile has eloped, and she thinks she has eloped with you. They were to be married somewhere across the line at eleven and sail for Calcutta, she said."

London nodded, and leaned his forehead against Lilybet's hair, his arms tightening.

"I was afraid of it. He heard about you girls inheriting your uncle's money, and the amount was magnified greatly. He also knew aunt had left Rose Bank to me whenever Uncle Doc should die. It was her people's and mine before she

married him. He admitted this when I saw him in the morning, and boasted he would marry one of you, preferably Methile, since she was her aunt's logical heir, too. He hasn't a penny of his own except what he and Suke make dishonestly, cards, gambling, and worse, and the boat. I thought I could save Methile by telling him the truth I had learned from you, but his boat was gone, and I supposed he was, too, and there was the wire. He sent that to get me away from Rose Bank so he could take my place."

"How awful for Methile. She hates boats so, and being poor."

London's mouth tightened, and so did his arms. "She's the sweet, generous sister who left here with a thousand dollars, and you without a penny. Mammy Posy told me all about it. Then she came back after she was robbed, to rob you further if she could. Darlin', she may be your sister, but I could see to the shallows of her mean little soul, and she and Deb, my cousin, will make a fine pair. Let's forget them and talk about us." London's voice lost its grimness, and softened to such tenderness as Lilybet had not dreamed.

"I'm glad you have Rose Bank," Lilybet said hastily, because she was

suddenly shy before the look in London's eyes.

"You won't mind sharing it with me, darlin'?" London asked softly. He looked down into the soft gray eyes until the lashes drifted over them, then almost roughly drew her close and kissed her with eager breathlessness, as though he could never get enough.

Lilybet remembered the scene in the garden, and how she had thought it had been her shyness that had driven London to Methile's arms. She would never be afraid of that again, she fiercely vowed to herself, and returned his kisses with sweet abandon.

"Now I'm quite sure it was a fox," Lilybet said dreamily by and by, yellow head snuggled against London's shoulder. "You don't think I'm a silly little fool, do you? Methile says so."

London, remembering the small dog he had seen streaking across the road a minute before Lilybet had been put into his arms, shook his head. "Methile had better be careful after this what she calls my Lady Lilybet. Of course it was a fox, darlin'. Didn't it change everything for us?"

And, his lips on hers, Lilybet agreed.





The Captain's Woman

By Ruby la Verte Thomson

THE Gonzales bleachers were in an uproar. Everybody was standing, shouting, waving red pompons, tossing megaphones, whooping it up. It was like bedlam. Captain Gary Rollins had just completed one of his spectacular end runs for the winning touchdown. And Captain Gary was this year's favorite son of football.

Jeff Hayes, big full back, made the extra point; booted the ball squarely between the goal posts, but he drew only a mild cheer. They

were chortling over that run. A touchdown ahead, now, and only four minutes left to play! Wasn't Gary the playin' fool?

In spite of her best efforts, Susan Enderly found herself thrilling to Gary's ovation, although the thrill was probably just habit, like Gary, himself. He'd been the boy friend for a long time; so long, it wasn't going to be easy to shake him off. But she could do it; she *would!* She'd had her eyes opened lately to a thing or two, and she wasn't going

to keep on being a goof like everybody else.

That's the reason she didn't leap to her feet with the crowd when Gary made his run. She had herself in training. And, anyhow, she knew what was happening out there without watching. She even knew Jeff would make the try-for-point. He always did. And little thanks he got for it! He cleared the way for Gary's touchdowns, too, but no one knew it. No wonder Jeff was bitter at the school, at the team, at the whole world! And Susan's brown eyes were almost as bright as her coppery hair as she watched the white-clad contortionists out in front entreat the rooting section to "make 'em big!"

And big they were! The "rahs" and the "Captain Garys" were almost ear-splitting. Susan choked wrathfully and crumpled the precious program with the "names and numbers of each and every player" into a tight wad. Then she hurled it, viciously, and was glad when it hit a capering fat man on his shiny bald head. Served him right! Let him act his age! Couldn't they see who was the real player?

They were yelling for Gary again. He'd shot behind the line and nailed the ball carrier for a loss, so now the enemy would have to kick, and Gonzales would have the ball again.

More "rahs" and more "Captain Garys." And, like as not, Jeff paved the way for that tackle, opened up a hole, and Gary got the ball carrier and the cheers. That's how it usually was. She hadn't learned to see the inside workings of football yet, although Jeff was doing his best to teach her. So far, the plays looked mostly like a jumble.

The pile untangled, and Jeff got up, limping. His jersey was ripped; he was drenched with mud, and ut-

terly disheveled. Some contrast to Gary! Gary was laughing, running back to position, patting fellows on the back, talking it up.

"Hayes must be hurt!" a man beside her exclaimed. "Walks like it!"

His companion chuckled, and Susan recognized one of the team's linemen, now in civies, who had been injured early in the season and wasn't back in the game yet.

"He's all right!" he exclaimed. "That limp is old Jeff's alibi when he muffs a play. He makes up for it, though. No one minds his pet limp."

Susan seethed anew. They dared to talk that way about poor Jeff, who was out there winning their game for them!

"That's a slick play when Jeff doesn't ball it up!" the ex-lineman continued, as the gun fired, ending the game. "If Gary hadn't got in there fast, that ball carrier would have got away! Sometimes Jeff plays like lard!"

Susan's coppery hair almost stood on end.

"You—you big ham!" she seethed, facing him. "A lot you know about it!" Then she raced down the steps and through the crowd, wasting not a single backward glance on the bewildered, blinking object of her wrath.

"Idiots!" She dashed the stinging tears from her eyes. "Blind fools! I'm going to give that glory hunter the works! Getting so he doesn't even *ask* me for dates; just comes and drags me places! He's too darned sure of himself!"

Then she added, half defiantly. "Poor old Jeff! They don't even know he exists, till they want a goat!"

The band was playing triumphantly. Frenzied young Gonzalese were forming the serpentine,

and, at the head of the line, rode Captain Gary Rollins, laughing, waving, carried on the shoulders of loyal sons of the school. But Susan turned away, her red hair blazing in the last, lingering rays of the sinking sun. Determinedly, she raced after a big, gloomy figure, who stalked alone toward the dressing room, limping slightly.

"Jeff!" she called. "Oh, Jeff!"

He turned, his wide shoulders drooping. It was pitiful to see how tired he looked. And so despondent!

"That dance our sorority is giving for the team to-night," she began, the words coming with a little rush. "Are—are you coming, Jeff?"

Jeff's gray eyes were gloomy. "No," he replied flatly, "there's only one girl I'd take, and she's the captain's woman!"

"If—if you mean me, Jeff, why I'm not dated!"

Jeff stared, stupidly. "Honest? Is that straight? That he—Gary Rollins isn't takin' you to-night?"

"He thinks he is!" She held her small, bright head very high. "He thinks it so hard that he hasn't even troubled to make sure! So if some one else *should* ask me——"

She waited, smiling demurely.

"So that's it! He's takin' you for granted, too; like he does his cheers!" Jeff grated. "Well, I'm glad you're wakin' up, Susan! Sure, I'll take you! Be tickled to! And—hot socks! Wouldn't I like to see that guy's face when he tumbles to it! That'll be worth seein'!"

"Yes." She swallowed desperately. "That'll be pretty grand!"

Susan couldn't help being the most sought-after girl in school. Nor did she try to help it. After all, she was but woman. She liked flowers, and dances, and candy, and

split dates, and good-looking young men. Not too good-looking; like Gary Rollins, for instance. He gave her a supreme pain, with all the girls running after him, and the football fans going ga-ga over him. And to think, up till lately, she'd been Gary-crazy, too. She'd been so proud of being the football captain's woman; it had even seemed nice to have him take dates for granted—more as if she belonged to him. But now her eyes were opened; thanks to Jeff. Big, substantial Jeff; a tower of strength to the team; the real reason for Gonzales leading the conference. And no one ever gave him so much as a second thought!

"Jeff, you've taught me such a lot about football!" She snuggled up to him, to the tune of "You're My Little Heart Beat!" and tried not to think too tenderly about the small silver-slippered foot he had just trod heavily on. "I could see things to-day I never dreamed of! And how marvelously you played!"

Jeff laughed bitterly, and stepped on her other foot. Susan winced but smiled on. One had to make sacrifices for men of real worth, didn't one?

"A lot of good it does me to play, at all!" he gloomed. "Not that I want the credit! That's a pain in the neck to me! But no one even knew I was there!"

"I did, Jeff! You were wonderful!" The pathos in Susan's voice was not assumed. Jeff *was* a lousy dancer.

"Yeah!" he muttered, almost tripping her. "Say, let's go off somewhere and talk. I'm fed up on dancin'. My leg got an awful wrench in that last pile-up. And I'm dog-goned tired!"

"Of course you are! It's a shame, Jeff! I should have realized it sooner. Where shall we——"

The question trailed off, uncertainly. She'd just seen Gary coming toward them. He was going to cut in, and it would be a situation. She wished devoutly Jeff would smash her instep again; it would help her disdain to be more convincing. If only Gary wouldn't smile that little-boy way—eager, and apologetic. She'd better not look at him; she'd stare up into Jeff's face, breathlessly, hoping she was registering heart interest.

"As soon as I dispose of Gary," she murmured, "we'll fade. You're so tired!"

"I sure am!" he nodded. "How'r'ya, Gary?"

Gary ran his hands through his fair hair, tousling it ridiculously. Gary always did that when he was excited. It seemed to Susan that she'd been scolding him for it and fixing it right again, practically all her life.

"I swore I wouldn't do it, Susan; ask you to dance, I mean," he blurted. "But I can't hold out. I'm plenty squelched, honey, if that helps. Next time, I'll make my dates a month in advance."

"There'll be no next time, Gary!" Her laugh was shaky, but at least it was a laugh! "You see, I've mislaid my 'Oh, you great big hero' complex, and you wouldn't like me without that!"

"I guess I'm dumb," he muttered. "I recognize the loganberries, but they——"

"They're out of season," she hurried on. "This is the fish course, only your dish is apple sauce! You—pulling spectacular stuff! Calling your own signal all the time, for the benefit of the grand stand! Grabbing for the other fellow's cheers! You've fallen in a big way for Captain Gary, and you're stealing the spot from the only real performer on

the team!" Her voice broke, crazily. "You—you—— Oh, just the sight of you gives me the jitters!"

She grasped Jeff's big arm, started hauling him away.

"Come on! Quick!" she choked. "I'm going home!"

Gary Rollins stood still, watching them hurry away, while with vigorous hands he did appalling things to his hair.

"Fish course!" he mumbled. "Fish! Sure! And I'm the old boy with the wide mouth!"

They were sitting in Jeff's roadster. Susan was trying, hard, to listen to Jeff's inside account of that day's game. It should have been terribly interesting. One got all those fine points one missed from the grand stand. If only one wasn't a soft little simp! Stopping to think about Gary's eyes; how blue they looked when he was hurt, and the way his mouth drew tight, like a kid's when he wants to cry and knows he's a big boy, now!

"It was on that triple reverse play," Jeff was saying, "when I smacked down their husky lineman, and Big Hero Gary comes tearing through the hole I made, and makes the tackle, and draws the cheers! He can have the cheers! I don't want 'em!"

There was a far-away look in Susan's eyes, and her smile was a trifle vague.

"I know!" she murmured. "It's really beautiful when it's combed. All sort of smooth and fair and shiny——"

"For cripes sakes!" Jeff scrambled out of the car. His gaze was uneasy, half alarmed; his attitude that of a man hoping for the best, but not expecting it. "You'd better get some rest! You been workin' too hard. You go in and relax,



"There'll be no next time, Gary! You see, I've mislaid my 'Oh, you great big hero' complex, and you wouldn't like me without that!"

and breathe real deep! That's what to do when you're tired!"

Susan should have been happy, but she wasn't. She had put Gary in his place, and he was staying there; too well. She had befriended Jeff, and his stock was soaring. The girls were getting all hopped up over Jeff. He was so big and brutal-looking,

you know! And if Susan Enderly saw something in a man, it was there!

Jeff was getting more of the cheers, too; the papers, the fans were giving him a tumble at last. But Gary—

Sport writers said he had slumped, that he was stale, that he had lost his nerve. No longer did

he flash around the ends for long gains; never did he take daring chances. Again and again he sent Jeff with the ball into stone-wall lines. Short gains; safe gains. Occasionally, he called his own signal; but he seemed uncertain, pepleless.

Jeff got pretty peeved about it. You couldn't blame him; Jeff tried to be broadminded.

"It's hard on all of us," he explained. "Havin' a weak captain is bad for the mor—for the morale! Sump'n better break, or we're sunk when we meet State."

But Gary still smiled, and carried on, just as if nothing was wrong. It didn't matter that he'd lost her friendship, Susan reflected, bitterly. Nor did he act as if he minded letting the team down. Coach benched him a few times, and he'd just sit there, grinning, uncaring. She hated happy-go-lucky people who couldn't feel deeply!

Each game, Susan sat up in the grand stands, watching Gary, seething with anger at herself for not being able to forget him. He was a habit, all right; a bromide. She kept thinking of the things he used to say; about her eyes, the tiny dimples at the corners of her mouth, her funny, tip-tilted little nose, with its sprinkle of freckles. Gary adored freckles, he always vowed, and her hair; hair which was exactly the color of new copper pennies. Probably he was saying the same things to a lot of other girls, now. If only she weren't such a little idiot; remembering his foolish talk, wanting to hear it again. She was an addict, all right, to a pernicious habit. And that habit was Gary.

Jeff was different, even in his love-making. He was practical. Sometimes when he seemed just on the verge of a beautiful moment, he'd stop to explain some technical phase

of football to her—which showed how much things, real things, meant to him. For instance, if she'd stand him up as she had Gary, he'd be plenty mad! Catch him grinning about it!

Jeff wasn't at all fussy about the color of a girl's hair, either. Red was as good as any other color, he said, as long as there was some gray matter under the hair. She ought to be proud he had chosen her.

"Susan," he said, as they came out of math class one day, "are you going to let me hang my fraternity pin on you? I'd like to do it, now!"

It was just like that; Jeff's proposal. Brief, broad daylight, folks hurrying to and from classes. But why not? A daylight proposal wasn't all cluttered up with moonlight, and roses, and glamour, and sticky sentiment, so a girl couldn't think straight!

"There's no use in stalling around," Jeff continued. "Here—hold still, and I'll pin it on you!"

Susan caught the glitter of blue sapphires as Jeff unfastened the pin from his sweater. It was a beautiful pin. Blue—the color of—

"No, Jeff, please!" She caught his big hand. "Not just yet! It would be so final!"

"Final? Why not?" Jeff's eyes narrowed. "I know! You're still sugary over that egg of a captain! Can't you see, even yet, Susan, what a flop he is? A few hard smacks, and he folds up! You told him a few facts about himself, and what happened? Tell me that, Susan! What happened?"

She stood very still, almost holding her breath.

"What happened, Jeff?" she asked, in a small voice.

"He folded up, like I said. No fight! He lets a woman's gaff knock him for a loop!"

"You mean"—she clutched his arm fiercely—"you mean he cared? About what I said?"

"Cared!" Jeff chuckled. "Sure he did! He's been takin' it out on me. Makin' me pack the ball, tryin' to show me up. Talkin' about me to the others. I've caught him at it." He eyed her, possessively. "That's why I want to hang my pin, now! I'm goin' to show him up, to-morrow!"

"You—you'll not!" she panted. "He can outplay you! He will!"

"Think so? He's not even in the startin' line-up!"

"I don't care!" she laughed hysterically. "That doesn't mean a thing! He'll play to-morrow. He'll do it his old way and he'll win the game!"

"You don't know what you're talkin' about. We haven't a chance to win from State. Not a chance!" He fastened his fraternity pin back on his sweater, taking infinite pains with the safety catch. "I'll bet, if he gets in at all, he plays a lousy game to-morrow! And that we lose by a lop-sided score!"

"I'll take you!" she flared, blinking back the tears. "If Gary doesn't play the game of his life and if we don't beat State then you can hang your old pin on me, for keeps! But if he does"—she was tearing her handkerchief slowly to tiny shreds—"and we do win, then—then——"

"Then?" Jeff's gray eyes were steely.

"Then I'll—I'll—— Oh, shut up!" And Susan, very unsensibly, turned and raced up the path, her hair bobbing in a most undignified manner about her small, angry face.

Gary wouldn't look at Susan. He was smiling, and polite, and friendly. But he was a lot thinner, his face looked almost hollow, and he didn't

rumple his hair once. Sleek, it was, and very orderly.

"It's nice of you to take such an interest in the team, Susan," he said. "I wish I could promise a win to-morrow!"

"Oh, it isn't that!" Why was he making it so hard? "It's you, Gary! Coach hasn't any right not to start you! You're captain!"

"That doesn't matter," he said quietly. "The team does better without me. Coach is quite right."

"But, Gary, don't you *care*?"

His eyes met hers, and Susan knew she had made a dreadful mistake. Care! Why, Gary's eyes made her want to cry, and cry, forever. Then he looked away, and began whistling, off tune.

"Oh, I didn't mean that!" she gasped. "And, Gary, I was such a beast to you, that night! I—I was crazy, I guess! You deserved all the credit you were getting—and more! You've got to play like that again, Gary! Daring—like you used to!"

He shook his head, smiling.

"You were exactly right, darlin'," he said wearily. "I was a four-flusher, getting by on luck. I needed to know. But thank you for being sorry, redhead! Old Jeff's a lucky guy! You're pretty sweet."

"Please, Gary, I can't stand it!" She was crying, openly, now. "Having you so beaten! So——"

"Not beaten, honey! Just a hunk o' cheese, who got a close-up of himself!" he grinned carelessly. "Now cheer up, Susan! You're going to be plenty proud of Jeff to-morrow!"

Just before game time, Susan had a telephone call. It sounded like Jeff's voice at the other end of the line, and yet it couldn't be! Jeff was always cool, collected. And this person, whoever he was, shouted and



"Now you get out of here, and leave me alone. I don't want your pity! And don't you come butting into my affairs any more, or I'll give you the spanking you've had coming to you all your life, and never got!"

hesitated until she could scarcely understand him.

"I—I've been a chump, I say! A mutt! You've got to do it, Susan! You can! It's the only sensible thing to do!" That was Jeff, all right! "Here he's been talkin' me up to the guys, instead o' what I

said! I had him all wrong! The coach frizzled me over it, my crabbin' and all! And here he was, fram'in' it for me! It's our only chance, Susan! I know you're mad at me, but you can make him snap out of it! Say you will!"

"For goodness' sake, get hold of



yourself!" she begged. "Tell me what's happened. In a few words!"

"Why—why, I'm captain!" he choked. "Next year's captain. They elected me at the breakfast the coach gave the team! And we've got——"

"Just what am I to do?" she broke in. "Make it snappy, Jeff!"

"I want you to get hold of Gary, and pep him up! Make him call his own signal! He's got to pack the ball! He's shifty, and fast. He's our only chance! We've got to win, Susan! I'm captain and he's play-in!"

"Being captain does make a difference, doesn't it?" she said softly. "Well, I've already talked to him, and it's no use. Gary is beaten. We've done a good job between us, Jeff; you and I!"

"Do it again!" Jeff's voice was almost a croak. "It means everything! Listen! He wasn't foolin'! He was just sure of himself! And he has to be! He's that sort! Coach says that's what's wrong! And no one else has his speed, his nerve! When he goes good, the team goes! Susan, please, for Heaven's sake try——"

"I don't guess Heaven knows much about us!" she choked. "We'd better either leave Gary alone or apologize on our knees!"

The first half of that game was a nightmare to Susan. Gary had slumped; Jeff had slumped; the whole team had slumped. They were nervous, too anxious. They fumbled; they dropped the ball at important moments, and all moments are important when a player starts dropping balls around. They couldn't tackle, and they couldn't block. And their lack of teamwork was appalling.

Susan wanted to run, or scream, or put her fingers in her ears, tight, so she couldn't hear the bitter comments all around.

Of course, State was good! But no team should have shoved the Gonzales crowd around as they were doing. It was heartbreaking. Jeff was pleading, shouting hoarsely; but he was discouraged, his wide shoulders asag. And he was frightened! All of them were frightened. They looked panicky—all but Gary. And Gary didn't seem to care; he played listlessly, as if he were terribly tired.

"The yellow bums!" some one shrieked. "Send in some foot warmers!"

The score was only thirteen to zero at the end of the half. It should have been many times that. But twice Gary woke up and made tackles which averted touchdowns; and a few times Captain-elect Jeff forgot to stumble over his feet and smeared dangerous plays.

The cheers from the rooting section were forced, mechanical. The slaughter was only half finished. Thousands of angry, humiliated eyes followed them as the beaten, dirty, disheveled little army—some

of them openly sobbing—trudged toward the dressing rooms.

Suddenly, Susan started down the steps. She didn't know where she was going, nor why. Just one thing of which she was conscious. A slender, drooping figure who trailed the scattered players, slowly, his head bent, while with one hand he swung his scarlet helmet, listlessly.

"Gary!" she called. "Wait!"

Gary turned. He looked old and tired. His face was a queer, gray-ing color.

"It's no use, Susan," he chided wearily. "We're plain lousy!"

"You can say that!" she choked. "You dare to even think it! Just because a girl idiot calls you names, you believe her! Haven't you a lick of sense? Don't you care about the team? About the school and me? We want to be proud of you, to cheer for you, and you're throwing us all down—for a little red-headed simp! You big ham!" she choked. "You—you—"

"Susan, you hush!" Gary's blue eyes were getting a funny black, and his voice was suddenly deep and growling. "I've taken a lot from you, but not this! You can't call me yellow!"

"Oh, can't I?" she panted. "I will, and you'll take it, just like you took the other! You'll believe it! Because you're a quitter! Because you *are* yellow! You can't fight! You— Oh, Gary, don't—please—you're hurting me!" Her voice was a frightened wail.

"Did you hear me say to hush?" He caught her wrist in a crushing grasp, and she blinked, bewildered. This wasn't Gary—with his careless smile and winning ways. His face, passion-distorted, white-hot with anger, swam before her blurred vision; his eyes were blazing, even his voice was seething with rage.

"Now you get out of here, back where you belong, and leave me alone. D'ye hear?" He shook her, slightly, and she began whimpering. She couldn't stop. "You want some one to pity and some one to cheer for, do you? Well, I don't want your pity! And you can get up there and cheer for whoever you please and whenever you get damned good and ready! D'ye get that? And don't you come butting into my affairs any more, or I'll give you the spanking you've had coming to you all your life, and never got!"

"Gary! Oh—oh——"

He stopped, suddenly, and stared down at her as if he were just coming out of a horrible trance. Then he looked down at the slender wrist, red and twisted.

"Susan! I—I'm a beast!" he gasped. "I didn't know—but, oh, darlin', how could you say that?"

"Because, you big simp," she sobbed, "I l-l-love you!"

Then she started running back toward the grand stand, where everybody was watching the spectacle of colored cards the State rooting section was displaying; spelling messages, forming weird pictures. She couldn't see very well—her eyes were so dimmed with tears—and she couldn't think, and she was utterly weary. Gary hated her; he would always hate her; she deserved to be hated. And all because she was a red-headed, rattle-brained little imbecile. Blindly, she groped her way to her seat.

After a few hundred hours of endless waiting, the team trotted back on the field. Gary's attitude was not that of lounging carelessness. He was stalking around, defiantly, an earnest, do-or-get-slaughtered expression in the very slant of his shoulders.

Susan watched, her hands knotted into tight fists, while Jeff booted the ball over the goal line. It was brought back to the twenty-yard line, then she saw Jeff plunge in, knocking interference men every which way. She saw Gary flash forward; like the Gary of old, saw him cross the scrimmage line, swooping relentlessly upon the ball carrier, and jerking him to earth with a thud.

"They're wakin' up!" chanted voices all around. "Now watch 'em go!" "That's the stuff!"

Gary was racing up and down the line, whacking players on the back, talking it up. The line held—held again. State kicked—and Gonzales had the ball!

Susan leaned forward, her eyes haunted, her breath coming in queer little gasps. The team was rushing into the huddle, pressing forward, eager to get Gary's signals. They were alert, on their toes.

Once more Gary was captain; leader of the team. Once more the team was made of championship stuff.

Suddenly Susan saw a little-used formation. It could mean just two things; a triple reverse, with Gary finally going around left end, or a forward pass—Jeff to Gary—down the left side of the field. She waited, breathless. The ball was snapped; a mass of players, thinning out, spreading, grim, determined.

She saw Gary slipping swiftly down the left side line. And Jeff was angling back, the ball tightly grasped in his big right hand. He stopped, his long arm swung high, snapped forward, and the ball sped like a rocket, boring swiftly through the air, while Gary raced to meet it.

Susan closed her eyes. Her lips moved. "Please, God—please, God."



Gary's lips crushed down on hers and she forgot the noise, the wild cries, forgot everything but the glory of Gary's lips on hers.

A deafening roar rose in mighty unison from thousands of throats. Everybody was yelling, shrieking, pounding each other on the back. Bedlam was out-bedlamed. Gary was racing toward the State goal line, tightly grasping that precious

ball; racing as if life, itself, depended upon that touchdown.

Susan laughed and cried, both together. The game went on; a spectacular, stupendous affair that thrilled and awed that vast throng. They had never seen anything like

it; they knew they would never see anything like it again.

Captain Gary was playing with an earnestness, a savage intensity, he had never displayed before. And the team caught his spirit. They played like inspired beings. They put over touchdowns, and kicked goals, and did it again.

Faster they played, and faster, scoring, running away with the game. And, in the grand stand, the cheers mounted, mounted, until the spectators were in a frenzy, screaming, shouting to Gary, begging for more touchdowns. The game was won, but the cheers went on; cheers for Captain Gary, who had played the most marvelous game of his career. Beautiful music—mad music—were those cheers. Susan could have listened and thrilled forever!

Down the steps, through the victory-crazed mob, she pushed her way. Some one blocked her path; some one big and wide and deadly serious.

"Jeff, you were grand and perfectly beautiful!" she laughed. "But you must let me go—quick! I—I've——"

Then she stopped still, staring at Jeff. Those terrible things she had said to Gary, his blazing anger—she'd utterly forgotten. In the heat of the game, in its intensity, they had seemed vague, unreal. But now those words were gigantic, the most important things in all the world, and they stood between her and Gary.

Jeff was talking about fraternity pins.

"I wanted to hang it on you, Susan, almost worse than anything," he was saying, "but I've lost our bet, and——"

"It wouldn't have done, Jeff," she put in quietly. "Can't you see? I—couldn't be engaged to you, because

——" She paused. Some things were hard to say.

"I get you!" he nodded, his face brightening. "And you're right. With me being captain next year, I'll have my hands plenty full. It wouldn't have been sensible. And, say, there's some one waiting to see you."

He began pulling her along toward the far end of the bleachers. "He's a good egg. And I was a chump. Him—workin' for me like he was, and me—jealous! I was a ham, Susan."

"You mean—you mean—Gary's there?" she panted, trying to pull away. But it wasn't any use. She couldn't loosen that steady, guiding hand. "But, Jeff, I can't——"

"Sure you can! You're doin' it, ain't you? But you'll have to make it snappy. They're huntin' for him, now! Gary, here she is! Get under them bleachers—hurry!" Jeff was talking steadily, pushing her toward Gary, pushing the two of them into the space under the seats. "I'll keep 'em away long enough!"

Then Jeff turned his wide, comfortable back, and she saw just Gary, his blue, sweet eyes laughing at her, his mop of blond hair, which needed a lot of smoothing.

"Redhead!" he grinned; "little honey darlin'. You said something back there pretty grand! If you meant it! Did you, or——"

She didn't answer. She didn't have time. And, anyhow, he couldn't have heard if she had!

Outside, hoarse-voiced exhorters were pleading.

"Let's make 'em big! Come on, now! Get ready! Make 'em big!"

"Let's, darlin'!" Gary's lips smiled, then crushed down on hers and she forgot the noise, the wild cries, forgot everything but the glory of Gary's lips on hers.



Moonstruck

By Ellen Rand

SYDNEY VAN LORN touched her horse's flank with the heel of her trim riding boot and the beautiful gray swung forward into a smart trot and drew abreast of the sorrel. Sydney leaned sidewise a little as her pleading eyes sought the dark, angry ones of the young man on the other horse.

"I wish you wouldn't act that way about it, Steve. There's no reason why we can't still be friends. After

all, it isn't as though I were breaking a promise. I never said I loved you."

He jerked his head around. His face was pale under its tan, and his eyes, burning with anger and pain, bored into her like gimlets.

"You never said it, but you must have felt sometimes, as I've felt for weeks now, that we were made for each other. Or haven't you? Have I just been moonstruck?"

The horses slowed to a walk as if by mutual consent and Sydney pulled thoughtfully at a strand of Major's mane. "Oh, I like you better than any one in the world, except Larry, but when it comes to a question of marriage——"

"You're going to marry him! Syd, I can't believe it! We've known each other so long, meant so much to each other." His eyes clung to her, caressed her, as if he could never get enough of admiring the exquisite contrast of her incredibly fair skin, dark sleek waves of hair, and vivid blue eyes. With his glance he embraced her slender, boyish figure in its smart riding habit, shirt carelessly open at the neck to reveal the smooth line of her white throat.

Sydney colored under his scrutiny and her eyes strayed to the dark, cool pine woods bordering the dirt road. She thrilled suddenly to the pungent smell, to the sound of the *clop-clop* of the horses' hoofs, slightly muffled in little billows of dust that rose from the road as the two thoroughbreds placed each foot with delicate precision.

Steve laughed suddenly, bitterly. "Strange that he should take from me the two things that meant the most—you, and this place."

"Take!" She stiffened with anger and her blue eyes turned to ice. "How can you say such things, when he saved you from disgrace, perhaps from jail!"

Steve's jaw muscles jumped out rigidly as he clamped his teeth together. "Sometimes I wish I hadn't accepted his help." His face relaxed and he raised his hand in a quick gesture of apology. "I'm sorry, Syd. I shouldn't say that. I know I owe him more than I can ever repay. It's jealousy and self-pity, I guess. Jealousy because

Randolph and I have run neck to neck since we met in college, graduating together, and then the bank. No, I'm wrong. We weren't neck to neck; I was ahead. I had Twin Oaks and an income; he started from scratch and beat me. Funny, how his ship's come in. He used to say jokingly that being born in poverty had made him ruthlessly ambitious for a good income, a decent home, and a wife to fit both. I don't blame you for picking him. He's a success; I'm a failure."

"You're being insulting, Steve," Sydney said quietly. "Larry and I are in love, and you know it." Quick sympathy drowned the resentment in her eyes. "You're not a failure. It was just a string of bad luck."

He said, as if to himself: "Bad luck. We were both in the same position. It was only bad luck the cashier tampered with my books instead of his, and then escaped so nothing could be proved."

Sydney looked at him with wonder, mingled with pity and a faint contempt. How he had changed in the last year! Could he ever have been that vital, slightly arrogant, gay young man with the happy, booming laugh of one who is a friend of all the world? Of course, she mustn't forget that his life had been blasted suddenly, horribly, and that through it all he had kept a stiff lip, till now.

He went on, as if enumerating aloud items to be entered in a ledger. "But I'm apt to forget my good luck—Randolph's getting a legacy just at that time and lending me part of it to square my accounts. If only I could have repaid him!"

Sydney's heart went out to him. So that was what rankled! How she had misjudged him! He could bear his own misfortune, but when

it was a matter of not being able to square obligations—

"Please don't feel badly about that, Steve. He wanted this place, and besides, he doesn't need the money."

Steve looked at her strangely, broodingly. "I know. But I would have given anything to have been able to save Twin Oaks. I've often wondered about that legacy. Randolph never spoke of his family, but once he told me he'd been earning his living since he could walk, selling papers and what not. Certainly, if he'd had a relative as well off and as well disposed—"

"Oh, he told me about that," Sydney put in quickly. "It was some one he once had worked for—a wealthy old man with no children who had become very much attached to Larry and left him everything when he died. Larry said he was never so surprised in his life."

"Sounds like something you read about."

The hardness in his voice destroyed the remnants of her belief in him. He hadn't been able to rise above adversity. He had become sullen, resentful, grudging his friend the one stroke of luck Larry had ever had, the good fortune that had made it possible for Larry to save him.

"You shouldn't have stayed on and worked for Larry," she said crisply. "It's warping you."

He laughed again, that short, bitter laugh. "What else could I do? I've no references. The bank authorities gave me a break allowing me to settle instead of putting me in jail. They'll never believe it was a frame-up without proof. And there'll never be any proof unless Hallam, the cashier, is caught. So there's no career open to me in the business world.

"Oh, I wouldn't mind so much if we were still friends. But that's finished since Randolph's been paying me to run the place. He's busy playing master of the house. I might as well have been hired through an agency by a member of his staff."

Sydney had been poignantly aware of the change in attitude between the two men, and it hurt her terribly. "Couldn't you get this kind of a job somewhere else?"

"Even that would be hard for a suspected criminal." The deeply etched lines of suffering around his mouth faded, and his eyes grew soft as he gazed at the horses they were riding. "Anyway—this probably sounds silly to you—I couldn't bear to leave Major and Prince, unless I were discharged."

A wave of happiness and sadness swept over Sydney at this spark of the old Steve she had once known so well, admired so much. She smiled at him tenderly. "Sorry, Steve. I've been awfully mean."

He grinned ruefully, unable to conceal the longing in his eyes. "You've been nothing of the sort, Syd. I'm the one to apologize for cutting loose like this. It's the first time. Sorry I forgot myself."

She dropped her eyes, feeling oddly shy with him all at once. "Shall we canter back to the stables? Larry and whoever he's bringing with him from town have probably arrived by this time."

As they rode along side by side, Sydney found herself noticing, as she often had before, how well he rode, how much a part of the horse he was, and how gentle and sensitive his strong, muscular hands were on the reins. It never occurred to her that he was admiring her own horsemanship and singling out the same points as proof of excellence.

Steve made as if to turn into the lane that went back of the house to the stable, but Sydney spotted Larry's big black-and-chromium car parked behind her own car in front of the big house. She cantered past Steve and up the main drive. He followed more slowly.

Sydney reined in expertly and sprang to the ground. The doors of Larry's car were open, disgorging suitcases, hatboxes, tennis rackets, golf clubs. It looked as though an army had moved in, and Sydney was astonished to see only two people standing beside Larry in the drive.

He whirled around and strode over to her, looking very tall and dark and well-groomed in an impeccably tailored gray suit and blue shirt. Sydney thought it fitted him almost too well, and that the color scheme—further enhanced by a blue tie, a shade darker than the shirt, and carefully folded blue-bordered handkerchief sticking out of his breast pocket—was almost too perfect.

But she forgot everything when he bent and kissed her. "Sorry to be late, darling." He grinned into her eyes then looked past her at Steve, standing at the horses' heads, and his grin faded. "At least, you haven't been bored waiting for me, I see. Anderson, I believe I told you we'd want the horses this afternoon before dinner." There was accusation in his voice and his manner was just a tinge insulting.

Sydney caught herself looking anxiously at Steve. His face was masklike. He rubbed Major's forehead gently as he said, "We only took a short ride. They ought to go out twice a day anyway."

Larry's hands closed convulsively and he drew a deep breath. "That will do, Anderson. You can put

them in now." He waved toward the car. "Then take this luggage to the two bedrooms in the north wing." He swung around and linked arms with Sydney. "Come on over and meet a couple of good eggs, Syd. I'm beginning to perceive that this is going to be one swell week-end!"

Over her shoulder, Sydney saw Steve lead the horses off without a word, without a change in his expression. It was so tragic that this bitter antagonism had sprung up between two men who, for five years, had been inseparable friends. It had always been "Larry" and "Steve" in those days.

There was a little lump in her throat as she glanced up at the huge, rambling house, and remembered another bright September day something over a year ago.

Steve had been master of Twin Oaks then. It was the day she had met Larry. Larry had been much thinner than he was now, and eager and intense, even a little shabby. Her heart had gone out to him, and she remembered the thrill of pleasure she had felt when she knew he was attracted to her.

Steve had admired him intensely and had described to her glowingly how Larry had gone through college by virtue of a scholarship and a job, and what a grand person he was. Steve had often said it made him feel useless and pampered to think of Larry fighting abject poverty all his life, and had taken his less fortunate friend under his wing, getting him into a good fraternity, introducing him to his friends, teaching him the necessary social graces of dancing, riding, tennis, golf.

Sydney had instantly felt Larry's deep appreciation for everything Steve had and was. He had none of the other's easy, jovial, rather arro-



"Sorry to be late, darling." Larry grinned into her eyes, then looked past her at Steve, and his grin faded. "At least, you haven't been bored waiting for me, I see."

gant acceptance of the good things in life. It was ironical that the fortunes of one should begin to rise just as those of the other crashed—ironical, and at the same time a

happy coincidence, for Steve was saved from public disgrace.

Larry had repaid Steve magnanimously, out of all proportion, and if Steve hadn't been utterly self-

ish, thought Sydney as she watched his retreating back, he would have felt grateful, at least. But Steve could see only the ironical side of it. It rankled that he should be the underdog now, and it was natural that it should hurt him to watch Larry's rise to success. Larry was cashier now.

Larry was making introductions, and Sydney roused herself from her reflections impatiently and tried to concentrate on the people she was meeting.

With difficulty, she kept the shocked surprise out of her eyes.

The woman, "Bunny" Morton, was an artificial blonde, a little too plump, too made-up and swathed in a bizarre red-and-white sports dress that fitted too tightly. Al Shard, her companion, was short and heavy, clothed in striped flannels, extremely pointed shoes and a rainbow tie. On the little finger of each pudgy hand was a large ring.

Inwardly, Sydney shuddered with repulsion. Where could Larry have picked up such friends? And he had described them as "good eggs"!

"Nice place you've got here, Larry, if you like the country, which I don't." The woman's voice was edged with a suggestive drawl which Sydney soon realized was habitual if affected, like everything else about her.

The man removed a chewed cigar from his mouth. "Yeah. Not bad at all. What do you do around here, Larry? Any golf?"

Larry laughed. "The minute you city people get into the country, you're suspicious of everything. There's a golf course a little way down the road. I told you about it when you asked if you should bring your clubs."

Al Shard's laugh was a hoarse cackle. "Yeah, but I just wanted

to be sure it wasn't in the next State. Distance means nothing to you farmers."

Bunny sidled up to Larry, and Sydney withdrew a step before her advance, jammed her hands into the pockets of her riding breeches and wondered how he could stand there without making some involuntary movement away from the creature.

"Give me a cigarette," Bunny said languidly to Larry. He produced one and lighted it for her, then, through a cloud of smoke: "Listen, I didn't come up here so you could spend your time playing golf with Al. You've got to play tennis with me. I hate it, but I've got to keep my figure."

There was more meaningless banter and a good deal of loud laughter in which Sydney took no part.

It amazed and shocked her to see that Larry was evidently enjoying himself hugely. At length, he ushered them all into the house and put his guests in the hands of Sadie, the maid, who was to show them their quarters.

As soon as they were alone, Sydney turned to Larry urgently. "Who on earth are they, Larry, and how do you happen to know them?"

He put his arm around her quickly, soothingly. "I know they're sort of peculiar, darling, but we've got to be nice to them. You see, Shard's one of our biggest depositors. He suggested this week-end, bringing Bunny along and all, and I couldn't very well refuse, could I?"

He was smiling eagerly, watching her intently, and she gazed thoughtfully into his eyes for a moment. Was there a hint of fear and anxiety in them? Determinedly she quelled a strange uneasiness and smiled. "Of course not, Larry."

He kissed her then—a lingering

kiss that increased in passion until, when he finally released her, she clung to him a moment, weak and limp.

She loved Larry, but why didn't she have a feeling of deep content and blissful security when his arms were around her? That would probably come when they were married.

At the thought of being married to him, she went a little cold. Somehow it was hard to imagine herself his wife—now. He had changed so in the last year. He gave an impression of largeness and sleekness, and it seemed impossible that he had once been the slender, alert, boyish creature who had captured her heart.

He interrupted her reflections. "I'll put Al and Bunny on the courts together, then you and I can take a ride. How about it?"

She was grateful to him for arranging things so the four of them wouldn't be thrown together. "I'd love it, Larry."

"Fine!" He glanced at a flashy, expensive-looking wrist watch. "We'll just about have time, allowing an hour to dress for dinner. I'll be ready in a jiffy."

He ran upstairs whistling, and in order to avoid Al and Bunny, Sydney strolled out toward the stables. She was wondering uneasily why it was Larry seemed almost a stranger to her at times. It had struck her forcibly when she had seen him in the company of Al and Bunny and noticed how intimate he had been with them.

As she approached the stables, Steve emerged, leading Major and Prince. "'Lo, Syd." He grinned and Sydney's heart bounded with joy as she looked into his eyes. He could still be himself! He wasn't completely crushed, thank Heaven!

Walking beside him back toward the house she found herself thinking how much better she knew Steve than the man she was going to marry. Just being near him was a comfort and banished from her mind the vague forebodings that had been troubling her a few minutes before.

"Syd," he said suddenly, "I want you to know how ashamed I am for the way I behaved when we were out this morning. It's just that whenever I think that all this happened because of something I didn't do, I lose control. I won't break down like that again, I promise you."

He wasn't whining; his voice was steady and matter-of-fact, his face composed and grave and strong. Emotion shook Sydney so deeply that for a moment she couldn't speak. She laid her hand on his arm and felt him go rigid at her touch. "Forget it, Steve. I—I still think you're a grand person." The flame that leaped into his eyes made her avert her head, and they stood there silently, Sydney's fingers twining themselves absently in Major's silky mane.

The house door opened abruptly, and Larry swung down the walk toward them, swaggering a little. His buff breeches were skin-tight, and the cut of his dark coat toppled over the other side of the peak of fashion. He took Prince's reins. "Do you prefer Major, Sydney?" She nodded and he turned to Steve. "My car knocks badly, Anderson. I wish you'd clean the carbon out some time to-day."

Steve nodded briefly. He was tightening the girth on Major's saddle. Then, turning to Sydney: "Do you mind holding Major a moment? I think I'll change this stirrup leather. It seems a bit worn."

Larry's eyes glistened. "Oh, you

should have attended to that before you brought the horses out."

Steve detached the stirrup and leather without answering and strode off toward the stables.

Larry led Prince aside a few paces and started to mount. He swung his leg over clumsily, accidentally kicking the horse on the rump. The high-strung animal jumped as if he had been lashed and started to prance nervously before Larry could find his other stirrup. Sydney gasped when she saw his face distorted with rage, and an involuntary exclamation broke from her lips as he jerked viciously on the reins and started sawing on Prince's sensitive mouth.

The horse's beautiful head snapped up as he was thrown back on his haunches, then he sprang forward, prancing and rearing, striving to shake his head free from the cruel, cutting iron in his mouth.

Sydney's heart contracted in agony as she watched helplessly.

"Larry, don't! Give him his head, please! He'll be all right."

She caught a glimpse of his face and knew he hadn't heard her. It was the face of a demon. Without relaxing his strangle hold on the reins, he was striking at Prince's head with the loose ends of leather in his right hand.

Hardly aware of what she was doing, Sydney let go Major's bridle and ran toward the stable, sobs rising in her throat. "Steve!" she called desperately as she drew near. "Steve!"

He appeared in the doorway and hesitated, eyes startled. Then he was beside her in a single stride. "Syd! What's the matter?"

"Oh, come quickly! Do something with Larry if you can. He's k-killing Prince!"

Together they ran back and

Steve's fingers, gripping her arm, stopped her a little distance from the plunging, terrified horse and the man on its back. Steve's face was white and set as he walked up to them quietly. "Get off, Randolph, at once!"

Sydney's nerves quivered and grew taut. It was the first time she had heard Steve address his employer by name and his voice was deadly.

Larry snarled something she couldn't hear and struck out blindly at Steve's face with the loose ends of the reins.

Sydney cringed as if she had received the blow, and the next moment, in a lightning move, Steve snatched the other's foot from the stirrup and dragged him out of the saddle, tumbling him in a heap on the ground. Almost simultaneously, he caught Prince's reins with his other hand, and suddenly everything was quiet, tranquil. Steve was standing patting and stroking the quivering animal, talking steadily and soothingly. Larry was climbing shakily to his feet, and Sydney could see that his face was white and that there were beads of perspiration on his forehead and upper lip.

His voice, when it finally came, was a hoarse croak, and there were gaps of breath between his words as if he were striving for control. "Anderson, what the devil do you mean——"

Steve interrupted him tersely. "No one can cut a horse's mouth to ribbons when I'm around and expect me to stand by and watch."

For the first time, Sydney saw the raw flesh at the corners of Prince's mouth. She felt sickish and a little faint, but Larry's voice brought her around sharply.

"I don't take treatment like that from a hired hand, Anderson.

You're through. Finish up the things you have to do to-day, and get out!" He turned on his heel just as Sydney flung herself in front of him, breathless, white.

"Larry! You can't fire him! Why, what will he do?"

His eyes gleamed balefully. "I don't care what happens to him. I've done all one man can for another, and this sort of thing is the thanks I get!"

Sydney went cold all over. Gentlemen didn't remind one of obligations. Larry had done a lot for Steve, Heaven knew, but the art of real giving was graciousness. She caught his arm desperately. "Larry, can't you see, he owned Prince, and when you've known a horse for a long time, it's like a human being and——"

Steve's voice cut in sharply. "Thanks for your intentions, Sydney, but under the circumstances, I think I'd better go." He looked at her bleakly for a moment, then turned and lead Prince off.

In a daze, Sydney let Larry take her arm and lead her into the house. She stopped suddenly in the hall, wrenched herself free and whirled to face him, her eyes flashing. "Larry, I—I never knew you could be like this!"

His eyebrows lifted in surprise. "Like what?"

"Oh, so cruel!"

He took her hand quickly and kissed it. "Forgive me, darling. I lost my temper. But sometimes, both horses and men have to be shown who's master. Come, my dear, let's change our clothes, have a drink!"

She let him kiss her, but only part of her was aware of him. A host of doubts assailed her.

During the evening and dinner, she was silent and preoccupied, won-

dering how this gay, charming, attentive Larry could be the enraged maniac who had so viciously punished Prince that afternoon. There were so many sides of his character she didn't know, and yet he was one of the finest people in the world in so many respects, helping Steve as he had. At the thought of Steve a lump rose in her throat and a wave of panic swept over her. What was going to happen to him now? Suddenly, she knew she couldn't let him go out of her life.

They were nearing the end of the last course when she was startled out of her thoughts by Al Shard's harsh voice exclaiming, "Look who's here!"

All eyes went to the door that opened onto the porch. There was a moment's tense silence in which Sydney looked at the newcomer, a little man with a bald head and shifty eyes. Her gaze flew to Larry as his chair scraped and he rose to his feet. His eyes were narrowed and his lips were compressed into an ugly, twisted line. "Just what do you want?"

"Show-down, Randolph," the little man said in a monotonous voice. "You and your gang." He jerked his head to include every one at the table.

"Too bad you decided you were through with me, because I'm not through with you."

"Now wait a minute!" Larry raised a hand that trembled visibly. He made a horrible attempt to smile. "I—I was just about to send you a check. It's upstairs. I'll get it now!"

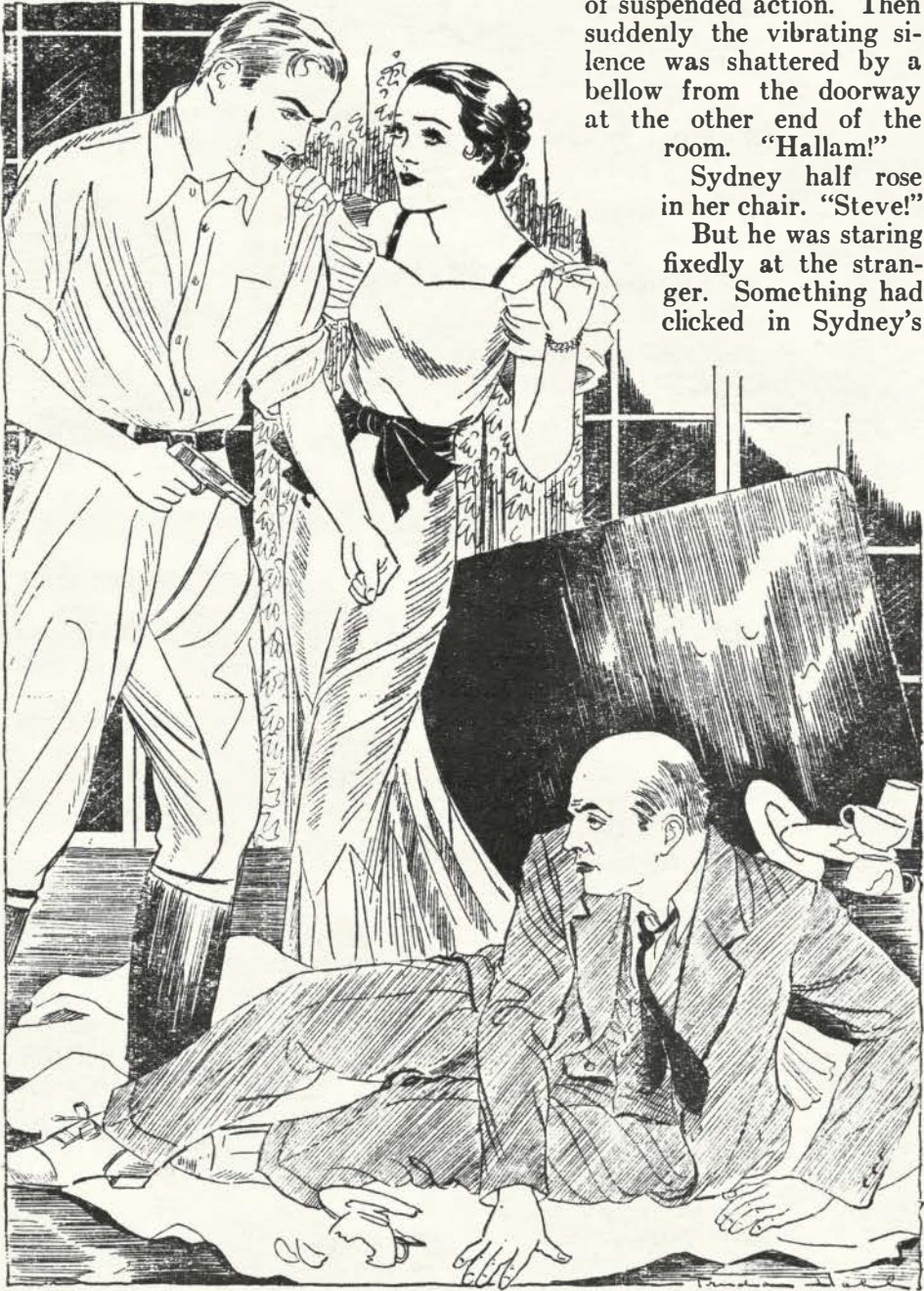
"No, you don't!" Larry, already on his way out of the room, spun around like a roped steer, and every vestige of color left his face. In the little man's hand was an evil-

looking automatic. "You can't escape as easily as that, Randolph."

For a moment, every one remained frozen in various positions of suspended action. Then suddenly the vibrating silence was shattered by a bellow from the doorway at the other end of the room. "Hallam!"

Sydney half rose in her chair. "Steve!"

But he was staring fixedly at the stranger. Something had clicked in Sydney's



The next moment, the gun was in Steve's hand and he was standing up. A trickle of blood was running down the side of his face. Sydney sprang forward. "Steve, my dear, you're hurt!"

brain, and she remembered that Hallam was the name of the cashier who had absconded and framed Steve.

Hallam was looking at Steve, but his gun still covered Larry unwaveringly.

Steve yelled, "Stand clear, everybody!" In one swift move, he leaped forward and tipped the dining-room table up on end. In the crash of silver and china that followed, Hallam's gun swung around and exploded, but Steve ducked and the bullet thudded harmlessly into the table.

Sydney, standing against the wall paralyzed with numb horror, saw Steve's hand dart out and snatch the tablecloth from the floor. Again the gun roared and again the bullet imbedded itself in the hard wood of the table. Almost at the same instant, Steve tossed the cloth, covering Hallam as if with a shroud, and sprang across the intervening space after it. The two men crashed to the floor, struggling convulsively.

Involuntarily, Sydney started to move toward them, only to find herself snatched back and dragged across the room by a frantic, nervous hand gripping her left arm. Ahead of them, Al and Bunny were disappearing through the door Steve had just entered.

Sydney fought wildly to free herself. "Larry, stop! Aren't you going to help Steve?"

In a blinding flash, she saw him for the cruel, craven coward that he was. His white, terror-stricken face was close to hers. "Don't argue," he panted. "We've got to get out of here!"

She caught at the door with her free hand, gripped it, and held on frantically. "Let me go!" She could never leave that room while

Steve was in there fighting for his life!

Larry tugged at her furiously. "Don't be an idiot!"

Sydney bent her head swiftly and clamped her small white teeth on his wrist with every ounce of her strength.

He released her with a violent exclamation of pain, and she sprang back into the dining room. For just a second, they faced each other, then he turned and fled. Sydney made her way swiftly toward Steve and Hallam, her very soul shaking with fear for Steve.

The two men on the floor were entwined in a mass of writhing arms and legs, but Hallam was no match for his assailant. The gun clattered to the floor and the next moment it was in Steve's hand and he was standing up. "All right, Hallam, stay where you are."

A trickle of blood was running down the side of Steve's face, and Sydney's knees seemed to turn to water. "Steve, my dear, you're hurt!"

He flashed a grin at her—a grin of amazed, incredulous joy. "Only a scratch. Syd, you're a brick to stay here! Call the police, will you?"

Suddenly she felt strong and capable, and her heart was glowing with a great happiness.

When she returned from the hall telephone, Steve was talking to Hallam. "But what was the point of framing me? Why did you run off with most of the stuff and make it look as if I'd taken the rest of it?"

Hallam's flat, monotonous voice was weary. "It was Randolph's idea. He'd always hated you and was jealous of everything you had, wanted to break you."

"So he wasn't joking when he said he was ruthless in his ambi-

tion." Steve's face was grim. "No wonder he had such a good time riding me. And I thought I was being unjust to resent him! His 'legacy,' I suppose, was part of the stolen funds."

"Yes. He made up that story so he could start right in living high."

"The two of you were in on the job together, huh? And he was paying you to keep quiet about him so he could play respectable citizen."

"Yes, and held out on me, the rat!" Hate suddenly flamed in Hallam's tiny cold eyes. "The other two were part of the gang, and you let 'em all get away! Now I'll have to take the rap alone!"

Steve's fine mouth curved in contempt. "They won't get far," he said coldly. Then, without taking his eyes from Hallam: "Remember, Syd, he wanted me to clean the carbon from his car. I just had time to take the engine apart before dark. If they're going anywhere to-night, they'll have to walk."

"But, Steve!" Sydney cried, struck by a sudden thought. "They can take my car!"

He smiled. "I put it away and locked it. The keys are in my pocket."

The police arrived and left, taking Hallam with them and gleefully announcing they'd have the others before long.

Steve was heartily congratulated for capturing Hallam with only a tablecloth for a weapon, and then peace and silence settled down over the old place.

Sydney found herself strolling across the lawn in the clear moonlight, arm in arm with Steve. It was like an ecstatic dream.

He stopped suddenly, faced her, gripped her shoulders. "Syd, you were so brave, so swell to stand by me to-night! I—I'm sorry about Larry." His voice was hoarse, but his eyes sparkled.

There were tears in her eyes, tears of joy and relief. "I saw what he really was to-night. I suspected after the episode with Prince." She swayed toward him a little, her face radiant. "I had to stand by you because—well, you see, darling, I love you!"

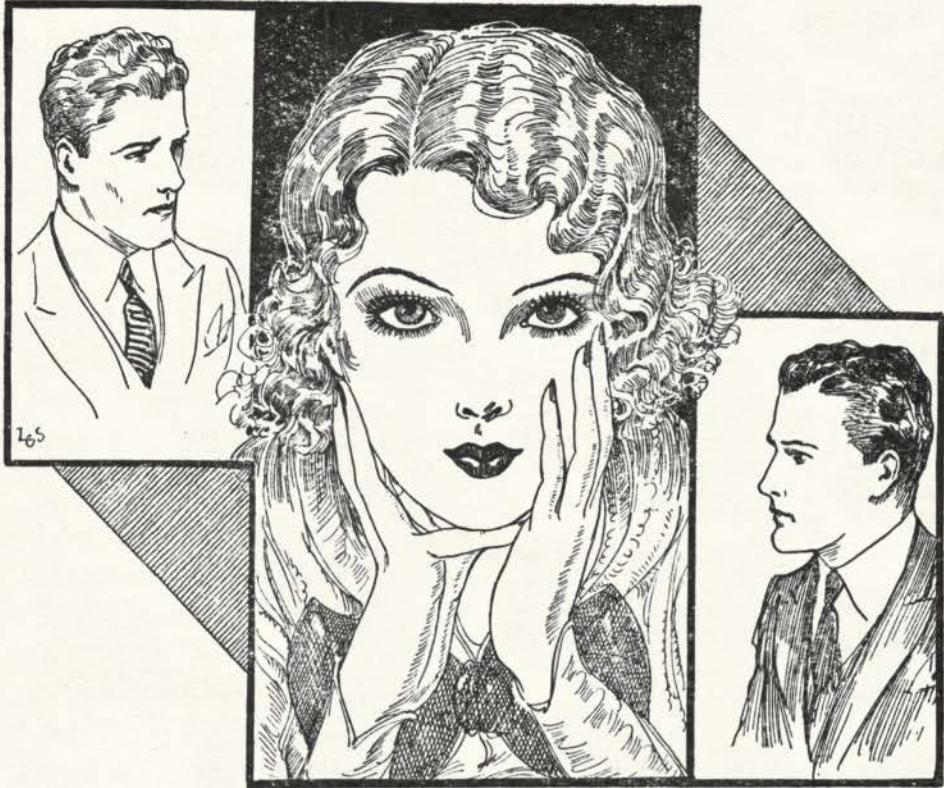
With a cry of wild happiness, he crushed her in his arms and she clung to him, quivering with an ecstasy that was exquisite agony.

"I—I can't believe it!" He laughed shakily. "When I dreamed of you, us married and living here at Twin Oaks, I wasn't moonstruck!"

"No," she murmured, "but I was for a while, dearest."

Then everything was forgotten as his lips met hers and the bright flame of their love devoured them.





Leading Man

By Caroline Appleton
and Bob Bohan

DAWN STANTON lingered on the spiral staircase that wound downward from the balcony of Carlota Mauresque's triplex apartment into the Georgian dining room.

Dawn had just arranged the flowers for the table, a prodigal heap of Parma violets that filled the dim, oak-paneled room with their wine-like fragrance. The centerpiece was flanked by tall ivory candles in

crystal holders, and tall-stemmed crystal goblets seemed to float like opalescent bubbles above the priceless lace cloth at each of the four places.

How like Carlota, Dawn thought, to have the table for an informal dinner for four dressed with flowers that cost a queen's ransom at this season, and that would be withered and dead an hour afterward. There would be food for the gods, too—

hardly tasted because Carlota would have to rush off to the theater with Martin Garvey.

Martin Garvey! The name made music in Dawn's heart. He was Carlota's leading man in the play in which she was now starring, "The Vestal Virgin." Dawn knew every expression, every line of Garvey's face, every tone of his voice—and he hardly knew that she was alive! And it wouldn't matter if he did, she thought, bitterly; no man who could make love to Carlota Mauresque every night and twice on Wednesdays and Saturdays, would ever give a thought to the dazzling Carlota's mouselike secretary, Dawn Stanton.

Dawn grinned to herself at the word "mouselike." It was hard for her to keep her gay nature, her more than passable good looks subdued to the drab uniformity that Carlota demanded. The great actress would allow no "personality" but her own to appear upon the stage of her private life. And that was a stage, too. Everything about Carlota was theatrical, even her matchless beauty, to which Carlota was passionately devoted, with the fervor of a pagan goddess whose altar is a mirror and whose deity is herself. And everybody else in Carlota's vicinity had to worship at the same shrine.

Dawn loved that, really. She thought Carlota was gorgeous. But deep in her heart there wasn't much room for admiration for any one but Martin Garvey.

There was a soft flush in Dawn's oval cheeks, and a luminous glory in her hazel eyes as she pictured him seated there in that tall carved chair, his powerful, lean body erect in the tuxedo he wore as casually as if it were a smoking jacket. The candlelight, Dawn thought, breath-

lessly, would gleam on his closely waved fair hair that shone like a knightly helmet above his perfect features.

"The goodliest knight," she quoted softly, "that ever sate in hall among ladies." And that reminded her that she didn't know who the fourth guest was to be to-night! The third was Byron Archer, the dramatic critic. But who was the other woman? No one very exciting, she knew. Carlota didn't go in for exciting female guests. "Some little sap," thought Dawn, "from the company. Somebody who won't dare open her mouth except to say, 'Oh, Miss Mauresque, how too simply divine'—blah!"

Then she sighed. She remembered that she had three check books to balance to-night, six notes to write telling people who begged for help that Miss Mauresque was not, as they supposed, a rich woman, and about sixty clippings to paste in the scrapbook. A swell night's work, but she would have the whole night free to do it in, for Carlota and Garvey were going on, after the show, to a costume party at Mrs. Burke Carteret's, where they were going to give the last scene of their play for charity.

But as Dawn passed Carlota's door, a meteor descended upon her unsuspecting head, while it wrapped her in roseate clouds of glory. For Carlota said:

"Dawn! Put something on, will you, and hurry up! You're coming down to dinner to-night. Byron Archer won't even eat with the girl I picked for him, but he says he doesn't mind you. Hurry! He and Garvey will be here any moment!"

"Who—me?" gasped Dawn, halting in the door.

Carlota turned from the taffeta-draped dressing table. Her lovely

brow was black as a thundercloud.

"Who—me?" she mimicked, so venomously that Dawn longed to slap her petulant face. "Why am I cursed with a secretary who says 'Who—me?'"

"When I'm struck by lightning, I lose all sense of grammar," said Dawn, cheerfully. "But I can't come down to dinner. I haven't a rag to wear except the dress I concocted out of that old gray costume of yours."

"You'll be charming in that," Carlota murmured abstractedly. "Where the devil is Hermine? I can't find my stockings."

"Hermine has gone to sit up with a sick aunt," Dawn told her glibly, well knowing that Hermine had a date with Wilbur, the chauffeur, who wasn't needed to-night because Martin Garvey drove Carlota's roadster to the theater. "But I'm sure you have stockings. I matched up thirty-seven pairs, myself, this morning, and a dozen more arrived from Orchidée's by messenger this afternoon."

"Then I suppose I must have," said Carlota, vaguely. "Dig up a pair for me, there's a dear. Terribly sheer—I'm wearing black."

Dawn found a pair of stockings of diaphanous texture and draped them over Carlota's shoulder, paused a moment to watch Carlota draw a line of scarlet across her wide, flexible mouth with the sure, swift hand of an artist, and then went out of the room. It's sinful, she thought, bitterly, as she went to her own room. No woman ought to be as beautiful as that.

There had been a wild tumult in her heart at the thought of dining with Martin Garvey. But she was depressed and blue as she took down the limp, dove-gray dress and laid it on her bed.

If only she had something devastating to wear, something with no back to it! Something that swirled around her slim knees and broke into foam at her feet. Something that would set off the pale-ashen-gold of her hair and the genuinely lovely green lights in her hazel eyes. Something that would make Martin Garvey sit up and take notice!

But as she brushed the mass of soft, pale hair about her delicate face, and drew it forward to curl against her temples, she felt better. She wasn't half bad-looking, after all. And gray was becoming to her. Perhaps Garvey was tired of so much beauty; perhaps he'd think she was nice, even if she didn't have the face that launched a thousand ships! A subtle exhilaration claimed her as she dived into the bottom drawer of her bureau and brought forth a pair of cerise moiré slippers that she had bought at a sale, and a length of cerise moiré ribbon, fully eighteen inches wide, that had come tied around flowers for Carlota. Dawn couldn't bear to throw the ribbon away, and now she tied it about the waist of the gray dress in a huge bow with long ends that fell to the floor.

There, thought Dawn, that's better! Then, a little dizzy with excitement—because she really did look well—Dawn leaned against the bureau and stared at herself in the mirror. Carlota didn't like to have the people who worked for her wear make-up, but Dawn drew a scarlet line across her soft lips, as Carlota had done to her own just now, and the color heightened the clarity of her skin and gave depth to her eyes. She added nothing but a touch of powder and a drop of perfume from the small atomizer.

She could hardly believe that she

was going to see him on—well, on terms of equality. She fancied that she remembered having seen him look at her meaningly once or twice, with a gleam of interest in his deep eyes. She fancied that she had heard a caressing note in his lazy, clever voice as he greeted her casually in Carlota's presence. That musical voice with its faintly English accent, the voice that was such extremely "good theater," as Byron Archer himself had admitted in his column one day, when he had panned Carlota and her company thoroughly for the seventh time this season.

For some obscure reason Byron managed to keep in Carlota's good graces, although he appeared to detest her and her art. Carlota did not, Archer maintained, wear half enough clothes in the temple scene in the last act of "The Vestal Virgin." In this scene, Carlota and Garvey reached the climax of their powers—the scene in which the young priestess forgets to tend the Eternal Fire and it expires while he is in the arms of her lover, bringing down upon them both the fury of the implacable goddess of beauty.

The play was the work of an anonymous author, and Byron Archer maintained that the man had sought oblivion from the spectacle of a vestal virgin who looked as if she were on her way to the bathtub!

Carlota had been livid with rage over that sally. Dawn, poring over an account book in the adjoining room when Carlota read the offending paragraph to Garvey, had giggled over it rapturously. It was true! Carlota overdid this pagan-beauty stunt considerably. She wore less and less on the stage as the years passed, and it was beginning to tell in her reputation as a

serious actress. It was beginning to show at the box office. Audiences who wanted to see an attractive back didn't care to wade through four acts of classical drama for that purpose, Archer pointed out, in the same paragraph.

"The fool is ruining my reputation," Carlota had wailed. "Garvey, what shall I do? I'll have to get married to prove to the world that I'm a good woman!"

To which Garvey had replied, with lamentable lack of tact, that perhaps the simplest solution was to wear more clothes. There had been a coldness between Carlota and her leading man for a week after that. But Carlota had gone into a huddle with her dressmaker, and there were new costumes in process of preparation. Dawn didn't believe, however, that Carlota would ever really overdress the part. Veils, perhaps, but they'd have to be transparent!

With a last glance at herself in the mirror, Dawn went down to the library, where cocktails were served before dinner. She thought the big room was empty at first, but half-way down the curving stairs she paused, breathless, with a sharp, swordlike pain at her heart.

He—Garvey was there! He stood in the middle of the amber-lighted room, his incredibly handsome face uplighted to her with a look of wonderment and startled admiration. Yes, actually admiration. Dawn felt the quick blood tingle in her finger tips. How wonderful he was—standing there, slender and vibrant in the sharp black-and-white of impeccable evening dress, looking up at her as if she were Carlota! It was unbelievable.

She smiled faintly and tried to descend the staircase as La Pompadour might have done, or like the picture of Maria Theresa, with the crescent



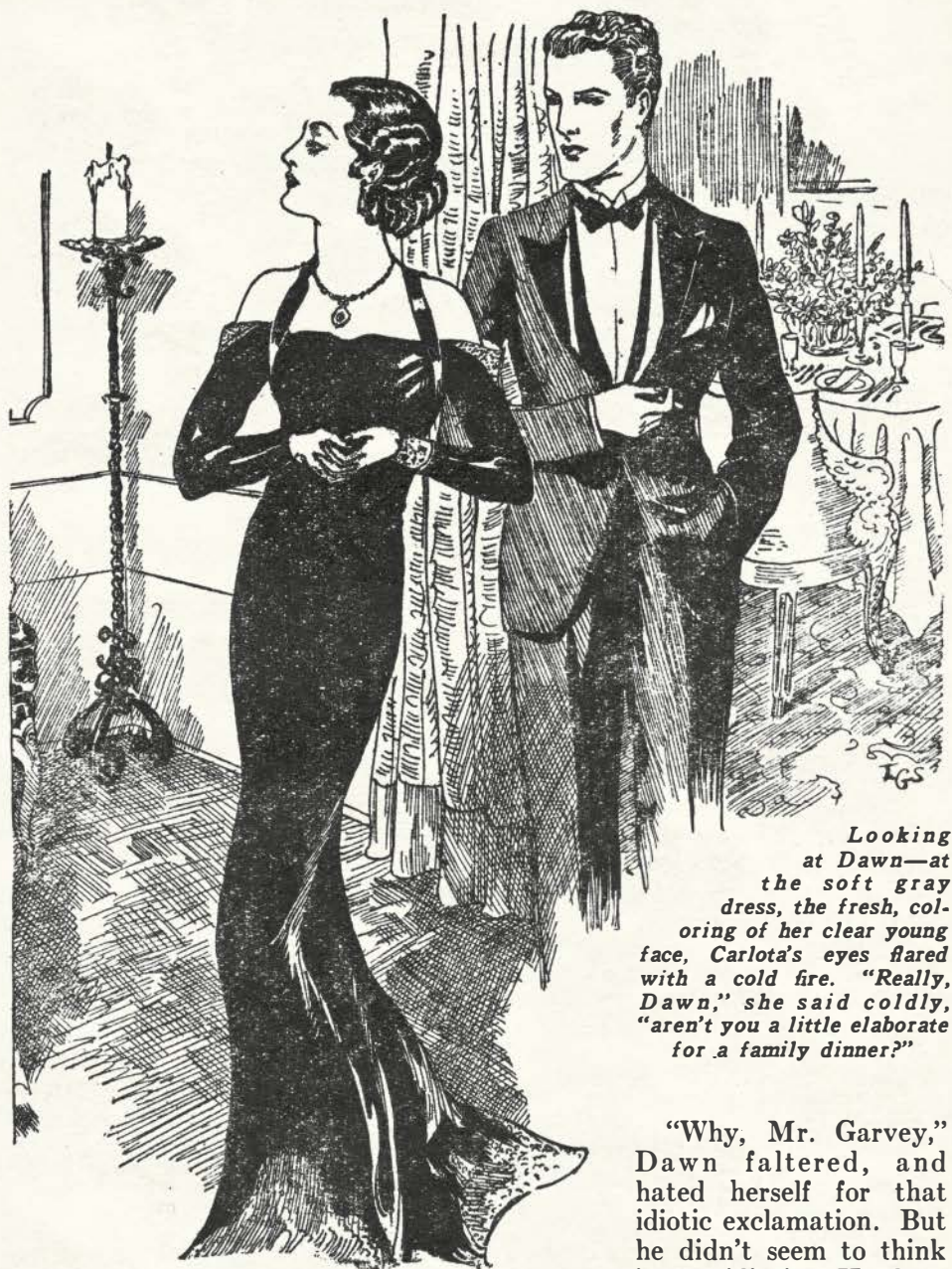
moon in her hair, like anybody but Carlota's private secretary. She tried to say something clever.

But all she could say when he took her hand was: "Hello, Mr. Garvey."

He did not answer for a moment. He stepped toward her quickly and seized both her hands. For a blind moment Dawn thought she was going to faint, but that would be silly, she decided; she might miss something! She tried to grin at him, the quaint, almost boyish grin of camaraderie that was most familiar to them both. But

the gravity of his face startled it away from her lips. She looked up at him, wide-eyed.

"Dawn," he said, in his deep, ring-



Looking at Dawn—at the soft gray dress, the fresh, coloring of her clear young face, Carlota's eyes flared with a cold fire. "Really, Dawn," she said coldly, "aren't you a little elaborate for a family dinner?"

ing voice, modulated now to her nearness. "Dawn, I've wanted to see you alone. You don't know how much. But I've had no chance."

her toward him. "How lovely you are in that dress," he murmured. "Gray as the shadows of night, with the first

flame of sunrise wrapping you, with your feet shod in sunrise, like Aurora's."

"My mother wanted to call me Aurora," said Dawn. "But dad liked Dawn best."

How tall he is, she thought, wildly. There was a small pulse throbbing in her throat. I've never been so close to him before. Oh, this can't be happening to me—it can't! He said her name softly:

"Dawn——"

He's going to kiss me, she thought. But the exquisite confusion of the moment, the magic enchantment of it, was broken by a mocking, familiar voice from the door—Byron Archer's voice.

"Oh, heavens, Garvey, don't recite!" Archer exclaimed. "If you know a poem that begins with 'dawn,' don't say it. I'm off duty."

Dawn whirled about, quick, bright color staining her cheeks. Byron Archer was tall and dark as Garvey was tall and fair. But Archer's face was lean and hard, creased with humor about unsmiling eyes, and with lines of bitterness about a mouth that was always smiling, but coldly, mirthlessly. She always thought she saw in Archer's eyes a haunted loneliness, as if he had lost something, or, perhaps, had never found something especially dear to him.

"Hello, Archer," said Garvey, easily. "Glad to see you. What an insulting person you are! Do you ever lay off your victims?"

"What for? To give them a chance to retaliate?" replied Archer, bitterly. "Hello, Miss Stanton. What was this ham actor telling you about the dawn? Was it a date? Don't let him fool you. He's got four wives and six children——"

"You exaggerate," Dawn put in, demurely. "Miss Mauresque would

not have him around if he were as married as all that!"

"There's something in that," murmured Archer, maliciously. "But don't trust him. He acts all the time. If he ever tried to be himself he'd forget his lines. I can't warn you sufficiently against him."

"I think you're doing a very thorough job of it," said Dawn. She raised her eyes as a faint sound on the stairs attracted her. "Here is Miss Mauresque," she added, in a low voice.

The two men revolved instantly, to give Carlota the eager attention she expected when she made an entrance. But it was too late. She must have been standing there for half a minute, Dawn thought, a trifle apprehensively. Carlota could be a perfect devil when she did not get her due! Her eyes flashed dangerously as she looked down upon the gay little group below, furious that they were getting on so well without her. Then she swept down upon them regally, smiling her dazzling stage smile. She was literally poured into a black velvet gown with long tight sleeves, from which her white hands and heavily powdered face with blood-red lips emerged like strange flowers, almost sinister in their beauty.

"Exquisite," muttered Garvey. Dawn glanced at him with a throb of surprise. His tone had been perfunctory, almost sullen. And he was not looking at Carlota now, but at her—Dawn! That fact almost robbed her of sanity, but she heard Byron Archer say:

"Stunning, Carlota. But why so many clothes? Am I to suppose that my published remarks have effected a reform?"

Carlota ignored the thrust. She was looking at Dawn—at the soft gray dress, at the flaming sash and

small, high-heeled slippers. At the fresh, almost untouched coloring of Dawn's clear young face. Carlota's eyes flared briefly with a cold fire.

"Really, Dawn," she said coldly, "aren't you a little elaborate for a family dinner?"

"That," remarked Byron Archer, to bridge the sickening silence, "makes me a member of the family. And I've been feeling like a pariah pup ever since I wrote the bit about Carlota and the bathtub. I'm relieved."

But nothing could soften the sting of that obvious rebuke, as from a queen to the lowliest of her vassals. And Carlota was not satisfied to leave the matter there.

"You'll only have to change, Dawn," she added, mercilessly. "I want you to meet us at Mrs Burke Carteret's after the show to-night, to help me dress. Hermine is still missing. You'll have to maid me." She passed Dawn by deliberately and laid her hands in Garvey's with a dramatic little gesture of affection. "Garvey, we must dine at once," she said. "We're late, as it is. Byron, will you take Dawn in?"

"You bet," said Archer inelegantly. He looked at Dawn with curious concern. She was so white. After the dark flush Carlota's words had brought, her cheeks were deathly pale. She had caught her trembling lip between her teeth. Her eyes, dark with pain, were fixed on Garvey in mute appeal. But Garvey was smiling uneasily.

Over and over, in her sick heart, Dawn was saying: "Was that why she brought me down to-night? To hurt me, to insult me before him?" She meant Garvey. But it was Byron Archer who was beside her, drawing her cold hand through his arm. Carlota was leading the way toward the dining room, her black

velvet-clad body swaying beside Garvey's tall, urbane form with conscious grace, her white hand linked possessively through his arm.

This left Dawn to follow with Archer. For a wild moment she wanted to run. To rush up to her room and hide her face in the cool pillows of her bed and never lift her head again. But she let Archer lead her toward the dining room. And as they passed through the wide doorway into the soft flame of candlelight and the violet-scented haze surrounding the lovely table that she, herself, had arranged, Dawn's head snapped up and her cheeks flamed scarlet.

"Claws," Byron Archer murmured, close to her ear, "are the chief attribute of a tigress, half her charm! I shouldn't mind so much, if I were you, Miss Stanton."

Dawn said nothing. She wanted to snap back at him: "Tigress! She's just plain cat!" Her head was high and she was smiling faintly as Archer seated her and took his own place. She tried to avoid Garvey's eyes now, but presently she saw him smiling at her across the table and something shook her anew, from head to foot, with a kind of sick pain that was half ecstasy. It's because I love him, she thought miserably, with utter frankness. That's what makes me all trembly and dumb like this! If I didn't love him, if I didn't care what he thought of me, it wouldn't matter.

The dinner was a strange, dream-like affair, yet hurried because Carlota and Garvey were late for the theater. The two men were rather silent, and Carlota, sensing some disapproval of her attitude, tried to make amends by being charming to Dawn. But the girl was coldly resentful. Dawn was courteous, but no more

"I'll leave this house to-morrow," Dawn was promising herself furiously, when she looked up and saw Garvey's eyes fixed upon her with an almost mournful intensity. He was turning his wine glass between long, sensitive fingers. He looked depressed, sad. Dawn's heart sank. If she left Carlota's employ it meant leaving him. It meant that she would never see him again, perhaps, except across the footlights. She couldn't go, then. She couldn't. She let her gaze rest upon his until a sensation of drowning rose to engulf her. She felt as if she were sinking down, down into that deep, magnetic gaze. Why is he looking at me like this?—she wondered faintly. Is he trying to tell me something? Trying to tell me that he cares, too?

Once more Archer's crisp, satirical voice cleft the enchanted moment. "Bravo," he said. "Bravo, Garvey! You look like the unwilling bridegroom in that tremendous drama, 'The Shotgun Wedding'—the part where he says: 'Little gurl, this hurts me more'n dew-yew.'"

With a crimson tide over his handsome face, Garvey half rose from his chair. "Say, Archer, is that supposed to be witty?" he said hoarsely.

"Not particularly," Archer replied shortly.

Carlota put her hand on Garvey's arm.

"Sit down, Garvey," she said petulantly. "And stop acting. Archer, I think you're horribly rude. Dawn doesn't know what you're talking about."

"Somebody ought to tell her," said Archer. "It's only polite." Dawn stared at him. "This tainted pair," said Archer, with a wave of his hand, "will be married to-morrow at three, at the Municipal Building. It will

silence a lot of talk, let me tell you!"

"Archer, you're simply detestable," Carlota murmured calmly. "Dawn believes implicitly in my moral character. Why must you disillusion her?" But her careless face belied the words. Plainly, she didn't care what Dawn thought about her.

Dawn heard no more. A strange, horrible thing was happening to her. She felt as if all the blood in her body had poured into her heart, with a sudden, tearing pain. She felt as if she would die, as if she wanted to die, now, at this moment.

The tall, white candles wavered before her eyes. The scent of the violets sickened her. She put her head down upon a cool palm, her elbow propped on the table, and looking down saw Archer's hand pushing his own wine glass toward her. She took it hastily and drained the white wine from it. A quick warmth revived her.

She heard her own voice, murmuring correct felicitations, and saw Garvey bow stiffly, formally, his face still flushed and angry. She saw Carlota's satisfied smirk, but her lips were smiling gallantly.

"Good girl," she heard Archer say softly. "Come on, they've gone." And she looked up to see that Carlota and Garvey had left the table and that she was still sitting there, staring at the dying violets, that were already withered. She rose unsteadily.

"If you'll excuse me," she murmured to Archer. She left him there. She didn't go back into the library. She turned and ran up the stairs that led out of the dining room to the balcony and so into the hall that led to her own room.

She closed her door behind her and stood for a moment in darkness,

her arms outspread against the panels of the door, her eyes closed. She was breathing hard, as if she had run a long way. "I'll pack now, and go—to-night," she was telling herself brokenly. "To-night!" She reached for the light switch beside the door and snapped it. The room filled with soft rose-shaded light. And before her, like a figment of her disordered imagination, stood Martin Garvey.

"Hush," he said quickly. "Be careful. Carlota is getting her wraps—I have only a moment. Dawn, come here."

"What do you mean by coming here?" she gasped. "What do you think I am?"

"Oh, don't be silly," he said brusquely. "You love me. It's written in your eyes, on your lips. I know it. I can read! And I love you. Come here, I say."

She didn't. But he came and took her in his arms masterfully, with a sort of rough tenderness, and kissed her. His lips were not quite as she had thought they would be, and she hated herself for having thought about them at all. She struggled away from him, icy with shock, glancing apprehensively over her shoulder at the door. If Carlota came in and found him here, what would she say? What insult would she not fling at them, and justly, too?

"Go—please go," Dawn gasped. "You're absurd, Mr. Garvey. I don't love you!" But his lips were on hers once more, lingeringly, with inescapable tenderness; a long kiss that deadened her anger and stirred her to the depths. But she still fought him furiously. "Let me go," she panted.

"Listen to me," he said sternly. "This marriage means nothing.

Archer was right. It's what he called it—a shotgun wedding!"

"You cad! You utter cad!" cried Dawn.

He shrugged. "Give me a chance to tell you about it. I tell you that you love me, and that I love you. Try to trust me, at least for a few hours. Go to the Burke Carteret affair. I'll find a way to see you there alone, if only for an hour. Will you give me that, Dawn—just one hour?"

She stared at him. She wanted, she wanted to believe him!

"Yes," she said dully. "Yes. That can't hurt any one but me." She did not realize how completely that admission betrayed her love until after he was gone and she stood alone in her room, her palms pressed to her burning eyes.

She waited until she was sure that they had left the apartment; then, mechanically, not daring to think of Garvey at all, she gathered up Carlota's check books and accounts and took them down to the library. She found Byron Archer there, smoking quietly in a corner of a big divan. He rose, smiling at her quizzically.

"Why didn't you go with them?" she asked abruptly. But somehow she was glad to see him there. It made her feel less frightened, less as if she were caught in a whirling wheel of misery.

"I've seen the play," he said dryly. "It's terrible."

"It isn't!" she said quickly. "It's wonderful!" She meant it. All that spoiled it for her, really, was the false accent that Carlota put on the love scene at the end. But Dawn didn't propose to criticize her employer to Archer, no matter how she felt about Carlota, herself.

"I think you're a wretched critic," Dawn went on, sinking into a deep chair with Carlota's check books in

her lap. "You stick pins in people just to see them squirm. I don't believe you could write one of the scenes you love to pan!"

Archer rose abruptly and went over to the book cases that lined the wall. There he turned and faced her suddenly. His face was a trifle haggard. She was shocked to see that her words had gone deeply. "Is that what you think, really?" he asked.

"I think," said Dawn resolutely, "that you were born rich and bad-tempered. You must have been an awfully spoiled kid. You aren't serious about anything, even your writing. And it's a pity because you have ability."

He came toward her slowly and to her intense surprise dropped down on one knee beside her and put his arms about her. Not with the fierce demand that had been in Garvey's embrace, but with a boyish appeal that disarmed her utterly. He looked so unlike the sardonic Archer she knew—this young, sensitive face raised to hers; the dark eyes hurt, yet smiling.

"Would it surprise you very much," he said softly, "to know that I wrote that play? And that I didn't write it for Carlota, I wrote it for you?"

"For me? Why, I'm not an actress," she gasped.

"I didn't write it for an actress," he said whimsically. "I wrote it because it was in my heart. I've dreamed all my life of a girl who would count the world well lost to spend an hour with me. A girl like the girl in my play—a girl like you."

He drew his arms from about her and rose, turning aside as if to hide the emotion in his face. He pawed the table for the silver cigarette box. "May I smoke?" he asked huskily.

"Of course," she murmured. She

looked at him, with a curious excitement. It was rather wonderful to be told that you had inspired a play like that.

"Is that why you don't like Carlota in the part?" she asked, in spite of herself. "Because of the way she plays it at the end?"

"Exactly," he replied grimly. "But I sold the play before it was cast, and Carlota was under contract with the producer. She had to be the one to play the part. And she does so—as nearly naked as she can manage to be without having the play closed. And now this absurd marriage ceremony with Garvey. It's a publicity stunt. It's the bunk."

Dawn started to her feet. Her face, her eyes, glowing.

"But how unfair to him!" she cried. Her heart was singing.

Garvey had told her the truth! The marriage meant nothing—nothing!

She forgot what Archer had just said—that she was the girl he had dreamed of all his life. That he had written a play about her. All she thought of now was that Martin Garvey had told her the truth, and that he loved her!

"Say," said Archer, gazing at her, "I believe you're in love with that trained ape!"

Dawn laughed aloud.

"Oh, I am, I am!" she cried. "And now that you've told me, I'm going to pretend that you're my friend and ask you to help me!" A wild scheme was milling in her brain. She was dizzy with it.

"I am your friend," he told her, but he was frowning. "I'd do anything for you. But don't tell me you're serious about Garvey."

"Yes, yes!" she cried impatiently. "Of course, I am. I'm mad about him. And I'm going to fight her

for him. Do you hear me? Fight!"

"Splendid spirit," said Archer gloomily. "But I can't approve."

"You mean that you think I'll lose?" she demanded. "Because she's so beautiful?"

"She isn't," said Archer impatiently. "I mean," he added, almost unwillingly, "that I'm afraid Garvey knows which side his bread is buttered on. Carlota is pretty powerful in the profession, you know, and Garvey is a newcomer."

"What a perfectly vile thing to say," said Dawn, with icy contempt.

"I know—I'm sorry," he replied, hastily. "I'm jealous. That's all."

"Jealous?" She looked puzzled.

"Because I'm in love with you, myself," Archer told her, simply.

"Don't be silly," said Dawn, rudely. But she couldn't help being thrilled. If she hadn't been so utterly mad about Martin Garvey, she admitted to herself, she would have found Byron Archer terribly attractive, with his dark, haunted look of having lost something, or, perhaps, of not having found something that he wanted desperately.

"I—I want to go to the Burke Carteret party to-night," she said, lamely. "But not to 'maid' Carlota, as she so attractively expressed it." Dawn made a wry face. "I want to go as a guest and I want to wear the swankiest costume we can break out of a theatrical costumers at this time of night!" But then her face fell. "I forgot," she faltered. "I haven't got an invitation. If I crashed it like that Carlota would be so mad she'd have me thrown out on my ear!"

"Bunk," Archer snorted. "I have an invitation. I know old Burke Carteret. But do you really mean it?"

"Absolutely," said Dawn, firmly. "I've never had any patience with

Cinderella, who sat around getting dusty while she waited for a fairy godmother to come along and snap her out of it. I've always had to fight my own battles. And I'm going to win this one!"

"What part am I supposed to play?" inquired Archer. "Am I the pumpkin, or the six mice?"

"You're wonderful," said Dawn, warmly. "You can pretend you're my—my brother."

"Ye gods," said Archer, disgustedly. "Well, since we're related, we may as well go over to my shack. I have a costume ready to wear myself to-night. And I can fix you up beautifully, if you'll let me. I have a trunk of gorgeous Spanish stuff that the dancer, La Violetera, asked me to take care of for her while she's on tour. You won't find anything half so nice in a theatrical costume place. And we'll match. I"—he grinned—"I'm going as *Don Juan*. Ain't that a laugh?"

Dawn did not answer that. She was looking at him curiously. She was thinking of La Violetera. Dawn had seen her dance and she was marvelous. Her beauty, her infinite allure, made Carlota Mauresque seem pale and drab, by comparison.

That sad, almost morbid look of Byron Archer's. Was that La Violetera's doing?—Dawn wondered. Did he love this Spanish woman who was notoriously fickle, the toast of Spain and of South America?

Wondering, Dawn stood quite still, staring at him with wide, child-like eyes, from which her long lashes curved back in startling loveliness, unwinking, amazingly dark against her clear, fair skin. Suddenly, with a queer sound like a groan, Archer caught her in his arms and kissed her. His mouth burned briefly upon



When she left the dressing room to join Archer at the door of the ball-room, he whitened a little and took her hand. "You're too lovely for me, Dawn," he said.

hers and a strange flame swept her from head to foot. But only for an instant. He patted her shoulder reassuringly. "Forget that," he said, curtly. "Just a moment of literary insanity. Critics are queer birds,

you know. Come on, get your hat."

"I don't think," said Dawn, suddenly, "that you'll be especially funny, as *Don Juan*."

"You fill me with the wine of hope," said Archer, dryly.

He wasn't funny, as *Don Juan*. In dull-black silk, laced with silver, with high boots of soft Spanish leather and a cape and sword, Byron Archer was rather startling. Dawn was delirious with joy at the array of beautiful things he spread before her to choose from, but she felt rather inadequate when she looked at him.

It was depressing to try to wear clothes that had known the lithe, magnetic loveliness of the Spanish dancer. But Archer was nice. He said she looked marvelous in the gown she chose. She wasn't sure until she got to the Burke Carterets. But the moment she dropped her cloak in the dressing room and saw the wildfire of envy sweep through the room, filled with lovely women, she knew that she was something rather rare, herself.

She wore a gown of silver brocaded pink taffeta, with the enormous flat hooped skirts of the court of Spain in Velasquez's day. Her pale hair lay like banded gold against her temples and cheeks and high above it towered a fantastic carved comb, shaped and patterned like a peacock's tail, studded with brilliants and seed pearls. Her small ears were weighted with giant earrings of hundreds of seed pearls, set in quaint old-fashioned gold, and broad bracelets and a massive collar to match made her white wrists, her slender white throat, seem too frail to bear them.

When she left the dressing room to join Archer at the door of the ballroom, he whitened a little and took her hand. "I'm sorry I brought you," he said, gloomily. "I shall never know a moment's rest again, as long as I live."

What a strange thing to say, thought Dawn, looking for Martin Garvey. But Garvey and Carlota

had not arrived. And when they did Dawn was sitting out a dance in the conservatory with Byron Archer, peculiarly absorbed in his explanation of why his future rest would be disturbed.

He told her little in words, but his dark eyes were burning and his mouth was set in hard lines of self-control. She didn't need to be told words. She felt like a queen. But she lost something of that sensation when Archer began to tell her how truly great an artist was La Violetera, whose gown she wore. Never, Archer said, had there been such a dancer, and hardly ever such a woman. That fan, for instance, in her hands became a weapon of merciless allure. He showed Dawn a sign or two in the language of the fan, and Dawn watched him, again wide-eyed as a child, and again he caught her to him, gorgeousness and all, and kissed her.

"I can't help it," he muttered, "you're too lovely for me, Dawn. But don't worry. I won't rumple your grand clothes! I won't even disturb one golden hair. But could you kiss me, Dawn—just once?" His dark face was close to her fair one. His eyes were blazing now, blinding her with their intensity. Then she saw a smile on his lips—faintly mocking, and she slapped him.

"You're awfully smart," she said, with a dry sob, "about kissing people without mussing them up! I suppose your Spanish woman taught you that, too!" And with a swish of her vast skirts she turned and ran from him, like a dainty ship under full sail in the pink light of early morning.

She went straight into the ballroom. There her heart failed her. They were already on the improvised stage—Carlota and Martin

Garvey—and the glittering crowd was silent, gathered to see the famous pair in the love scene that was the talk of the town this season.

It was the temple scene, draped in white gauze, with the Eternal Fire blazing high in an urn that stood on a marble column. Before it stood Carlota, and Dawn glanced over her shoulder instinctively to see if Byron had followed her, and was there to witness the astounding fact that Carlota was swathed from head to foot in draperies! They dripped from her long, slender arms like tree moss, waving in the faint draft that rocked the Eternal Fire. She was chanting an incantation, and Garvey stood in the shadows, watching her, superb in his Roman toga, his arms folded across his chest. Dawn's eyes dwelled upon him.

"Confound these private theatricals," she heard Byron mutter, at her elbow; he had woven through the crowd to her side. "That flame is too high—it's dangerous! Look at those sleeves."

"Who induced her to dress up like a cocoon, anyway?" snapped Dawn. "You did! I'm going up to the side entrance to the stage. Garvey is coming off now, and he won't have another cue for several minutes and there's no point in my being all dressed up, too, unless he sees me, is there?" she added, sweetly.

"No," said Archer. His eyes were blank and hard and she knew that her thrust had gone deeply. Why did she want to hurt him?—she wondered. She hesitated. She could see Garvey afterward. It would be rather brazen to go to him now.

"Go ahead," said Archer, harshly. "What are you waiting for? I'm going to look up Burke Carteret and get that lamp fixed before something

happens." He turned on his heel and left her.

She went to the side of the stage, skirting the crowd, which was absorbed in Carlota. She told herself that she was frantic to see Garvey, to know if he had arranged to see her alone, as he had told her that he would. One hour! How in the world was he going to manage a whole hour?—she wondered with some irritation. It wouldn't take fifteen minutes to tell her that he loved her and that he had told Carlota that he loved her, Dawn, and that he wasn't going to be married to-morrow, after all—unless it was to Dawn! It was very simple, Dawn thought. It wouldn't take a whole hour! She came to the two carpeted steps that led to the side entrance of the stage, curtained to make an anteroom. She went in.

Garvey stood looking out at the stage. He did not see her, or hear her.

"I'm here," said Dawn, in a low voice. But still he did not turn. Instead he started violently, then fell back with a gasp, his arm upraised, as if to shield his eyes from some horror. And at that moment Dawn heard a wild, hysterical shriek, "Fire! Fire!" There was an instant of frozen silence, then pandemonium broke loose in the crowded ballroom.

"Byron!" Dawn screamed. "Byron, where are you?" She flew to Garvey's side and looked over his shoulder. It was Carlota who had shrieked and was running toward the wings, her airy garments ablaze.

Dawn clutched Garvey's arm. "That curtain—the velvet one," she cried. "Quick—catch her, wrap her in it! She'll burn to death!" Then she fell back from him, sick with horror. For Martin Garvey was paralyzed with fear. His handsome



"I don't want to hear anything about Garvey. Anything at all. I don't like him any more. But you—I love you," Dawn murmured.

face was gray. His eyes were glassy.

"I—I can't!" he gasped. "It's fire—I can't!" He buried his face in his hands.

With a low cry, Dawn tore the velvet curtain from the thing it

draped and holding it wide ran swiftly toward Carlota who was fluttering, screaming, gyrating like a moth with flaming wings. But Dawn closed with her at last, trying to smother the flames that licked

out like small, venomous serpents that would not be subdued.

She heard herself sobbing Byron Archer's name, and her own choked scream as the unspeakable atrocity of flame scorched her throat and, it seemed, her lungs. Then she felt Carlota clawing, struggling to be free of her.

"You're hurting me!" wailed Carlota. "Do you have to tear the clothes off my back?"

The fire was out then, Dawn thought, dully, and stumbled forward. She caught her heel in the immense skirt of the pink taffeta gown and fell heavily. Her head struck the corner of the marble column above which the Eternal Fire still burned, tall and wavering in the draft. But Dawn lay still.

The awakening was fragrant with flowers, and her dazed eyes looked upon a cool, darkened room richly furnished in a mannish fashion—vaguely familiar. Then she knew. Byron Archer's apartment where she had dressed last night for the ball—last night? Dawn wondered. She put her hand to her aching head where a bandage served to hold her reeling thoughts together. Her hands were bandaged, too. Suddenly sick with terror she sat erect with a low cry, but Archer materialized from the shadows that wrapped her and took her in his arms.

"You're not hurt badly, my darling," he whispered. "There won't even be a scar. But what courage! Dawn, Dawn!"

"Is she burned?" asked Dawn, faintly. "Her lovely face?"

"No. Only her arm. It will heal, the doctor says. And Garvey—you

haven't inquired for Garvey?" He smiled down at her.

"That's so," said Dawn. "But I don't think I want to hear anything about Garvey. Anything at all." She closed her eyes.

Byron moved restlessly. "Perhaps you're too hard on him," he said, gamely. "Fire is a horrible thing, Dawn. A brave man may be afraid of fire——"

"I don't care how brave he is," Dawn broke in. "I don't like him. Is that clear?"

"Perfectly," Archer replied, with a low, exultant laugh. "And me? Do you like me?"

"You? I love you," Dawn murmured. "And I've ruined that Spanish woman's dress. I'm glad of that. I'm sick and tired of famous beauties. Byron, what are your intentions? Are you going to——" She paused. Her color rose hotly, swiftly. She was going to be bold as brass about it and say "marry me," but she couldn't.

He gathered her close. "I have to," he said. "You're in my home, in my arms! Dawn, we're going to Spain! We're going to have our honeymoon at the Alhambra, and I'm going to buy you every shawl in Cadiz, every comb in Seville, every crown jewel left in Madrid! I love you—love you, my darling."

"Don't talk so much," said Dawn softly. "Just kiss me."

With a low cry he gathered her close and in a second his mouth found the soft eagerness of hers and the haunted, hurt look left his eyes and there was only a look of supreme contentment there. But Dawn did not see. Her heart was too filled with the ecstasy of Byron's kiss.





Coffee For Two

By Esther L. Schwartz

ROY MARTIN needn't think he owns me, just because he was engaged to me once," Merry Lent pouted, looking up at Arthur Bingham as they danced together at the Silver Turtle.

"What was the big fight about?" Arthur wanted to know, putting his smooth-shaven cheek close to Merry's pink-and-white one.

"You'll never guess—it was about you!"

"Me?" Arthur peered down into her big blue eyes, unable to believe what he was hearing. "But what on earth would make you and your fiancé fight about me?"

"Don't call him my fiancé!" Merry cried, and her lips curled adorably. "If I never see Roy Martin again it will be too soon."

"But I can't figure out—he certainly couldn't have known I'd call you up and ask you to go out with me this evening. I didn't know it myself, for it was just an accident. So how could you possibly have quarreled about me?"

Merry's lips pouted again, and she made a defiant move with her head.

"Roy Martin needn't think he owns me! I'll do as I please! Everything is over between us, anyhow. I gave him back his ring."

"But see here"—Arthur Bingham's good-looking, dark face was filled with concern—"if you two really mean a lot to each other, I don't want to butt in."

"We don't mean a thing, not any more," Merry confessed. "Roy has the crazy idea that just because a girl says she'll marry a man, that means she's never to look at another soul."

"But isn't that just about right? If you're pledged to some one, doesn't that automatically cut off all others?"

"Not to me!" Merry shook her blond head defiantly again. "I'm much too independent to allow any man to rule my life! And last night, when Roy got so fresh, I told him where to get off."

"And I had to call you up and ask you to go out with me, just when you'd ended things with him. Just my luck, Merry. You know it's ages that I've been trying to date you."

"Roy knew it, too. That's what always made him so furiously jealous. He told me I wasn't even to talk to you if I met you on the street."

"The village bad boy, that's what I'm supposed to be." Arthur smiled wryly.

"Well, your reputation is rather like that." Merry grinned up at him. "You do drink and gamble, and run around with women."

"So what? Would you want me to sit around and twiddle my thumbs? What's there to do in this town but to drink and gamble to pass the time? And why shouldn't I run around with women if they throw themselves at my head?"

Merry had the grace to blush, and the rich color suffusing her fair skin only made her look lovelier than ever.

"I—I didn't mean exactly to throw myself at you," she murmured.

"Not that I mind," Arthur hastened to say. "To have the prettiest girl in town willing to go out dancing with you is something to boast about."

"Oh, there's Roy!" Merry called out in panic as a tall, red-haired young man in Tuxedo entered. "And he's alone! I'll bet he's come to look for me!"

"Now, don't be scared. I'm just as big as he is, Merry, and if you don't want to pay any attention to him you needn't."

"But he looks furious!" Merry panted. "Oh, Arthur, try not to fight with him, will you? Roy has a terrible temper. Once it's roused there——"

"Don't worry, baby, I have, too! And I'm well able to take care of myself."

"Let's sit down, shall we?" Merry begged, trembling with fear.

They sat down at their table, and a moment later Roy approached, belligerent chips almost visible on both broad shoulders.

"Look here, Mr. Bingham, I suppose you know you're out with my girl," he began.

"Your girl?" Arthur repeated, in feigned surprise. "I didn't know Merry was any one's girl, particularly."

"Oh, you didn't? Well, that's a lie, and you're a big——"

"Roy, don't say it!" Merry put in, frightened and trembling.

"You keep out of this!" Roy ordered furiously.

"That's no way to talk to a lady, and especially the lady I'm escorting," Arthur blustered.

"Oh, yeah? Well, who told you to escort her? You know she's engaged to me!"

"I am not! I gave you back your ring last night."

"I'm not talking to you, Merry Lent," Roy growled.

"I'm not a sack of meal, to be fought over without having a word to say!" she protested vigorously.

"Sh—— People are beginning to notice us," Arthur put in.

"I don't give a darn who notices us!" Roy shouted. "I want my girl, and I won't stand for her running around to places like this with a man like you."

"You can't stop me!" Merry cried boldly.

"Oh, can't I?"

Roy came closer to her, and in an instant his hand closed down on hers like steel bands, sending a violent thrill through her, in spite of her anger. For all night she had wept, fearing that Roy would never touch her again.

"Let me go, Roy Martin! Arthur, make him release me!"

The two men stared at each other. Arthur, so dark and handsome, and a perfect man of the world; Roy, red-haired and boyish, his hazel eyes filled with the desire for a fight.

Arthur made one move toward Roy, and Roy lunged out at him with a fist that caught at the older man's chin and sent him sprawling to the floor. People came rushing from every table, but Roy caught at Merry's hand and dragged her to a side door.

Once outside, Merry's anger cooled, but Roy was still flaming.

"The idea!" he sputtered, as he flung her into his tiny coupé. "Going out with the worst fellow in town."

"You think *you* did me a lot of good, don't you, fighting about me in a public place, getting me talked about!" Merry fumed.

"That just goes to show you I

mean what I say! I won't stand for your running around with men like Arthur Bingham, and that's all there is to it!"

"Says you! Well, I won't have you telling me what to do! Maybe you think you've won out because you got there first with your punch! But you just wait. Arthur's not the kind to call quits after a thing like this."

"I'll break his neck if he takes you out again!" Roy shouted. "And if you go out with him, you'll get the worst spanking——"

"Indeed?" Merry put in coldly. "Now I'm to be spanked, am I? Swell way you have of getting a girl to love you."

"Love's out of this for the present, young lady! But let me tell you this—just because you handed me back my ring last night doesn't say I agree to release you. No girl can keep me running after her for three years and then kick me aside like an old shoe."

"And no man can tell me how to run my life."

"Even your mother says I'd be a good influence on you, that you're always trying to run things in a crazy way."

"Oh, yeah? Well, just because you've got mother on your side doesn't mean a thing! I was twenty-one the other day, and I can do as I please."

"You just think you can!" But in an instant, as they approached Merry's street, his tone changed to a more gentle one. "Aw, Merry, let's cut out the fighting. I like you, kid, and I——"

"Oh, you do?" Having him give in like that was the worst insult of all, Merry thought, and her anger rose once more. "If that's the way you act when you like me, I'd hate

to see how you'd act if you hated me."

"Don't be like that, Merry. You know as well as I do that no girl can run around with Arthur Bingham and not get herself talked about."

"I'll run around with any one I please, and you can't say a word about it!" Merry said through clenched teeth. Let me out here, and I don't want to ever see you again."

He stopped the car, but before Merry could pull the door open he had reached out and gathered her tight against him and pressed his lips hard to hers. Merry hated him and was ashamed of herself because the kiss stirred her so, but with an angry murmur she pulled herself away, got the door open and ran up the path to the porch steps.

Trembling uncontrollably, she opened her door and climbed the stairs to her room.

Undressing, she stared at her reflection in the mirror and wondered why she should be such a little devil with Roy. She loved him—she didn't deny that, even to herself, but what right had he to order her about that way?

She had a will of her own, and she wouldn't stand for his trying to boss her! If she stood for it before they were married, she'd never be able to call her soul her own afterward. Better to clear things up while there was still a chance, than to wait till it was too late!

"I'll go out again with Arthur tomorrow!" she vowed, before her head touched the pillow.

Next day at the office she rang Arthur up. He was angry, as she had known he would be, but she tried her sweetest to get him to forget the blow of the night before.

"Let's just go for a little ride in



Roy came straight up to their table. "Look here, Mr. Bingham, Merry is engaged to me! I want my girl, and I won't stand for her running around to places like this with a man like you."

your car," she insisted. "Roy needn't know. I'd like to apologize for the way he acted last night, and to show you how sorry I am."



"Oh, all right," he grunted. "We can drive out to Murray's, on the River Road."

Murray's was one of the places where Roy had said no decent fellow would take a girl. But that

only made Merry, in her present mood, all the more eager to go there, and to be seen there with Arthur. She'd even try to see to it that word drifted back to Roy that she had been at Murray's with the town's

bad man. That ought to hold him for a while, and show she meant what she said.

Just the same, when she got to Murray's with Arthur, dressed in her sea-green chiffon and silver slippers, and wearing her white bunny jacket, Merry was a little afraid. The people who were at Murray's might be having a good time, but they looked furtive and there was too much drinking, and she didn't like the way couples went up to the second floor. Merry knew an awful fear that Arthur would suggest her going up there with him, too.

She didn't have very long to wait for Arthur to make the suggestion, and in a way, she didn't blame him. She had brought it on her own head.

"No, Arthur," she tried to say gently, though her heart was quaking. "You know I'm not that kind of girl."

"You're kidding, Merry! Any girl's that kind of girl! You asked me to take you out, didn't you? I didn't call you up—you called me."

"But, Arthur, you don't understand!" She looked into his slightly bloodshot eyes, noted the trembling of his hand as he held his glass, saw the way a few drops spilled on the table. "I'm so sorry, Arthur, but, really, you've made a mistake! And I'd like it a lot if you'd take me home now."

"Evening's just beginning!" he grunted. "Don't feel like taking you home."

"Then I'll have to go myself," she announced, and stood up.

Just then Merry espied a familiar red head entering at the door, and all her anger at Roy returned a hundredfold. So he thought he could continue to spy on her, did he?

"All right, Arthur," she murmured quickly. "I'll go upstairs with you."

But she had only reached the foot of the stairs before Roy caught up with them.

"I came to take you home!" Roy gritted.

"Oh, you did? Well, I'm not going home with you!"

"Oh, yes, you are! Come along, before I give you the spanking I promised!"

"You wouldn't dare!" she flamed. "Wouldn't I?"

He reached out quickly and caught at her hand. She slapped him, and with one vigorous move he caught and held her as he sat down on the step. He pulled her over his lap, held her firmly in place, and administered three sound slaps. Still retaining his hold on her—for she was too stunned to offer any further resistance—he dragged her down the hall, under the astonished, drunken gaze of Arthur Bingham, and in another instant they were out the door and in his car.

"I'm taking you home!" he ejaculated through white lips. "And if I ever see you out with that man again——"

"What'll you do?"

Her heart was pounding, and angry tears were streaming out of her eyes, but she had to know what new monstrosities Roy would think up to get her to do his bidding.

"I'll drag you to a minister and marry you!"

That settled it for Merry. She didn't have her temper for nothing! She sat, silent and weeping a little, while he drove her home. Even when he reached out and kissed her, as the car stopped before her door, she was still crying, but she wouldn't say she was sorry, and she wouldn't give in.

Marry her, would he? Just to show he was the boss? She'd show him!

Merry happened to meet Arthur Bingham next day at noon, as she was hurrying out of the restaurant where she had had lunch alone. In the good old days lunch with Roy had been a matter of course, but since their quarrel there had been no Roy's bright red head at the entrance to her office building, no tiny coupé to take her out toward the river for a half hour's breath of air after lunch.

"Sorry I was drunk last night," Arthur apologized at once. "I should have known better. I don't blame your boy friend for being sore and dragging you out the way he did."

"Did you see what he did?" Merry questioned, tears of mortification filling her eyes at the memory.

"Sure I did, and I don't blame him much. I'd have done the same thing if it was my girl."

Merry thought quickly. She'd have to prove a couple of things, and there was nobody better to prove them with than the same good old bone of contention, Arthur Bingham. She'd already made a mess of things with him, and gotten people to talking about her, so why not have a final show-down, just to prove she was right and Roy was wrong?

"I'd like to go somewhere this evening—some nice place, and we don't need to drink or pet or anything," she floundered.

"O. K. with me," he grinned, "though I'm about dead for sleep."

"Let's make it the Stantler Hotel," Merry suggested. "Nobody can say that's not respectable and everything."

"The Stantler, then," Arthur grinned again. "I'll call for you at eight."

But at eight a stern-jawed young man with red hair drove up and

alighted at Merry's door, and just as she entered the car of Arthur Bingham she was whisked out the door and placed in a rather battered little coupé.

"Now, young lady, I'll show you who's boss!" she heard Roy exclaim, and not another word did he say before they drew up at a minister's. Worst of all, it was the same minister Merry had been going to ever since she was a little girl, and she wouldn't have acted nastily before him for anything.

In spite of everything, she had to admit that she was thrilled at Roy's masterfulness. Maybe she had been wrong. Maybe, after all, it only proved he loved her when he didn't want her to run around with questionable men to questionable places. Maybe, after all, getting married and settling down was the best thing that could happen to her. Maybe what she really needed was not just running around with Roy, but getting into a home of their own, where they could settle their little difficulties in each other's arms with no one else to see.

"Do you take this man to be your wedded husband?"

"I do," Merry whispered. She was saying little prayers to herself, prayers of hope that everything would be all right.

The next thing she knew Merry was sitting in the coupé again, Roy beside her, more grim-lipped than ever. Without a word he drove back to her house and opened the car door to let her out.

"But—but——" Merry gasped.

"Go home! You're my wife according to law, but—well, I don't want you. I just married you to keep my word with you."

He started the car and left her, still gasping, in front of the house. Tears began to stream down her face

as she saw his car disappear into the darkness. Haltingly and still weeping, Merry made her way inside the house and up to her own room.

There she fell on her bed and wept uncontrollably. To be left like that! Still wearing Roy's wedding ring, his engagement ring, too—and he didn't want her! He'd only married her to get his way!

She put the hand that wore his rings against her trembling mouth to still her sobs, and fell asleep, fully clothed, with that hand still against her lips. Hours later she awoke, stiff and cold, and undressed, shocked at first to see the rings, and then queerly thrilled. She cried again as she donned a dimity nightgown and thought of the trousseau things in her bureau, and knew that this was her wedding night and the man she had married didn't want her.

In the morning she was filled with dismay and misgiving. Should she tell her mother or any one about last night's wedding? No, better put the rings away and say nothing. She would go to her office, and call up Roy and ask his forgiveness, saying she would turn over a new leaf and try to be what he wanted her to be.

But Roy was not at his office, and she was filled with despair when they told her he had gone away for a month's trip.

"He said he was going to get married and go on his honeymoon," the man told her. "I think he went to California."

Merry almost died at that. No other girl had ever been treated like that before! A wife, and yet not a wife! What was her status? She was married to Roy, all right—she had made no objection in front of the minister, and they had been married with the license they had gotten almost five months before, when Merry, in one of her perverse moods, had said she'd changed her mind.

"I'm the most awful girl that ever lived!" she told herself. "I don't deserve to be happily married, and now I know I never will be! Oh, I wish I were dead! Oh, Roy, if only I had another chance, I'd show you I didn't mean it all! I'd show you I could be the kind of a wife you want me to be."

Considerably chastened, she went home that evening after work, and, pleading that she

wasn't hungry and needed sleep, she went straight to bed.

Merry lay on her bed, wide-eyed, unable even to cry, and thought it all out. She had been too sure of Roy, that was it. She had led him an awful time, ever since they had first known each other. He had been sincere and straightforward always, making no bones about the fact that they both had tempers and would have to learn to control them. He had always made an effort to control his, up to the night she had flung his ring at him and told him she'd do as she pleased about running around with other men.



"It's all my fault," she thought, miserable and repentant. "Oh, if only I had another chance! If only he'd come back!"

But it was too late. Knowing Roy, she was sure he would stay away for a month, and then get an annulment.

Merry wept at the death of her hopes and dreams. Roy had been everything to her. Only that vicious temper of hers had interfered to spoil their happiness. He still was the sun and the moon and the stars to her. No other man's kisses could thrill her the way his did.

She fell asleep at last, having taken out

the wedding and engagement rings and put them on. She even put on the nightgown she had expected to wear on the night she was married. It clung to her figure tenderly, and she thought, with infinite pathos, that Roy would never know how



Roy sat there on the bed, not touching her. "I came back because I couldn't bear to live without you," he said. "Nothing matters any more, dear, if you'll only let me love you."

sweet she had looked in it. Roy would never even see her again.

She had heard her mother and father go to the movies before she fell asleep. Even in her sleep she seemed to hear the sound of their car returning, and when she drowsily heard steps climbing the stairs and stopping at the door of her room, she tried not to breathe so her mother wouldn't open the door and come in, to find out how silly she had been. Donning her wedding nightgown. Putting on her wedding ring.

But the door opened, and even in the pale moonlight that entered the room Merry could see it wasn't either her mother, or her father. The terrible lurch at her heart told her it could be only one man in all the world who could make her thrill like that!

He came closer and sat down on the edge of the bed.

"Merry?" Roy whispered softly. "I came back. There wasn't any one downstairs, and I came up here to look for you. I thought at first maybe I was sort of bold, coming straight to your room, and then I remembered it was all right because we're married."

He sat there on the bed, not touching her. Merry saw, even in the half light, that his cheeks were

gaunt and there were big shadows under the eyes she loved.

"We're married," she whispered, too. "But you said you didn't want me, Roy."

At that he reached out and gathered her against him. His hands were big and strong and hard, and his heart was pounding against hers. Then he was kissing her trembling lips over and over, as though he could never have enough of her.

"Oh, my darling! I want you so! I came back because I couldn't bear to live without you! Nothing matters any more, dear, if you'll only let me love you. I don't care about your temper or anything."

Merry turned on the small bed light, so she could see his dear face better. She saw him gasp at the way she looked in the wedding nightgown, and she nestled closer against him as she said:

"You won't ever need to be afraid of my temper again, darling. I've learned my lesson. I need some one to boss me, and—oh, honey, say you're willing to tackle the job!"

With a single move, he turned out the light again and gathered her tight in his arms. Their lips met in a long, clinging kiss that was the beginning of everything, and that swept them into a timeless dream of ecstasy.





Pay For Your Kisses

By Ruth Lyons

A SERIAL—Part II.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER Peter had gone, Carlotta sat for a long time, tearing a handkerchief to shreds, her eyes bright and smarting with unshed tears. So this was what life did to one. Snared you into love and then dropped you without warning, crushing you, killing you.

She went to bed and tried to sleep, but her body was racked with long, shuddering sobs, and still the tears wouldn't come. She heard Lily come quietly in and get into

bed, and she forced herself to calm the shaking of her body, control her convulsive sobs.

She went to her work the next day, dull, leaden, her feet dragging. She felt there was a great aching wound where her heart had been, and she had to bite her lips to keep from crying aloud. Lily was too engrossed in her own thoughts, too happy in her own love to notice, and so Carlotta was spared her questions.

At three thirty Miss Mary Gavin came in, and because Miss Gavin was perhaps the only patron of the

tea room to whom Carlotta was genuinely sweet, she tried to be her usual self. But Miss Gavin noticed the difference immediately.

She had been coming to the tea room for almost a year, and from the first Carlotta had felt a mixture of pity and liking for the old woman. For she was quite old, in her sixties, and she wore the most amazing clothes—Queen Mary hats, and frumpy, rusty black dresses. She was tall and very thin, and for all her years carried herself straight as a rod. She had piercing eyes and a formidable-looking nose, and the waitresses all called her "an old freak." That was perhaps what had started Charlotta's liking for her; some bit of perversity because every one else had made fun of her. And feeling that touch of pity for the gaunt, queer old woman, she had been particularly sweet and helpful to her, had done all to please her.

At first Miss Gavin had given the appearance of an old crank. She had wanted the fan turned off and although it was a hot day, Carlotta had immediately complied with her request. She could see that the old woman was surprised at that; she had evidently expected at least polite opposition. She had made several other unreasonable demands, and when she finally realized that Carlotta's smile would not wear off, and that she was sincerely anxious to make her comfortable, the old lady had relaxed.

She had said, her fierce old eyes

on Carlotta's, "Don't mind me. I'm an old crank."

And Carlotta had laughed, her rippling, gay laugh. "That's a lot of eyewash," she had said inelegantly. "You're no more an old crank than I am. And you can bet your last nickel if I was in a position to, I'd make folks hop for me, too." Then she had stopped, aghast at her manner of speech. "Oh, golly, Miss Granville would boil me in oil if she heard me using slang to the customers. I guess I forgot myself."

Old Miss Gavin had laughed, saying, "That's the first laugh I've had in a long time."

And from then on she became a regular customer of the Green Oak, coming in at tea time when the tea room was not very crowded, and always Carlotta would say or do something to amuse her. Carlotta knew nothing about her except that she had

never married, and lived alone, and was probably quite poor, because she wore the same clothes season after season.

On this day, although Carlotta gave her her most friendly smile, and hovered attentively over her, the old lady's sharp eyes noted the difference in her manner, the hurt that shadowed her eyes. She said sharply to Carlotta, her piercing eyes raking over the young face. "What's the matter with you? Sick?"

Carlotta started. "Why—why no. I'm all right."

"Well, what's bothering you?"

THE STORY SO FAR: Carlotta Andrews, tired of the constant quarreling with her stepfather, leaves home and rents an apartment with Lily Reed, whom she works with. Her experience with her stepfather makes her prejudiced against men, and her creed is to take everything and give nothing. She is quite successful and content until she meets Peter Dunlap. One night he kisses her and she confesses her love for him, but he tells her he is engaged to be married to Virginia Davenport, who, unlike Carlotta, is not a play-girl.

"Why, nothing, Miss Gavin—really nothing."

Old Miss Gavin said, "Hm-m-m," and went back to her tea, and later Carlotta said good-by to her a little abstractedly. The old woman went out, shaking her head and mumbling to herself.

Each minute of that interminable day Carlotta thought, "I can't stand it any longer. If this day would only end." But when the time came finally for her to leave, it seemed worse than ever, for now she would have nothing to keep her busy and occupied, now she would be a prey to all the haunting, agonizing memories of Peter.

As the days slowly wore away she slipped back a little into her old ways. She would think, "What is the good of being kind and considerate and trusting? You love a man and he breaks your heart. I shouldn't have let myself go soft; I should have been hard and mean. Perhaps he would have loved me then. Anyway, that's the last of love for me."

But she knew it wasn't true. She knew she couldn't tear her love from her heart, and she faced each day with the frightening thought that she must go through life with this aching load in her heart.

She tried to keep herself busy all the time, making a great many dates, but now when she played her little tricks it was no longer with that young, chuckling mischievousness but with a bitter desire to hurt men as she had been hurt. But her zest for the game was gone, and the days rolled by, dull and disappointing and stupidly alike.

It hurt her to see Lily and Kenneth so obviously in love, and she was often tempted to warn Lily not to expect happiness from love.

LS-7C

One day Lily told her that Kenneth and Bud were giving a party and wanted Carlotta to go. She froze up for a moment, but as Lily continued to persuade her she made a quick decision. And feeling like a murderer who returns to the scene of his crime, she went.

When they arrived at the boys' apartment Carlotta thought it was all so like that summer evening when she had first met Peter here—the same people, the same chatter, the same punch—the only difference being that this was September and the evening cooler.

Her palms were damp with nervousness, and there was a frightened shiver running through her as she looked around the room, and then she saw Peter's profile, the curve of his cheek, and her heart thumped madly against her ribs. She looked away quickly. She couldn't bear to meet his eyes at that moment.

She swallowed hard and smiled flirtatiously up at Bud and chattered away about things she had been doing since she last saw him.

A middle-aged man, with gray showing at his temples, and a full, ruddy face, came up to Bud and patted him on the back. Then he looked at Carlotta.

"Won't you introduce me?" he said to Bud.

Bud said, "Oh, I'm sorry. Miss Andrews, Mr. Mathews."

Sam Mathews beamed down on Carlotta while she stared at him, her breath catching in her throat. She managed a sweet smile and said, "Oh, are you Mr. Mathews of the Dunlap-Mathews Agency?"

He smiled and nodded. "Smart girl," he said.

Carlotta's mind was racing wildly. Peter's partner. He was interested in her. He was a weapon in her hand. How she could use him, she

didn't quite know. But somehow she would. And she would hurt Peter through him, somehow.

She cooed up at Sam Mathews, "You weren't at Ken's last party, were you? I certainly would have noticed you."

His face flushed a deeper red. "No, I wasn't," he said. "You see, I'm married, and I don't get much chance to run around," and he winked at her.

She thought, "What a hateful person! And he's married. But I'm not going to let that stop me."

She walked around the room with Sam Mathews tagging after her. Virginia Davenport wasn't there. Probably, Carlotta thought with a curl of her lip, Virginia was being very self-sacrificing and staying at home with her mother.

She knew she would have to speak to Peter before long, and she steeled herself for the encounter, but when he turned and saw her and their eyes met, her heart turned over and her nails dug painfully into her palms.

He said, "Well, hello, Carlotta."

She clung more tightly to Sam Mathews's arm, gave Peter a cool smile, and walked on.

The rest of that evening was always to remain a little hazy to Carlotta. She couldn't afterward remember all that had happened. But she did remember that she didn't speak again to Peter, and that she flirted outrageously with Sam Mathews, and she had a very distinct memory of catching Peter's eyes on her many times during the evening. Cold eyes, they were now, and a little puzzled and contemptuous.

Before she left the party she had made a date to meet Sam Mathews the next afternoon, and at five thirty on the following day she and Sam were on their way to the Ritz

Bar. She was sorry now that she had made the appointment with him. She didn't like him at all, and he kept squeezing her arm, pinching her cheeks. But she played up and was bright and amusing, and all the time she wanted to cry and have Peter's arms around her, holding her tight.

After they left the Ritz they walked along Madison Avenue for a while, deciding where to have dinner, and then Carlotta stopped before a shop window with a cry of delight. The window was decorated to represent a penthouse terrace, the furnishings of wicker in a red-white-and-blue color scheme. There were chairs, an attractive low table, and a couch piled with striped cushions.

Carlotta said, "Isn't that lovely? It's just what I want for our terrace." She sighed. "It's horrible to see something you want and not be able to have it. Just imagine, I could sleep on that couch out on the terrace." She turned away with another sigh.

Sam Mathews squeezed her arm again. His face was very red. "Would you really like that, my dear?"

"Don't ask foolish questions," she answered.

"Well, you go in and order it tomorrow. I have an account there. Just charge it to me."

Her eyes danced. Here was a way to show Peter, perhaps hurt him. And Sam Mathews deserved it. He had no right to be running after her. She clapped her hands together. "Do you really mean it? Oh, you darling!"

They reached her apartment at ten thirty. Sam had explained that he had to get home early because his wife thought he was at his club, and Carlotta had pretended great



So this was what life did to one! Snared you into love and then dropped you without warning, crushing you. Charlotta's body was racked with long, shuddering sobs.

disappointment. At her door he pulled her into his arms, and kissed her while she strained away from him.

He said thickly, "Don't you think I deserve something in return for my gift?"

She was suddenly sickened with

the whole business, and she pulled violently away from him. He was angry now, and pulled her roughly toward him again.

Just then Lily came up the stairs, and Carlotta gave a shuddering sigh of relief.

The next morning she was up early, still shuddering with horror at memory of the night before. That hateful beast! She'd show him.

She dressed and went up to the Madison Avenue shop. She ordered the terrace set and charged it to Sam Mathews. The salesman said it would be delivered the following morning.

She went to the tea room, and quite a few times during the day forgot to be pleasant to patrons. There wasn't any use living if she had to go around carrying this pain in her heart, this terrifying knowledge that Peter didn't love her, couldn't ever love her.

The next morning the furniture arrived. First the delivery man came to the door and asked if the furniture was for her. She said, "Yes," and he handed her a bill. "C. O. D.," he said.

"But it's charged!" she exclaimed.

She called up the store. The business office said they were very sorry, but Mr. Mathews hadn't O. K.'d the charge.

She hung up the receiver, her hand shaking, and the fire of her temper broke loose in her, sweeping away reason. She said to the man, writing on a slip of paper, "Deliver the stuff to this address, and you'll get paid for it there. I'll meet you there."

She followed the delivery truck in a taxi, and when they got to the address of the Dunlap-Mathews Agency, she told the men to take the furniture right up. The girl at the desk in the reception looked inquir-

ingly at her, and Carlotta said sweetly, "Some furniture Mr. Mathews ordered."

The girl said hesitantly, "He stepped out for a moment."

But Carlotta was directing the men where to place the furniture. The gay red-white-and-blue wicker looked ridiculously out of place in the subdued reception room. Carlotta's cheeks were flushed, her temper still shooting sparks. Was Peter in? Suppose he came out and saw her? She hoped he would. She'd tell him a thing or two also.

She looked up and saw Sam Mathews standing in the doorway, his face a dull red, his eyes popping.

He sputtered, "What's this? What do you mean——"

Carlotta said much too sweetly, "Pay the man, Mr. Mathews. It's C. O. D."

He blustered, "Take that stuff out of here!"

Two secretaries passing through the reception room stopped to stare, and were soon joined by a man.

Carlotta said, "You'd better pay the man, Mr. Mathews."

He roared again, and then a door opened and Carlotta's heart turned over with a sickening thud when she said Peter coming out, a puzzled expression creasing his forehead.

Her temper suddenly died down, and she felt ill and weak. She held her ground for a moment longer, looking scornfully at Sam Mathews and letting her glance flicker over Peter's face. Then her voice rang out clearly in the room. "This is just a little lesson for you married men and almost-married men who like to play around."

And then she walked out of the office, her head held high to keep the tears from spilling down her cheeks. She went out into the street, not even curious about what

was happening back there in the office, conscious of only one thought—Peter, Peter, how you must despise me. How much more than ever you must despise me now.

She was late when she got to the tea room, and Miss Granville gave her a hard stare, and would have spoken but there were customers about. Carlotta went about her work, white-faced, sick at heart. Would she never be able to forget Peter? Was she destined to go through life loving and unloved? She couldn't stand it!

Miss Gavin came in later in the afternoon. She gave Carlotta a searching look and grunted something. Then she said, "I'm going away. Chicago."

Carlotta said, "Oh, no!"

Miss Gavin nodded. "Going out to live with my cousin. She's all alone now. Her husband died."

Carlotta's eyes were wide with regret. She liked funny old Miss Gavin, and would miss seeing her. She said, "Oh, gosh, I don't know how I'm going to stand this place if you won't be coming in any more."

Miss Gavin said sharply, "You look kind of peaked. What's the matter with you? You ought to go away somewhere."

Carlotta laughed shortly. She said, "Well, if I had time to dust off my yacht I might take a short cruise."

When Miss Gavin left she handed Carlotta an envelope, and a few minutes later when Carlotta had a chance to open it her eyes popped wide in surprise at what she saw. There was a note which read:

Please take that trip as a gift from me. It's the only way I can show you how I appreciate your kindness. I can afford it, so don't feel backward about accepting it. I lost the man I loved many years ago and I've been pretty lonely ever since, and

you've done a lot to cheer me, so it is a pleasure for me to do this. Good-by and good luck.

Folded up inside the note was a check for one thousand dollars!

About nine o'clock that evening Carlotta was sitting out on her terrace in the cool darkness thinking of that amazing fact. One thousand dollars! She could go to Bermuda—that would help her to forget Peter. And she'd have plenty of money left to give her mother, perhaps even to induce her mother to leave John Lake and come to live with her.

For the first time in days she felt almost light-hearted. Just to be able to get out of the city, not to have the fear of running into Peter somewhere—that would be something. Peter, Peter, why can't you love me? Why don't you want this love I offer you?"

She heard voices up on Kenneth's terrace and was glad it was dark and they couldn't see her. She didn't want to have to talk to any one now. She wanted to be alone with her thoughts. And then the voice of Kenneth's companion came clearly down to her, and her heart stopped for a beat while she clutched the arms of her chair. It was the voice of Virginia Davenport, Peter's fiancée! She couldn't mistake that voice, she would know it anywhere.

She was saying, "And the doctor said she must have a change, a sea voyage if possible. Poor mother. I'm so worried about her, Ken." Her voice broke, and when she spoke again she seemed to be holding back tears. "But we can't afford it. I haven't enough money to go ten miles."

Ken said, a little uncomfortably, "Gee, I'm sorry, Virginia. I wish I could help you in some way, but I'm pretty broke myself."

Carlotta was frankly eavesdropping now, tense, wide-eyed.

Virginia said, "Oh, I don't know what to do. I shouldn't be bothering you with all this, but we've known you so long. Ken, isn't there any one you know—I mean, do you think you could borrow the money somewhere?"

"Gosh, Virginia, I don't think so. Everybody I know is in the same boat. Why don't you ask Peter? I should think he could help you out."

She said in a shocked voice, "Oh, Kenneth, I couldn't think of such a thing! It's different asking you because you're an old family friend. And besides Peter hasn't been drawing much money from the business. Please don't mention it to him, Ken. He'd feel horribly hurt that I asked you, and then he might feel obliged to get the money somewhere for me."

They went inside then, and Carlotta waited a while, tensely, until she heard Ken come back out on the terrace alone. She made a sudden decision. She knew it was crazy, but perhaps it would work. She was shaking with excitement, thinking of it.

She whistled up to Kenneth. He leaned over the ledge, and called back to her. She said, "Are you alone?" and he answered, "Yes."

"Come over. I want to talk to you."

A few minutes later they were seated in Carlotta's apartment, and she was saying, "I couldn't help but overhear you and Virginia. I know you'll think I'm crazy, but I want to give you the money for her."

He stared at her aghast. "Are you goofy?"

"I knew you'd think that. But you see, I just came into some money—a thousand dollars—and I

don't need it, and I felt so sorry for her and her poor mother."

That wasn't the truth, and she had difficulty uttering the words. She hated Virginia Davenport, hated her as any girl might hate the sweetheart of the man she loves. But if Virginia could get the money and go away with her mother, she would leave a free field for Carlotta. If she could have one more chance with Peter, with Virginia out of the way, she could win him. Oh, she knew she could.

Ken said, "Well, that's darn decent of you. In fact, I still don't believe it."

"Really, Ken, I mean it. Please take the money and give it to her. But I don't want you to tell her where you got it. She might not take it. Say you borrowed it somewhere, but you've got to promise you won't tell her the truth."

It took quite a bit of persuading on her part to make Kenneth agree. But when she finally convinced him that she was being merely charitable, he consented.

He left finally, and she went back on the terrace, thrilled, excited. She was going to have a chance to get Peter! It was an expensive chance, but it was worth it. She *must* have Peter. And she had a deep conviction that she could make him love her. She'd make him forget that whining, cold-faced girl.

She was so happy she sang to herself, and when, in a few minutes, Bud Jasper dropped in to see her, she was pleasanter than usual.

"I thought you had developed a big hate for me, or something. You've been so cold lately," he said, smiling down at her.

She laughed gayly. "Why, Bud, I like you lots."

He said, suddenly serious, "Really, Carlotta?" He took her hands in

his, squeezing them hard. "I suppose you'll laugh at me, but I'm in love with you—terribly."

She didn't laugh. She felt a great pity, pity and gentleness. She knew what it was to love that way. She said simply, "Oh, Bud."

He took her in his arms, drawing her to him. "Can't you love me, Carlotta? Don't you think you could? I can't stand it if you don't."

She couldn't speak. She remained in his arms, not drawing away, looking at his handsome face, his pleading eyes. Why couldn't she take him? Why must her heart be bound to another man, a man she couldn't have? And Bud loved her so. It was heavenly having a man want only you, give you his whole love.

He pressed his firm lips against hers, and kissed her hungrily, madly, and she felt an answering thrill run through her. She put her arms around his neck and clung to him. She was so hungry for love. Bud was so sweet, so gentle.

Reason came to her finally, and she drew away from him slowly. He said, "You do love me! You do! Don't you, Carlotta?"

She drew her hand over her forehead, her hair. Her lovely brown eyes gazed into his with a puzzled expression. He tried to draw her to him again, but she pushed him away gently. She said, "It's all so puzzling, Bud. I don't know—I don't think it's love. Perhaps—Oh, I don't know, don't ask me."

After he had gone she thought, "I'm getting so I don't even know my own mind. I love Peter, only Peter. But if I couldn't have him, I guess I'd want Bud."

She led a fairly quiet life for the next couple of weeks, seeing no one but Bud and Kenneth and Lily.

Sometimes she'd think, "I'm crazy, giving away a thousand dollars, all for a silly scheme that'll probably get me nowhere." And then: "But it's worth it. It's worth anything if it'll get me Peter."

Ken had told her that he had given the money to Virginia, and she had been overwhelmed with gratitude. She had told him that she and her mother were leaving for Bermuda on the 18th of October. The eighteenth came and went and Carlotta breathed a deep sigh. She had the field to herself now. She didn't know how long Virginia would be away, but she would make good use of her absence.

On the evening of the twentieth she called Peter at his apartment. Her hand trembled as she held the receiver and listened to his voice saying, "Well, this is a pleasant surprise."

She said, "I thought perhaps you might take pity on a thirsty girl and give her a cocktail."

"Fine, I'd love to. Come on up and I'll have one ready for you," he said at once.

She wore a red wool suit and a pert red hat, and Peter's eyes widened with admiration when he saw her. She tried to calm the excited hammering of her heart when he took her hand in his for a moment. She was seeing Peter again! Seeing him, being in the same room with him, listening to his deep, thrilling voice.

For minutes she could do nothing but utter banalities, look stupidly at him. But soon his fine, casual manner, his pleasant cheerful voice steadied her, and she was almost her old self. She sipped her cocktail slowly. She didn't really want it.

"You know, it's nice seeing you again. I've missed that silly little laugh of yours, and those big brown



"Can't you love me, Carlotta? Don't you think you could? I can't stand it if you don't." Carlotta remained in his arms. Why couldn't she take him? Why must her heart be bound to another man, a man she couldn't have?

eyes," Peter murmured, watching her.

She laughed with a catch in her throat, her brown eyes large and bright. "I rather like seeing you again, too." Oh, Peter, you don't know what it means, seeing you again. You don't know how I've ached for you, cried for you. What can I do to make you love me, make you want to keep me with you forever?

She said, looking down into her cocktail, trying to make her voice casual, "How's Virginia?"

"She's fine," he replied.

Her fingers tightened around the stem of her glass. Wasn't he going to tell her that Virginia had gone away?

There was silence for a moment between them, then she said, laughing a little shamefacedly, "How's Mr. Mathews?"

"Say, I meant to ask you—what the deuce was all that rumpus in the office that day? He almost went crazy. Had a devil of a time straightening things out with that shop."

"It serves him right. He promised me the stuff and then tried to get out of it because I wouldn't let him make love to me. Well, I guess he won't try that again. If he wants to make love to some one, why doesn't he stay home with his wife?"

Peter laughed a little ruefully, shaking his head. "Carlotta, Carlotta, when are you going to reform?"

She said nothing, sipping at her drink, gazing at him over the rim of the glass. If he would kiss her again, take her in his arms, she'd make him forget Virginia.

She put down her glass and said in a soft voice, "Peter——" And then the phone rang.

She sat biting her underlip while he answered it. She heard him say, "Of course, come right up," and her nails bit into her palm. She wasn't going to be alone with him, then.

He came back and stood before her a little uncertainly. He said, "Well, Carlotta, we'll have to see more of each other."

She got to her feet, pain tearing at her heart. She said, "Oh, you're busy. You're having company."

"Well, yes. You see, Virginia's coming up. I'd ask you to stay, but we have some business matters to discuss."

She was staring at him, white-faced. "Virginia!" she cried. "I thought she had gone away!"

The expression of his eyes changed. The pleasantness was all gone from them. "What do you mean? What made you think that?" he asked, curtly.

"Why—why, Kenneth Bowers told me," she said desperately.

His eyes were cold and angry now. "I don't like your prying into my affairs." He bit the words off sharply.

For a moment she stood staring at him, aghast. And then anger washed over her in waves of heat. She tried to stem the rising tide of her temper, but it was out of control. She continued to face him, her eyes flashing sparks now, her chin set defiantly. The force of her anger made her weak, and she sat down again in her chair. Her lovely curved lips were drawn into a tight line. "I'm staying."

"I must ask you to leave," he said coldly.

She didn't answer him, and he made a motion toward her, when the doorbell rang. He glared angrily at her, and went to the door, and Carlotta heard Virginia say in

her thin, cultured voice, "Hello, Peter dear."

She came into the room and saw Carlotta, and her back stiffened perceptibly. Her lips looked thinner than ever. She said to Peter, her haughty glance sweeping past Carlotta, "I'm sorry. I'll leave."

But Carlotta was out of her chair, and blocking her way to the door. "No, you don't. You're going to stay here for a while. I have a perfectly good reason for wanting to find out a few things, but we won't go into that now. First of all, why are you still in town? I thought you were supposed to leave a few days ago."

Virginia turned to Peter, her eyebrows lifted, her face pale with anger. "Is there any reason why I must listen to this person?" she asked him.

"Carlotta——" he began angrily.

But she interrupted him. "I'm having my say first." She turned to Virginia. "I heard you talking to Kenneth Bowers about borrowing money to go away——"

Virginia broke in wildly, "Peter! She's mad. Get her out of here. Of all the outrageous lies!"

Peter went over and grasped Carlotta's wrist roughly. "You seem to have a habit of making trouble. You even stoop to telling lies to gain your ends. I don't know what your purpose is, but it seems to be making trouble between Virginia and me."

She wrenched away from him furiously. "All right, if that's the way you're going to be. Ask her where she borrowed that thousand dollars for her trip."

Peter looked at her scornfully. "If it will quiet you and get you out of here, I'll tell you. I gave it to her."

For a moment Carlotta stared at him, then she broke into laughter, high, hysterical laughter. Then she looked at Virginia. "All right, you win," she said wildly. "I thought I was clever, but my sweet sister-under-the-skin plays a better game than I do." And then she was running madly out of the apartment, slamming the door after her, running down the hall, while tears blinded her eyes, and hysteria mounted within her.

CHAPTER IV.

On the way home she managed to quiet her screaming nerves, and composed herself to a state of dull apathy. She wouldn't think about anything. She couldn't. It was all too horrible.

When she arrived home, Lily and Ken and Bud were there, and she was grateful for their presence that saved her from the ordeal of thinking. Bud was so devoted and tender that she felt a little of her self-assurance returning, a little of the pain and hurt dissolving.

The next day was Sunday, and she got up early. She couldn't stay in bed, couldn't sleep. She looked up Virginia's address in the Brooklyn telephone book, and an hour later was walking down a quiet Brooklyn street and ringing the bell of the Davenport house.

Virginia opened the door and gasped when she saw her. Then she said coldly, "Come in."

Carlotta followed her into a living room, her teeth clenched, hands balled into fists.

Virginia turned and faced her. She didn't ask her to be seated. She said, "You understand I'm not anxious to have you stay here longer than is necessary. I wouldn't have let you in but I was afraid you

might make a scene, and I don't want my house disturbed. What is it you want?"

Carlotta said, "I want the money you got from Kenneth Bowers. It was my money. I gave it to him for you. Never mind why."

"That's a lie!" Virginia exclaimed.

Carlotta shrugged wearily. "Ask him," she said.

Virginia ran from the room, and a minute later Carlotta heard her swiftly dialing the telephone.

When she came back she stood inside the door, pale and shaken, her glance resting bitterly on Carlotta.

"That's a nice trick you played on me," she said.

"I want the money," Carlotta said abruptly.

"I won't give it to you!" Virginia's mouth clamped into a thin, tight line. "I haven't got it, and I wouldn't give it to you if I did."

"Oh, yes, you will," Carlotta told her calmly. "You'll give it to me now. Unless you want Peter to know the truth. I'll give him proof this time."

"You common little beast!" Virginia cried and hurried from the room.

When she returned, she handed Carlotta a roll of bills. There was a pinched look around her nose, and her mouth was a straight, grim line.

Carlotta deliberately counted the money. Then she turned on her heel and said, "Good day, Miss Davenport," and left the house.

When she was back in New York she called her mother, asking her to meet her, and a half hour later they were sitting on a bench on Riverside Drive.

"How's everything, mom?" Carlotta asked anxiously. "Are you all right?"

Her mother nodded, patting her hand. "Yes, Lottie. Everything's

all right, only I miss you. I wish you'd come back."

"I can't do that, mom. Listen, I have good news for you. A funny old lady who used to come into the tea room went away, and she gave me a present before she left. A thousand dollars! What do you think of that?"

"No!" Mrs. Lake gasped.

Carlotta nodded, showing her the money. "I'm going to take a little trip. I'm all in. Do you want to come with me?"

"You know I can't, Lottie."

Carlotta sighed. "No, I suppose you won't. Well, look, I'll give you half the money. I want you to keep it and use it if you need it. But don't give it to him! I think I'll go to Bermuda on the next boat, and I'll call you as soon as I get back."

That evening she told Lily her plans, and though Lily was glad of her good fortune, her eyes filled with tears.

"Don't be a goose, Lily. You'd think I was going away for years the way you act. I'll be gone only a couple of weeks."

The next morning at the tea room Carlotta boldly approached Miss Granville. The possession of the money gave her a feeling of confidence and independence. She wasn't afraid of Miss Granville now.

She said, "I'd like to take two weeks' vacation, starting to-day."

Miss Granville raised her eyebrows. "Really?" she said.

"I've been feeling sort of run down," Carlotta went on. "I really need a change, a rest. Will it be all right?"

Miss Granville shrugged her lean shoulders. "If you must, you must," she said. "Only your position may not be waiting for you when you come back." And she turned on her heel, terminating the conversation.



Carlotta broke into laughter, high, hysterical laughter. "All right, you win," she told Virginia wildly. "I thought I was clever, but my sweet sister-under-the-skin plays a better game than I do."

Carlotta left hurriedly, and went to a steamship agency. The next Bermuda boat left in two days, but there was a cruise boat going to South America that stopped at Bermuda. It left the next afternoon,



and Carlotta said, "That will do," and booked passage on it.

Next she went shopping in the Fifth Avenue stores. That was fun! It was the first time in her life she had been able to buy what she wanted, where she wanted. It was

thrilling, and added to the exciting anticipation of her trip it was almost too much to bear. She bought two lovely evening dresses—one frothy white, and one a soft coral-pink. She bought lovely, fragile evening sandals, and a long taffeta evening wrap; linen and knitted dresses for the daytime, a wisp of a blue bathing suit, a large beach hat, beach pajamas.

She was flushed and tired and happy when she had completed her purchases.

When she got home she was too excited and tired to prepare dinner, so she had a glass of milk and a sandwich.

The stores couldn't deliver her purchases until the next morning; therefore, there was very little packing she could do now. But she got out her bags, and neatly folded and put into them what little of her old clothes she was taking with her.

In the midst of her packing the doorbell rang, and when she opened the door Bud and Ken swooped into the room, crying, "Surprise!"

She laughed. "What's up?"

"So you were trying to sneak out on us without telling us you were going away, eh? Well, Lily broke the news and we came over to stage a little going-away celebration. Lily said she'd try to get off a little early this evening," Ken told her.

"I'm awfully glad for you, Carlotta. But I hate seeing you go," Bud put in. His eyes were large and sorrowful, and Carlotta felt a stab of pity for him.

The boys had brought their victrola with them, and the makings for cocktails, and soon their gay laughter was riding above the waves of music. When Lily arrived she was greeted with shouts and hugs, and soon after that Bud took Carlotta out onto the terrace.

He was silent for a while, holding her hand in his. Then he lifted it to his lips, kissing each finger separately. He looked long into her eyes. "I wish I could understand you, Carlotta. I wish I could know how you really feel about me. I haven't got much to offer you, but I'm getting more work all the time. Carlotta, promise you won't forget me while you're away. Won't you give me some hope?"

She pulled his face down to hers and kissed him gently. "You're one of the nicest persons I know, Bud. And I'm sure I'll miss you. But I can't tell about things right now. I'm all very mixed up. I don't love anybody else." Something in her heart protested at that, but she said to herself fiercely, "I don't love Peter any more. I hate him, hate him. How could I love him after the way he's acted?"

"Then there's a chance for me?"

"Don't ask me now, Bud. When I come back—well, ask me then."

He pulled her into his arms and kissed her hungrily, and again she thought, "He's sweet, he's nice, he loves me. Why can't I be content with this?"

But she pushed him away, laughing a little shakily, and ran back into the apartment.

The next morning she was in a fever of excitement. Her packages came from the stores, and she had scarcely time to think between packing and dressing. Her boat sailed at three o'clock, and at two Bud arrived to take her to the dock. He had brought her a corsage of gardenias to wear, and her eyes filled with tears at his thoughtfulness.

It was a clear, cold day, with a bright sun shining, and Carlotta's emotions were torn between happy excitement, and regret at leaving her friends.

She had never been on a boat before, and she ran around inspecting everything, Bud following soberly. There were flowers in her stateroom from Lily and Ken, and Carlotta said, "Oh, Bud, I can't stand it. You've all been so darn nice to me," and burst into tears.

He patted her shoulder awkwardly, and then it was time for visitors to go ashore. He kissed her, and said, "Please think about me a little while you're away, Carlotta. I'll be thinking of you all the time."

She watched him go through a blur of tears, and after a while realized that the boat was in motion. She stayed in her stateroom, drying her eyes, powdering her face, and finally went up on the promenade deck. She stood at the rail, looking down into the churning water, feeling the wind whip against her face, blow tendrils of her hair out and whip them back into her face.

She laughed aloud with the sheer joy of living, and the excitement of it all, and a man standing next to her at the rail said, "Tell me what's so funny. I need a laugh."

Startled, she turned to him, a sharp retort on her lips, but she checked herself. He was young, dressed in loose tweeds, and his face was nice. There was nothing offensive in his glance—just pleasant friendliness, so she laughed again and said, "I'll tell you a secret. This is the first time I've ever been on a boat, and I didn't know it would affect me this way. It's so—well, exciting and exhilarating."

He nodded. "I know how you feel. I guess I felt that way once, too. But I've made so many trips on this boat I've gotten over the thrill."

"I don't see how you could. Are you going to Bermuda too?"

He shook his head. "No. I'm on

my way to South America. My father's in business down there and I go down every year to visit the family."

She said, looking out to where the sparkling water met the blue sky, "I don't think I'd ever get tired of traveling. But perhaps that's because I've never been anywhere outside of New York."

"You'd be a swell person to take places. So many people are so bored with everything that it makes them quite boring too."

She said nothing, and after a while he went on, "Look here, my name's Gregory Blair."

She said primly, "How do you do? I'm Carlotta Andrews, and don't call me Lottie."

They walked around the deck together, and then he went with her while she arranged for a deck chair. He had it placed next to his.

He said later, "Shall we have a cocktail before dinner?" and she said, "I think that would be very cozy."

They went to the smoking room, and sat in a tiny booth, and Gregory ordered two dry Martinis.

"I'm glad you spoke to me," Carlotta told him. "I wouldn't have known what to do. I'd have been darn lonely if you hadn't."

He smiled at her, and the admiration in his eyes made her warm and tingly. "I don't think you'd have been lonely. Beautiful girls aren't ever lonely on boats."

"You're much too kind, sir."

He sipped his cocktail, his eyes on her face. "I *would* be going to South America, though. Just my usual luck."

She was about to answer, when she heard a voice in the next booth that made her heart skip a beat. She put down her glass, spilling a little of the liquid. The wooden partition was just high enough to hide from view the occupants of the adjoining booth, but the voice came to her clearly.

It was Virginia Davenport's voice, and she was saying, "I called Peter before the boat sailed, and told him I had decided to take mother on today's boat instead of waiting until next week."

Carlotta was gripping her glass with tense fingers, and when Gregory started to speak she silenced him with a lifted hand.

She had missed the answer of Virginia's companion, and she strained her ears for the next words.

Virginia said, "He doesn't know you're on this boat, does he?"

Then very distinctly Carlotta heard a man's voice say, "Good heavens, no. I told him I was taking a trip for a couple of weeks, but hadn't decided where. He'll just think it an accident that we met."

And Carlotta sat there listening to the echoes of that voice, her heart pounding painfully. The man was Sam Mathews!

TO BE CONTINUED.





Heavenly Arms

By Barbara Whitmore

CHERRY STANWOOD looked up from the book she was reading as Peter barked excitedly from his point of observation, the window seat.

"Hush!" But Peter would not hush. With all the vim and vigor that an excitable young wire-haired fox terrier contains within his compact body, Peter protested the passing of somebody on the street.

Cherry tossed aside her book and bore down menacingly upon the yelping dog, snowy-white with two black patches on his back and a black-tipped left ear. He simply must stop this awful noise when people went by.

"Hush, Peter! Keep still!" she insisted as her hand went out to rest on his head, and her eyes looked out the window.

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A quick stab of pain went through her. Her cheeks grew pale. She might have known! Peter always raised such ructions when Brian Cutting walked his Scotch terrier within the range of Peter's vision, and Peter could see halfway across the park which stretched for blocks directly across the street from the tiny bungalow in which Cherry lived.

Every time she saw Brian Cutting she felt hot and cold by swift turns. Only nine months ago—yes, not even a year, he had come often to the house, despite her mother's disapproval. He had insisted that he was in love with her, and she with him. She knew she had been in love with him—oh, so much. Almost enough to do what he asked of her, but not quite enough.

But he couldn't have loved her as he said he did. Otherwise he would not have gone away that night, gone in an outburst of temper that had never cooled to permit him to again smile or speak to her. Only bow and raise his hat—so studiously polite!

He simply would not believe that her mother was as ill as she professed to be. That Cherry could not leave her to marry him, particularly when mother so strenuously disapproved. Why had mother disapproved? Now, as Cherry looked back, she understood much that she had not, nine months ago. Mother had insisted that a girl of nineteen did not know her own mind. Not well enough to tie herself to a man for the rest of her life.

"Mother says we may become engaged, but we can't marry for a couple of years," she had told Brian that night. Always she had obeyed her mother. Lonesome, widowed mother who had idolized her, and been such a marvelous companion!

"Your mother is one of those women who never wants to give up her daughter to a man!" Brian had retorted hotly. She remembered how his brown eyes had snapped. "She will let us become engaged. And then she will break the engagement, somehow. There will always be ill health for you to guard against; always your will must be bent to hers so as not to excite her. Cherry! I thought you had some sense!"

"You must not talk about my mother that way!" Cherry had immediately and gallantly sprung to her defense. "I love her dearly. It's not her fault that she has a weak heart, and that I can't have all the good times here that other girls have at their homes. And," she added thoughtfully, "there is the question of money."

"You're just blind, Cherry, to what she's doing to you," Brian had insisted. "You just put your foot down and marry me, and you'll see that her heart won't fail her, or anything else."

"But Doctor Lenten told me that she was really very ill," Cherry insisted in return. "You're just prejudiced, Brian. If you really loved me, you would wait until mother thought I was old enough."

"I do love you, but I want to marry you now, not when we're older and all the romance and thrill has worn off everything."

Even now, thinking of those words, a quiver of delight flowed through her slim little body. He hadn't loved her, though. Not really. For when she had refused, when she had definitely made him understand that she would not elope with him, he had gone, throwing back over his shoulder the cruel, cutting words, "Some day when it's

too late you'll be sorry, for you're going to realize that I'm right."

That night after he left she had cried herself to sleep, insisting to herself that she hated Brian Cutting and everything about him—even his wavy brown hair, and his broad grin that showed his even white teeth, and the tender strength of his arms. And his kisses! It was hard to forget them, but she learned to. She knew, a few weeks later when she saw him with Greta Seymour, that she hated him.

A sudden bad spell of her mother's had taken her thoughts from Brian Cutting. Two months later Brian's engagement to Greta was announced. For a few hours Cherry felt as though the world had tumbled about her ears. Her heart would surely never beat the same after that. He had loved her! And a couple of months after their quarrel he had become engaged to another girl.

If that was love, mother had been right. Young people did not know enough about life and love to decide such an important question at her age.

Yet, as the days passed, having been told her mother was demanding and selfish, Cherry found herself watching the development of little requests and big demands on her mother's part. She realized that she was being kept from young people. She suddenly realized, too, that she did not want only the companionship of her charming mother, but of people her own age as well.

And then mother was well and up again, as well as she would be with a weak heart. The doctor had insisted upon a trip to the South for the winter. Mother had complained about the expense, but at last they had gone. Just a week after they had been installed in the hotel

mother had suddenly taken ill and passed quietly away.

Cherry had been miserable. Her conscience bothered her because she had doubted her mother's actions toward her. Suppose she had misjudged? There had been so little time to really be sure. Had mother been selfish?

Back to the tiny bungalow Cherry Stanwood had gone. The kindly lawyer, a man in his early thirties, came and explained many things. When he left that afternoon Cherry was stunned with the realization of what her life could have been.

There was money—plenty for them to have had a maid, for travel and lovely clothes, for a car, for good times. Cherry could have gone to college. She could even have gone abroad for the summer, after she graduated from high school, with the other girls who had gone as a present from proud parents. Mother had said there wasn't the money! Mother had not wanted Cherry to leave her!

Slowly, in the weeks that passed, Cherry adjusted herself to her new life. She adjusted her thoughts to the realization that her mother had meant well, but had been selfish and self-centered, loving Cherry devotedly and clinging to her. And the realization that she had to admit that to herself made her hate Brian Cutting all the more. "Some day when it's too late you'll be sorry, for you're going to realize that I'm right." And it was too late. Brian was engaged to Greta Seymour.

With a pang Cherry had realized how few friends she had. None of the young crowd were really her friends. They had been school-mates, but always she had hurried home to do this or that with mother each afternoon.

Dances, theatricals, the activities of the Community House and the Junior Woman's Club. They were not part of her life. She longed for them, and did not know whom to go to, asking the favor of nomination into their happy midst. Everybody was polite, but distant. Somehow she felt she did not fit in their laughing scheme of life.

Peter had been a drastic step. Mother had always hated animals. Cherry could never have a pet. So, no longer under restrictions, she had bought Peter, put his pedigree in the safe deposit box, and proceeded to make friends with him. He was a darling. He was the friendliest thing, and so proud! He walked beside her as snooty as the king of dogs.

But he had taken an ardent dislike to Brian Cutting and his Scotch terrier the first time he had seen them, and there was no letting up of that dislike. Cherry wondered if it were not because the sensitive Peter could so quickly detect her moods. He might have felt the wild, burning anger that swelled up within her every time she saw Brian. Yes, she decided, that was it.

She hated Brian and Peter realized it, and that was why he barked so lustily when Brian passed through the park. For, unless Brian walked his dog in the park, Peter never saw him. Brian didn't pass the tiny bungalow except in his car, on his way to visit Greta Seymour.

Going back to her seat, Cherry took up the book and tried to concentrate, but it was of no avail. Again the sight of Brian had roused stormy feelings within her. She hated him! But though she fervently so assured herself, she wished that he were not engaged to Greta. Then—she might speak to him. And if she spoke? Would he

be glad? Would he sweep her into his arms, his eyes burning into hers, his lips assuring her that he still loved her and wanted her? She shook her golden-blond head. Such ideas! Of course, she wouldn't speak to him, even if he weren't engaged to Greta. Why should she? She didn't love him. He didn't love her. All his words of love had been lies, his kisses but a passing fancy.

Ogden Rees, the lawyer, telephoned to invite Cherry to dinner at the club in the neighboring town where he lived with a married sister. Of course, she would love to go. Suddenly she realized that she must begin to determine what part Ogden was to play in her life. He was attractive. He was charming. He was all that any young girl would ask, and surely he loved her though he had not yet said so.

There was something in the way he had looked at her the last two evenings, the way he had held her close as they danced, the way his lips had lingered on hers when he kissed her good night. The question would come—soon—and what would she answer?

She hated Brian with his dancing brown eyes, his wavy hair that she loved to run her restless fingers through. She hated him for his plea that she elope, and then his denunciation and stony silence. She hated his ability to make her laugh, to bring the happy side of life to her.

Married to Ogden she would forget Brian. Ogden was taller and thinner than Brian, his hair a lighter brown, his eyes a gray-blue. He smiled with a queer little quirk to his lips that was individual and in no way would remind her of Brian, and his eyes were always serious, but eagerly alight when they rested upon her.

Yes, Ogden would soon ask her to

marry him. And, because she hated Brian she would say "Yes," and would be happy. As happy as any girl could be who had loved once as she had loved Brian, and had then torn out that love by the roots and thrown it away. You never loved the same after that, but the love that remained in her—that love was Ogden's.

They returned from the club immediately after dinner. Cherry knew that the moment had come. As he stopped his car in the driveway of the bungalow the maid opened the door and Peter came dashing out, wildly barking his delight at her return.

He tore to the side of the car, and bounced around while Ogden got out to open the other door and help Cherry out.

There was a scream of brakes quickly applied. Cherry looked swiftly through the back window of the car. A car was stopped in the street directly in front of the bungalow—a car she well knew, and beside it, in the road, lay a still white form that was Peter. And then a man was bending over him, the man whose car had run him down.

In the swift thoughts that came to her two things were apparent. In his wild enthusiasm Peter had forgotten his orders never to cross the street, and had dashed joyously across the road. Following that thought had come the blinding flash—again Brian had been the one to hurt her. He had run over her dog.

Unassisted, Cherry flew from the car and out into the street. She knelt beside the still figure with a tiny trickle of blood coming from his mouth. Yes, he was breathing. But what always happened? Internal injuries! You had to rush him to the veterinary to learn that there was no hope, and leave him to

the gentle ministrations of the doctor.

She looked up into the eyes of Brian Cutting. They were so tender, so pathetic.

"I'm terribly sorry, Cherry," she heard his voice say, and it did sound sorry. "I wouldn't have done it for the world."

"No?" Suddenly hysterical anger filled her. She knew she should not speak, but she did, words that came tumbling out in a quick torrent. "So sorry! Of course! Sorry I suppose that you killed my faith in my mother! Sorry that you didn't drag me from her side during her last days on earth. Sorry that, when at last I get a darling like Peter, you ruthlessly run over him! Sorry!"

A stern voice beside her spoke sharply. "Cherry!" She looked up into the steely, gray-blue eyes of Ogden Rees. She caught her lower lip between her teeth and struggled for control. His hands were on her shoulders now, lifting her up.

"Come. Go back to the car. We'll take Peter to the veterinary."

Without another word she did as he bade. She left Brian standing in the road, looking after their speeding car. Her breath caught in a sob. Brian was sorry! How funny! Brian had taken love from her, had taken everything she loved and cherished—and left her. A prayer rose to her lips, that she would be happy with Ogden.

But Ogden did not propose that night. The excitement of Peter's accident postponed what Cherry knew would have been a declaration of his love. He brought her back to the house. Peter, groggily staggering, had walked slowly by her side. Ogden had left almost immediately, admonishing her to get to bed quickly and have a good night's rest.



His arms were about her. His lips brushed tender kisses over her cheeks, her eyes, her throat. "Darling, I'll try to make you forget those cruel things I said if you'll forgive me and tell me you still love me," he said.

But how could she rest with Brian's tender brown eyes forever coming before her, and his voice saying, "I'm so sorry!"

"I hate him!" she assured herself. And then she wondered. Did she? But he was engaged to Greta. It was all over. She was silly. She must not even think of him. She must think of Ogden, and be

sure that nothing interfered when he came the next evening, for surely, then he would propose.

That kiss when he had taken her in his arms just before leaving—it had told her that there was more than casual affection in his heart for her. But though she realized it, she had been unable to respond in like vein. Brian. Peter. "I'm

so sorry!" Tender brown eyes. They all had stood in the way.

The next morning while Cherry was sitting at the breakfast table in striking black-and-gold lounging pajamas, the doorbell rang. The maid opened the door, and the next moment Cherry heard Brian's voice and saw him step into the living room, then come quickly toward her

as she braced herself in her chair. She looked at him steadily.

"Good morning, Cherry," he said quickly. "I stopped in to see how bad the damage was last night."

There was a growl from under the table and Peter, still lame from the blow, crawled out into view.

The relief on Brian's face was sincere.

"Gosh, I'm glad it's no worse than that," he assured Cherry, and then looked from her to the dog. His eyes grew larger as he looked. If a dog had a black eye, Peter had one, and a swollen jaw, and, as Brian laughed and Peter growled again, a broken tooth revealed itself in his upper jaw.

A hot, angry flush flooded Cherry's face as Brian threw back his head and continued to laugh.

"I don't see the joke," she assured him in an angry voice. "I fail to see anything funny about almost killing the dog."

He immediately choked down his laughter and his eyes, filled with tears of amusement, met hers.

"Cherry! He's funny! Really, dear, just look at him. He looks for all the world like a prize fighter the morning after a knock-out.

Cherry knew she should be angry, but she couldn't be. That was so exactly what Peter looked like.

Her eyes twinkled but she kept her lips firm. She could not look at him though, for her heart was softening toward him. He had always had the happy faculty of making her laugh, of showing her the funny side of things. And here he was, doing that, and in a few moments he would be gone—to Greta.

"Come here, old fella," she heard Brian coaxing, and knew that Peter was disloyal. His growls had ceased. He had gone to Brian and was accepting his petting with a tail

wagging in delight. It would never be the same, not now that Peter had been won by Brian.

"He's a grand pup, Cherry," she heard Brian say. "I bet he and my hound would have a good time together. May I bring Bounce over some evening soon?"

Her eyes flew up to meet his. Could he bring Bounce? What would Greta say? Was he still engaged?

For a long moment they stood facing each other, neither speaking. Then Brian shifted his gaze, and spoke softly.

"I owe you an apology, Cherry. Something I said a long time ago. I'm terribly sorry. I was wrong. Last night when you—mentioned it, I realized how cruel I had been. I hadn't meant to be cruel then. I wouldn't hurt you for anything, dear. I love you too much."

Her blue eyes grew deeper. She wondered if she had heard right. He must have seen the doubt on her face for he continued, his eyes pleading with her to understand. "It's you, Cherry, or nobody. I tried to kid myself that there could be somebody else, but—there'll never be any one but you."

"Oh, Brian," was all she could manage to whisper. He did love her, after all! He had always loved her. And she did love him. She knew now that she had never really hated him, though she had so convincingly told herself so. She loved him!

His arms were about her now. His lips brushed tender kisses over her cheeks, her eyes, her throat.

"Darling, I'll try to make you forget those cruel things I said if you'll forgive me and tell me you still love me."

"They were cruel, Brian, but there was some truth in them," she

admitted honestly. "And I do love you, Brian, so very much," she murmured tremulously.

His lips were on hers then—tender, thrilling, rapturous, in a kiss that left her breathless, and that she found she had not forgotten at all. Never could she forget!

Her arms clung about his neck and she strained close to him, again

feeling that blissful strength of his arms about her.

There was a heaving sigh, a thump, and a weight against her foot. Peter, quick to detect Cherry's mood, had laid himself beside them in his favorite attitude of contentment, with his head on her foot. There was really no reason why he should dislike Brian now.



OF ALL THE WORLD

OF all the world I've chosen you
As fairest of the fair,
And ask no greater boon of life
Than just your fate to share,
To follow gladly in your steps,
No matter where they wend,
And be your comrade through the years
Unto the journey's end.

Of all the world you are to me
The measure of all bliss;
I find my rapture in your arms,
My joy within your kiss,
My sunshine in your radiant smiles,
Which ray the heights of gain;
My balm and solace and reward,
Transcending loss and pain.

FRANKLIN PIERCE CARRIGAN.



Golden Moment

By
Genevieve
Harris

I LOVE you, Enid!" Philip Avery had brought his car to a halt where the road curved at the edge of the lake that lay like a sheet of silver in the moonlight. He gazed upon the rippling waves as he repeated, softly, the words he had vowed not to say, "I love you."

The eyes of the girl beside him were dark and troubled as she studied the clean-cut profile of his serious young face. She wasn't entirely surprised at his declaration, but she was sorry he had made it. Their friendship had been so sweet. Why must love enter in, to destroy it?

"You know I'm engaged to some one else," Enid said gently. "You have known about Rodney since you first met me."

"Knowing that you

love some one else, that you're going to marry him, hasn't kept me from loving you," Philip said. His voice had a queer huskiness. Of course, I knew there was no hope for me, and I intended to go away without telling you how I felt. But I'm not ashamed of my love." He smiled wistfully. "Just accept my devotion as an offering for which I'm asking nothing in return."

"I can't bear to have you hurt," Enid protested.

"That isn't your fault," he assured her. "You must not blame yourself. You are the finest, most honorable girl in the world. It's only that——"

"That you are romantic, Philip. You have idealized me. I'm not at all what you think I am. But you don't know how I prize your friendship. I wanted to keep it always. When you are a famous author, I'll boast that I read your first novel in manuscript!"

"You know I'll never be a famous author!" His face clouded. "That novel is simply drivel. The characters are all wooden—except the heroine. She's real, because she's *you*. I have nothing to offer you," he went on, "but I had to let you know I adore you."

"I like you so much, Philip," Enid said thoughtfully. Her dark eyes traveled over the lake to the far-off, lonely horizon. "You've given me a new and broader outlook on life, somehow. You've made the little world I've lived in seem so narrow." She had met Philip seven months before in the office where she worked as secretary to her uncle, who was publisher of the *Gazette*, leading newspaper in the small city. Philip had joined the staff as a reporter. He was not long out of college, eager, alert, and ambitious to

make this connection the start of a career as a writer.

Enid was engaged to Rodney Graham, son of the president of the Graham Woolen Mills, a handsome young sportsman who was rated as the best "catch" among the eligible bachelors in the town's society. The date for their wedding had not been definitely set, and Enid had continued her work as her uncle's secretary because she enjoyed it. How much of that enjoyment came from this stimulating friendship with Philip Avery she did not pause to question.

Their friendship had for a long time been quite free from any romantic undercurrent. It had begun when Philip, who wrote movie reviews for the paper in addition to his other duties, had fallen into the habit of asking Enid to go with him to cover the films. Sometimes Enid wrote bits of gossip for his column. His invitations had been given casually, and accepted in a matter-of-fact way. It all seemed part of their work for the paper.

Then Philip had told her of a novel he was writing, and after that had read to her many chapters of his work.

But all this had had little to do with that Enid considered the more important phase of her life—her engagement to Rodney and their plans for a honeymoon trip and for their home together. They intended to go to Italy to visit Rodney's sister, who was married to an Italian count. Upon their return they planned to live in a beautiful home which Rodney's father promised to buy for them.

It is probable that if Enid had not met Philip at the office, their paths would never have crossed, for Philip cared little for society. Social rank meant less than nothing to

him, a fact which surprised Enid, who had been brought up with a high regard for one's position in society. Through his influence, however, she was gradually coming to judge people by new standards.

But now their friendship had taken this disturbing turn, which must bring it to an inevitable end. Enid sighed. Why couldn't a man and a girl be friends without one or the other falling in love?

"You needn't go away on my account," she said. "I'm going to resign my position soon." Why couldn't things have gone on serenely until she left?

"I couldn't bear to stay in this town, knowing you belong to some one else."

"So you will go away and forget me." Her voice held a note of sadness. "But I'll remember you always, as my friend."

"I'll not be able to forget you, I'm afraid." Philip leaned toward her, seeking to look into her eyes. He put his hand under her chin, lifting her face toward him. There was a breathless moment as she realized that he was going to kiss her.

Their lips touched, and it seemed that the world stood still. They were caught in an ecstasy which was like a devouring flame. It was as if their friendship, the deep understanding which had been slowly growing between them, suddenly blazed into a love which could not be denied.

"Enid, beloved, we were meant for each other," Philip whispered when the long, breathless kiss ended. Something in Enid's heart cried, "This is your golden moment—it may never come again. This man is your destined mate. There can be no one else for you."

But she drew away, frightened by the force of her own emotion. What

was this madness which threatened to upset all her bright plans? Rodney's ring was on her finger. What kind of girl was she to let herself be so stirred by another man's kisses, a man who could never be anything to her, who lived in an entirely different world?

"Don't!" she cried, as Philip sought to draw her to him again. "I think we're both moonstruck."

He let her go at once. "Moonstruck? I thought we had shared a taste of heaven."

"Or touched an electric wire! Philip, where did you learn to kiss like that? Or have you been seeing too many movies?"

She glanced at him and saw his face grow set and stern. If she had struck him, she could not have hurt him more deeply than she had by this flippant comment, she realized.

"Did it mean so little to you?" he asked. Enid fought back a wild impulse to draw his head to hers again, to wipe out with her own kisses that hurt, baffled look. But she sat still, looking straight ahead.

Philip started his car. "I think this moonlight is dangerous," he said grimly. "Shall I take you home?"

They talked only of casual things as they drove to Enid's home. When they parted, Philip said, "Forgive me for being a romantic fool."

Enid's eyes were filled with tears. She did not trust herself to answer him, but turned and went blindly into the house.

Her mother was waiting for her. Enid passed her with only a word of greeting and went into her own room, where, for a few minutes, she struggled to regain her composure. When she came into the living room again, only the heightened color in her cheeks betrayed her agitation.

"What are you reading, mummy?" she asked, as she stooped to kiss her mother's tired face. How much her mother had sacrificed for her, and how greatly the older woman's heart was set upon Enid's marriage to Rodney Graham! It would enable her to take her place again in the social circle to which she had belonged as a girl.

"This magazine has just come," Mrs. Evans said. "Isn't this an exquisite wedding gown?" Enid looked over her mother's shoulder at the picture of a beautiful society bride. Other pictures on the page portrayed smart people in smart surroundings.

An advertisement showed the interior of a beautiful home. Surely one could be happy, living in surroundings like those, owning delicate, precious things! Such things would be hers, when she was Rodney Graham's wife.

Was she to set aside all these dreams, crush her mother's plans, just for that little moment of strange happiness which she had experienced in Philip's arms? How little Philip could ever understand what it meant to a girl to live in the wrong part of town, to cling to the edge of a social circle to which she belonged by birth, but was barred by lack of money.

Enid's father, Doctor Evans, had died when his daughter was a baby. Mrs. Evans, left with a very small income, had endeavored to rear Enid according to standards which had been hers in her own more affluent girlhood. Although their home was humble, Enid had been as carefully trained and guarded as any child of wealth. She had been taught to regard herself as a small aristocrat. When other children on their street had played about in rompers, Enid had sat demurely on the porch to

keep her dainty dress from being soiled.

Then a few years later her mother had scrimped and schemed, had done fine sewing and given music lessons, to earn money to send Enid to a fashionable finishing school. It was the same school to which Louise Meadows, daughter of the president of the bank, was sent.

Enid never told her mother nor let her guess what an agony it had been to go to a school like that without the money and background the other girls possessed. Many a time she had wept in secret, wishing she might have remained at home and gone to the city high school.

After graduation, Enid had for the first time gone against her mother's wishes by taking a course in stenography. She had begun to realize that her mother's ambitions for her were taking too impractical a form. Her uncle, publisher of the *Gazette*, admired the girl's spunk and gave her a position in his office.

Yet Enid knew that her mother's pride was hurt by the fact that she had gone to work when the other girls of her set had had formal débuts.

However, Mrs. Evans's chagrin was turned to triumph when Rodney Graham singled Enid out for attention. They had met at a party Louise Meadows gave, and since that evening Rodney had scarcely looked at another girl. Before long he had proposed.

Enid realized that the greatest thrill of her engagement was when she told her mother, "Rodney has asked me to marry him." How proud she had been to say that!

But she did care for Rodney, she told herself defiantly. She was by no means marrying him just for what he could give her.

"I'm tired, mother. I think I'll

turn in early to-night," she said. She felt suddenly exhausted by this turmoil in her mind. Yet she lay awake for long hours, wondering about many things.

Enid did not see Philip the next day, and she tried not to think of him. In the evening Rodney came to take her to a dance at the country club.

"Hello, sweet!" he greeted Enid as he came into the living room. "Put on your bonnet at once. I want to stop at the stables and show you that new polo pony I've just bought. She's a honey!"

Rodney Graham was a tall, blond youth with a ready smile and blue eyes in which laughter lurked. Shielded by his father's wealth, he was gayly playing his way through life.

"Another new toy, Rod?" Enid teased. "When will you ever grow up?"

"Polo's a grown-up game," he told her indignantly.

It was sweet to go to the dance, secure in the assurance which being Rodney's fiancée gave her. Enid knew many girls there envied her. She noted that Louise Meadows followed Rodney with her eyes. A tall, pale girl with a discontented expression about her mouth, she had always felt, Enid guessed, that she had had somehow a prior claim to Rodney.

"I wonder if she cares," she thought, and felt a little sorry for Louise.

It was an evening like many others, yet to Enid it seemed different. Where was the glamour which had once surrounded this gay young set? Why did they seem a little trivial, a little tiresome, to-night?

In vain she tried to recapture her mood of other times. She knew too

well what had happened to her—a moonlit night, Philip's arms about her, his lips on hers! Until he held her again, she must be lonely. She wanted no other kisses but his.

"Will you take me home early?" she asked Rodney. "You know, I'm a working girl."

She couldn't tell him to-night. She must have a little longer to think over this decision which meant so great a change in her life. But to-morrow, at the latest, she would explain, and give him back his ring.

"I'll call at your office to-morrow about five," Rodney told her when they said good night. "We'll drive out somewhere for dinner."

The next morning her decision was firmly taken. She hoped she would not hurt Rodney, but it was better to break with him than to pretend to care when her heart belonged to another.

Enid did not see Philip that day, and she began to think he was avoiding her. But all would be well again when she was released from this engagement which now meant so little.

Rodney called at five. He seemed a little subdued, not like his usual exuberant self, and Enid wondered how to go about telling him what she had planned to say.

It was after they had ridden out into the country and were dining at their favorite restaurant, that Rodney said:

"Enid, it looks as if our plans must be changed."

She looked at him, startled. "Why, what's the matter?"

"Dad and I had a long talk this morning. You know, he's never told me much about the business, and I guess I've never bothered to inquire. But it seems that the mill has been running deeper and deeper into debt.



She seemed to hear Philip's voice again and looked up suddenly. And Philip was there! Her heart began to beat tumultuously. "You've come back?" she asked dazedly.

Dad has a big note to renew at the bank, and he doesn't think it will look well if we spend money on a trip abroad and a big house. From what he says, we'll be lucky if we can afford a kitchenette apartment."

"I see," Enid said quietly.

How could she tell him now that she had decided not to marry him? What could he possibly think except that she had wanted to marry him because of his money? What would any one, even Philip, think if she broke her engagement now?

"It's a frightful nuisance, isn't it?" Rodney went on. "I thought I'd better warn you."

She smiled at him, and patted his hand across the table.

"Don't worry. We'll manage, somehow. You know, I've never been accustomed to riches."

But she had a terrible sense of being caught in a trap. It wasn't the loss of the Graham fortune she minded. The money part mattered little, Enid realized, as she thought how gladly she would have faced poverty with Philip.

But she must stand by Rodney now. He needed her, as he had not before.

"You're a brick, to take it like this," he said gratefully, his hand closing over hers. "But I might have known you'd be like that."

Enid summoned a smile. "You didn't think I was marrying you for your money, did you, Rodney?"

"Of course not! But we could have had a lot of fun. I didn't want it to be like this, for either of us."

"Things don't always go the way we want them," Enid said wistfully, putting aside her dream of happiness with Philip. "We've got to do what seems right."

"Of course, maybe dad is just trying to scare me." Rodney's face brightened. "He thinks I've been spending too much. Maybe things aren't as bad as he says."

When she reached home, Enid did not tell her mother what Rodney had told her. There would be time enough to rearrange their plans.

"That young man from the newspaper called," her mother informed her. "He said he'd call again."

A few minutes later the telephone rang.

"I'm sorry to disturb you so late," Philip's voice reached her. "But I

simply had to tell you the good news. My novel has been accepted by the publishers. I just received the letter!"

"Oh, Philip, that's splendid. I'm so happy for you!"

Well, that would compensate Philip for whatever pain he had felt at losing her. Though she tried to be happy for his sake, Enid could not help feeling that his success was putting another bar between them. His feet were set now upon the road to fame and wealth, which she was not to share with him.

They lunched together the next day. Philip was jubilant.

"It's like having a dream come true," he told her. "I'm still a little bewildered and afraid I'll wake up. I think it might be a good idea to go to New York at once. I'm leaving here, anyway."

"Yes. I suppose there will be a contract to sign, and things like that. Let's say good-by now, and wish each other—luck!"

Like this, across a luncheon table, it was easier to keep him from knowing how she felt. She could not endure a more private interview, she knew. Philip was too engrossed in his new plans to realize that he was taking her heart away with him.

Then he was gone, and Enid's days were barren and lonely. They might be less so, she thought, if she and Rodney were married at once. In that new life, she might be able more quickly to forget Philip, or at least not to long for him so keenly.

She told Rodney one night, as they sat on her porch, "Let's just slip away and be married, and give our friends a real surprise."

Rodney cleared his throat, and his face grew red.

"Enid, perhaps you'll think me a cad, but I'm going to be honest with you. I think, under the circum-

stances, our engagement is a mistake. To set up a home of our own is just to put an added burden on dad. And besides, it isn't fair to you.

"I'm still in hopes that things will be better soon," he went on. "Mr. Meadows is trying to raise enough money to see dad through this crisis."

Mr. Meadows, president of the bank, and father of Louise! A great light dawned upon Enid. Suddenly she wanted to laugh aloud. Mr. Meadows would be much more eager to help Rodney's father, if Rodney were free. Whether Rodney saw through the scheme or not, Enid did not know. And somehow, she didn't greatly care. If Rodney had really loved her, all this would not have mattered.

So she had lost them both, Rodney and Philip. If only she had had the courage to listen to the counsel of her heart on that night when Philip's kiss had awakened her to the real meaning of love. But she had been afraid. She had hesitated.

Later, she had tried to play fair. She had acted according to her own code of honor in standing by Rodney. Now he was failing her.

In the days which followed the office seemed a haven, where memory was bittersweet. Here she and Philip had met, had talked, had laughed together. She seemed to hear his voice again:

"Want to come and see a movie with me?"

She looked up, for the words were startlingly real.

And Philip was there! Philip, laughing, repeating the old, familiar invitation. Her heart began to beat tumultuously.

"You've come back?" she asked dazedly.

She was alone in the office. Philip came over to her desk, dropping his playful manner.

"I came back for you, Enid." There was a new assurance about him, as if his success had given him decision and courage. "I'm not going to give up so easily. I've thought of you, longed for you. Enid, that night—that kiss—it did mean something to you! I'm sure. I shouldn't have let you go!"

She stood up, put out her left hand. "I'm no longer engaged," she said simply.

He took her hand, drew her into his arms. Again his lips spoke to hers, the wordless language of love and faith and promise. Now she need not draw back, need not fight against this rapture.

"You're engaged now," he said at last. "You're engaged to marry me."

He drew her to him once more, and again his lips on hers swept her into a dream of ecstasy. Golden moments were too precious to be lost, even if golden hours lay ahead.





Complete Understanding

By Ruth Knight

A PUCKER of anxiety gathered between Viola Benton's blue eyes as she read the news item in the morning paper:

LOS ANGELES POLICE PLAN CHECK-UP ON CRIMINAL ELEMENT; REGISTRATION WILL BEGIN AT ONCE

The activities of all persons with criminal records will be checked and their names registered at police headquarters. This information, once in the hands of the police, will greatly reduce crime in southern California, it is hoped.

Viola's hands shook and her face was drained of color. Twice before this plan to list offenders had been mentioned in the papers, but no definite time had been set. This notice was different. It said they were starting at once.

Viola sat perfectly still, her mind plunged into chaotic questioning by the news she had just read. Was this check-up meant to include such offenders as herself?—she wondered. The reform school where she

LS-8C

had spent eighteen months was in a way a prison, with its grim iron gates and its stern discipline, and the girls who were sent there left criminal records on the books of the court.

Would the police get her name there, ferret her out, and warn her employer, Bob Halliday, that his stenographer had a criminal record? Viola shivered convulsively. What right had they to dig up her past? She had paid the price the law exacted.

She had tried so hard to close the book of her memory, and had almost succeeded in tearing out that first wild, dark chapter of impulsive love and misplaced confidence.

Sooner or later Bob Halliday would ask her to marry him, she was sure. Little attentions, invitations from his young sister, Lela, informal dinners at the Halliday home—all gave more than a hint of Bob's serious interest in her, and of his family's approval.

Of course, Bob didn't guess the truth about her. Bob and Lola and the friends to whom they had introduced her, all considered her as free of any past as they themselves were. Only the officer who arrested her and the judge who sentenced her knew that she had been madly in love with the handsome and debonair "Bink" Masey—who, she learned to her sorrow, printed counterfeit bills in the back of his small printing shop—and that she had been accused of being his accomplice.

Over and over during the eight months Viola had worked as stenographer in Bob Halliday's law office, her heart had beat out the question of confessing to Bob, especially after his interest in her had become so apparent. Her conscience wouldn't allow her to marry Bob, her story

untold. How passionately she tried to believe that it wouldn't make any difference in Bob's love for her! By her very wish to believe, she realized how much Bob meant to her, how much more she loved him than she had ever loved Bink Masey, and how differently.

But deep in her heart Viola feared that telling her story would make a difference in Bob's feeling for her. So, week by week, instinctively she had held him off, keeping him from telling her of his love. Now Viola realized with a pang of regret that she could no longer keep the door closed on those yesterdays. Somehow, somewhere, during this police check-up, he would learn about her past. She had to tell him about it herself, and at once.

Viola was suddenly glad that she hadn't let Bob propose to her. It would make confession easier and less embarrassing for both of them. Knowing the world as she did, she was certain that no man, not even Bob Halliday with his strength, and kindness, and keen sense of justice, could overlook a past such as hers.

Suddenly Bob Halliday's luxurious office became suffocatingly close as memories crowded in to taunt her. Why had she ever let a strange man pick her up! Of course, it had been raining, and she was wet and weary from tramping the streets looking for a job. It had been a long way back to her dingy room, and the man in the shining coupé had courteously offered her a lift.

If she had only let the ride end the matter! But she hadn't. The good-looking young man had said that he had some extra work she might do in his printing shop—just until she landed a better position. So Viola had accepted Bink Masey's introduction of himself along with the proffered job.

And then one day Bink had pleaded: "Let's get married, dear. I'm crazy about you. You're so sweet, so little. I want to take care of you always, give you the lovely things you deserve."

Viola had welcomed his caresses and promised to marry him the next day in Tia Juana, where there was no tiresome three-day wait for a license. But the police saved her from that. In the city's largest department store, where she had gone to buy a few bits of lingerie before leaving with Bink, they arrested her for passing a counterfeit bill.

For an hour the store detective shot questions at her, trying to make her admit that she knew the bill was counterfeit.

"But I didn't know," Viola had protested indignantly. "That bill's a part of my salary. Mr. Masey, my employer, will tell you he gave it to me."

But when the officer who took charge of the case went with her to Bink's shop, Bink had fled, leaving behind the copper plate on which the bills had been printed and a stack of bogus money. Upstairs, in the tiny room that Viola had expected to share with Bink after their wedding, the officers found her clothes neatly hung beside Bink's in the closet—which didn't help her case any. They refused to believe that she had meant to marry Bink that very day, and that she knew nothing of the counterfeit bills.

How could she be living with a man, working with him day after day, and not know he was printing bogus money!

Over and over Viola had explained that she had not lived with him or shared his confidence, but they wouldn't listen. They tried to get her to give them a picture of Bink, but she didn't have any.

There seemed to be no photographs of the handsome Mr. Masey, just varying descriptions that told the authorities he was a good-looking young man with no distinguishing marks to identify him. Descriptions that fit a thousand other young men, so Bink escaped and Viola took the rap. Eighteen months in the reform school. She might have gone to the penitentiary if the judge hadn't been a kindly soul and shown mercy because of her youth. There hadn't even been a public trial, for which Viola was everlastingly grateful.

She had come out of the reform school a sadder and wiser girl. Bink Masey was lost to her forever, she hoped fervently. Bob Halliday loved her and she loved him. And now this terrible specter of the past was rearing its head to menace the calm security she had almost won for herself.

Viola folded the paper and put it on her desk. It would prepare the way for her confession to Bob. The office was very still. As Viola settled back in her chair the door flew open and Lola rushed in, breathless with hurry and excitement.

"Are you alone, Viola?" she asked in a husky whisper.

Viola smiled wanly at Lola's childish air of mystery.

"Yes. Bob hasn't been in this morning."

Lola didn't bother to sit down. She rested both hands on the edge of Viola's desk and leaned across it.

"To-day is Bob's birthday. I'd almost forgotten. I'm throwing a surprise party for him to-night. Don't breathe a word! I'll send the car for you at eight."

Viola didn't want to go. She knew that Lola would have a dozen of her own young friends as well as Bob's more quiet acquaintances. There would be noise and gayety,

and she would have to join in the fun. Fun, when she was facing loneliness, heartache!

With swift, flashing impulsiveness, Lola blurted out: "Why don't you give Bob a break, Viola? He's crazy about you! Of course, I know it's fun to keep a man guessing—but eight months. Gosh, have a heart!"

Viola closed her eyes wearily, and when she opened them they were dimmed by tears. Instantly Lola's arms were about her.

"Viola, you mustn't! Gee, I'm sorry, honey. If you don't love Bob—why, it won't make a bit of difference. We'll love you just the same. Just because we think Bob's wonderful is no sign you should. Forget it. And I'm expecting you at the party."

Dear, friendly Lola telling her how much they loved her! Actually believing that she held Bob off because she didn't love him! She walked to the door with Lola. But she didn't promise to attend the party. Lola seemed to take it for granted that she would come. How different things would be after she told Bob! There would be no more invitations from Lola, no more intimate gatherings at the Halliday home.

Viola went back to her desk and sat down. It seemed that she had sat there an agonizing eternity before the door opened again and Bob came in with his usual cheerful greeting. With sudden resolve, Viola reached for the paper on her desk. By the simple expedient of showing him the article about the police check-up and telling him why she was interested in it she would save herself needless hours of suspense.

She watched him coming toward her, his long, slim body moving without haste, yet with surety, his

steady brown eyes a bit clouded with some secret concern.

"Got those notes on the Cordell divorce case handy, Viola?" He put the brief case he was carrying down on the desk, and his fingers were busy with the straps and buckles. "The case is set for eleven o'clock."

"Yes," Viola heard herself saying with a semblance of naturalness. "I have them here. But I didn't retype them. You said you were expecting a reconciliation."

"Not a chance!" Bob gruffed disgustedly. "Why the devil can't women learn to keep their mouths shut about their pasts? Cordell loves his wife, but after she told him about that first flame of hers——"

Viola found the papers and put them into his hand without looking up. "You mean you think a woman's past is distinctly her own affair?" she pressed, only half believing him serious. "Of course, you're theorizing, Bob. Doesn't a man demand to know all about the girl he marries?"

"Most of them do, I guess! But kids cry for green plums, too! Things are never the same after a woman feels it her duty to reminisce."

From under her half-lifted lashes, Viola caught a humorous twinkle in Bob's brown eyes.

"But tell or keep still," he chuckled suddenly, "the poor gal pays. If she keeps her mouth shut like a wise woman, her conscience nags her, and if she tells, it's usually good-by, love! Gosh, I've got to step on it! Ten thirty already."

He reached for the brief case. At the same moment Viola put out a hand toward it, and their fingers met. He clung to hers and looked down into her white face.

"You look all in, Viola. I didn't realize that I had been such a slave

driver. Your hands are like ice."

If he only knew how cold her heart was at that moment!

"It's nothing," she said hurriedly. "Just a slight headache."

"And you aren't doing a thing for it. Here, hustle into your coat and hat. I'm taking you as far as the drug store for some headache tablets. Then you're going home and straight to bed!"

He waved aside all protest, linked his arm in hers, and hurried her toward the elevators down the hall. As he helped her into the one that was waiting to go down, his fingers closed tightly over hers, and he smiled down into her eyes.

Viola looked away, suddenly unable to meet the passionate sweetness of his glance. She stood watching the people scurrying along the hall, and just before the grilled iron door clanged shut, she caught a glimpse of a figure lolling in a doorway directly opposite the elevator. She almost screamed her relief as the operator shot the crowded car downward with breath-taking suddenness. The man she had just seen was Bink Masey!

Had he seen her?—she wondered. All the way to the drug store, walking beside Bob Halliday, she was tempted to look back to make certain that Bink wasn't following her. With a little sob of relief, she ran into the drug store. Bob made his purchase and settled her on the street car, regretting that time wouldn't permit him to drive her home himself.

At that moment she saw Bink again, swinging onto the same car. Her heart stuck in her throat, but Bink made no attempt to claim acquaintance with her. He settled down behind a newspaper and never even looked her way until she got off at her street. Something told

her that Bink would get off, too, and she wasn't surprised to hear him saying right behind her:

"Vi! I had to see you, to talk to you! Imagine bumping into you. I've wondered where you were."

Viola didn't stop. The silly shortening of her name that she had loved so, the same swaggering assurance, the same pulsing undertone in Bink's voice that had once set her heart racing—how little he had changed! But it was lost magic. Never again would Bink have charm or appeal for her.

She turned to him almost fiercely. "So you've been wondering where I've been? Well, for eighteen months you didn't have to wonder. You knew. I might have been sent to the penitentiary for all you cared!"

"You're wrong, Vi! I did care. But it meant a long term in the big house for me if they got hold of me. If they had given you a real stretch, I'd have given myself up and cleared you, kid."

"You can't make me believe that!" Viola declared bitterly. "Oh, why did you follow me? I don't want to see you ever again."

"I'm not exactly anxious to see you, either. You're dynamite to me. You're the only person who could positively identify me to the police."

An idea flashed through Viola's mind. Why not turn him over to the police, make him come clean and clear her of that miserable charge? She could marry Bob then; hold her head up.

Bink seemed to read her intent and was quick to show her the folly of it.

"Don't get the notion you can tip me off to the cops, Vi! If you do, you'll be wishing you hadn't. When they make me talk, I won't white-wash you. I'll tell 'em you *were*



His arm tightened about her. "Darling, don't you know that nothing could change my love for you? I love the real you, and I know that you're brave, and lovely, and sweet, Viola mine."

living with me in that room over my shop and knew all about me."

"You know that isn't true! It's a lie!" Viola declared passionately, white to the lips. "My things hadn't been in your room a day."

"Sure I know it's a lie, but I'll tell it if you blow on me. And they'll believe it. They didn't fall for your explanation when they pinched you, did they? I don't suppose you'd want the new boy friend to hear such a yarn."

He didn't miss the horror in Viola's face, and pressed his advantage. "I'm going straight now. I swear it, Vi. And I'm in love with a swell girl. I may marry her—if you lay off. Keep your mouth shut and your new boy friend will never hear a word. But if you even hint you knew me before, I'll tell that man of yours a story that'll make you wish you'd held your tongue."

"He will hear enough to disgust him, anyway," Viola said tiredly.

"This police check-up. I suppose you've read what they mean to do."

"Forget it," Bink discounted with a wave of his hand. "Use your noodle! If they put every man on force to combing old records and nosing out the present address of every one who's been sent up, it would take ten years and a mint of money. And then they couldn't get a line on a baker's dozen. It's just a gesture. The police department wants to make the dear public believe it's cleaning house."

He leaned coaxingly closer. "Keep your mouth shut and they won't bother you, kid! Stir up the old mess and they'll be down on you like a swarm of hornets."

Viola wanted to believe Bink was right about the police check-up. Common sense told her that he was, that it would be difficult to list all former offenders. Only those picked up in new crimes would be listed and watched. She was safe. She could marry Bob. She needn't confess. Her conscience would be clear. Bob had said he didn't believe a girl should confess her past to the man she loves.

But suppose, after she married Bob, Bink should be arrested. That would revive the old scandal and bring it to Bob's attention. Yet Viola was ready to take a chance.

"Well," Bink pressed impatiently, "do we understand each other? If we should meet again, I don't know you and you don't know me. It's live and let live."

"I—I suppose it isn't exactly my business, running to the police. And we probably won't meet again," Viola wavered.

His eyes held hers, and for a fleeting second a strange flame burned in their cold depths.

"I've got a hunch we're going to see a lot of each other," Bink said

shortly. "It's a darned small world, after all."

They had reached Viola's apartment house, and now she brushed past him, anxious to get away. Deep down inside her a little pulse of fear had begun to beat, and alone in her room, frightened hysteria swept over her.

"What shall I do? I'm afraid—so afraid," she cried in a hoarse whisper.

But by eight o'clock Viola had gotten a grip on herself. She mustn't let herself get panicky. Bink Masey was as much afraid of her as she was of him. He wouldn't deliberately look her up again, and the possibility of an accidental meeting such as had occurred to-day was remote.

When the Halliday chauffeur called for her shortly after eight, Viola decided to go to the party, after all. She dressed hurriedly, and was her usual sane and happy self again, but the minute she stepped into the Halliday living room, cold fright claimed her.

The guests had already arrived—and Bink Masey was one of them! Viola understood then why he had been so anxious to talk with her. The meeting hadn't been accidental at all, as Bink had tried to convey. He knew somehow—possibly from Lola—that a girl named Viola Benton was working for her brother, and had hung about the hall, hoping to see if she might be the same Viola Benton he had known in the past. And Lola was the new girl Bink had declared he loved and meant to marry!

She was sure of that from Lola's possessive air when she introduced Bink as: "My good friend, Perry Mason."

Viola nearly fainted. Her knees felt like rubber. It was Bob's hand

on her arm that steadied her. That and the threatening flash in Bink's blue eyes.

Swift shame swept over Viola at the falsity of her position as she stood beside Bob, saying to Bink Masey—alias Perry Mason—the conventional things people say on meeting for the first time. All evening, as she danced, Viola turned the situation over in her mind.

This changed things entirely. It was her own affair if she wanted to risk marrying Bob Halliday without telling him of Bink and her past love for him. But it was quite another thing to keep still now and let Bink marry lovely little Lola Halliday. He had just the charm, just the appeal that a young girl would fall for hard. Who knew that better than herself! He might even drag Lola into some wretched affair just as he had involved her. Bink Masey couldn't go straight if he tried.

It was clearly her duty to tell Bob what she knew about him. She would be forced to choose between protecting Lola and losing Bob's love. For Bink Masey, cornered, would be mighty unpleasant. And the things he would tell Bob—

Viola was sitting on the davenport at the moment, and as though her thoughts of him conjured him up, Bob sank down beside her.

"You've been rather quiet to-night," he commented. "Still feeling ill?"

Viola looked off across the room to where Lola and Bink were dancing. Bob's gaze followed hers. He turned back to her almost abruptly.

"You've met Lola's big moment before, haven't you, Viola? To-day, when I put you on the street car—I'm positive he's the man I saw swing on. I never forget faces. You looked then as if you'd seen a

ghost. If he isn't all he should be, I'll give him his walking papers. Lola never brought him here before."

His hand slid over Viola's where it rested on the damask cover of the couch, and somehow it gave her courage. Her face was drawn and colorless, but there was the fire of sacrifice in her eyes.

"Yes, I do know him. I was engaged to marry him when he called himself 'Bink Masey.'"

She floundered helplessly at the pain in Bob's dark eyes, but bit by bit she told her story. When she had finished, Bob struggled to his feet, his handsome features convulsed with rage. Viola thought for a second that he meant to drag Lola from Bink's arms and throw Bink out of the house. He wavered on the brink of uncertainty, then drew Viola to her feet beside him and, linking her arm in his, led her silently across the spacious living room, guiding her between the dancers and down the hall to a small den.

"Wait here," he said shortly, whirling on his heel and stalking out of the room.

Viola stood beside the reading table, thankful for its solid support. When Bob returned a few moments later, Bink Masey was with him. Bob locked the door. At sight of Viola, a sound escaped Bink's lips that was almost a whimper. But he rallied instantly and asked with swaggering bravado:

"Well, what's the private conference about?"

"You know darned well what it's about," Bob answered gruffly. "If the house weren't full of guests, I'd give you the beating of your life. You let my sister and Viola alone, understand! I'm giving you just one hour to get out of this city. If

you don't, I'll turn you over to the police at once."

"I guess you won't do that," Bink retorted sneeringly. "Think of the publicity that would bring Viola."

He looked straight into Viola's frightened eyes, and she knew that he would show her no mercy now. He would tell Bob the horrible lie he had threatened to tell if she ever gave him away. Viola looked at Bob pleadingly with haunted eyes, begging mutely for his faith.

Bob's arm crept about her.

"Don't worry, honey," he comforted her. "We won't have to resort to the police. Bink Masey will leave and he won't talk. He knows when he's well off." Bob's fists doubled up significantly.

"You *are* a simp," Bink sneered. "Because you're in love with Viola you believe everything she's told you. I suppose she painted herself nice and white to you. Well, there are two sides to every story, and you're going to hear my side, too!"

"Bink!" Viola pleaded. "You can't—you wouldn't tell Bob that—that rotten lie just because I had to protect Lola."

Bink ignored her. His eyes smoldered with hate as he turned to Bob Halliday.

"I loved Viola. I was crazy about her. We lived up over my shop, but she wouldn't marry me because I didn't have enough money to give her the things she craved. She wanted expensive clothes and a swell apartment before she'd promise to marry me, so I started making counterfeit bills to buy her things. I was crazy in love, see. I was afraid she'd leave me for some rich guy. If you don't believe me, just look up the court records," he finished triumphantly.

Bob's arm dropped from Viola's waist. He walked stiffly to the door and unlocked it. And as she watched the man she loved turn his back to her, her face was a dead, blank mask. But Bob came back much faster than he had gone. He caught Bink Masey by the collar and marched him toward the exit.

"You seem to think that Viola didn't love me," Bink taunted spitefully.

"I know she loved you, with a child's love and faith. But you killed it. I know it was a beautiful, clean love. Even if it were written otherwise on a dozen court records, I'd still believe what Viola told me. I love her that much. And since I don't want to hurt her even a little, I'm giving you this chance to get out of town. Now go!"

There was no mistaking the purposeful glint in Bob's dark eyes. Bink went, and he went in a hurry. Neither Bob nor Viola bothered to follow him out. They stood before the open fire, and Bob's arm was around her once more, drawing her close.

"You poor little innocent," he murmured. "So this explains why you've kept me at arm's length for months, when I was hungry for your lips."

Viola looked up at him, her heart in her eyes. "I meant to tell you about it before I ever promised to marry you. But it wasn't easy to confess. I put it off—I was afraid knowing about Bink and the reform school would change your love for me. I couldn't endure that. Then to-day I read about the police check-up. I was terrified. I wanted to tell you everything this morning. But when you came down to the office you were late and——"

"And then I made that bright remark about confessions killing

love," Bob said understandingly, his arm tightening about her. "Darling, don't you know that nothing could change my love for you? I love the real you, and I know that you're brave, and lovely, and sweet, Viola mine."

She nestled in the shelter of his arms but her eyes were questioning, still afraid.

"This police check-up," she recalled faintly. "There may be unpleasant publicity even if Bink Masey goes free. My name is on

the court records. The charges were so—so terrible."

She shuddered at the memory.

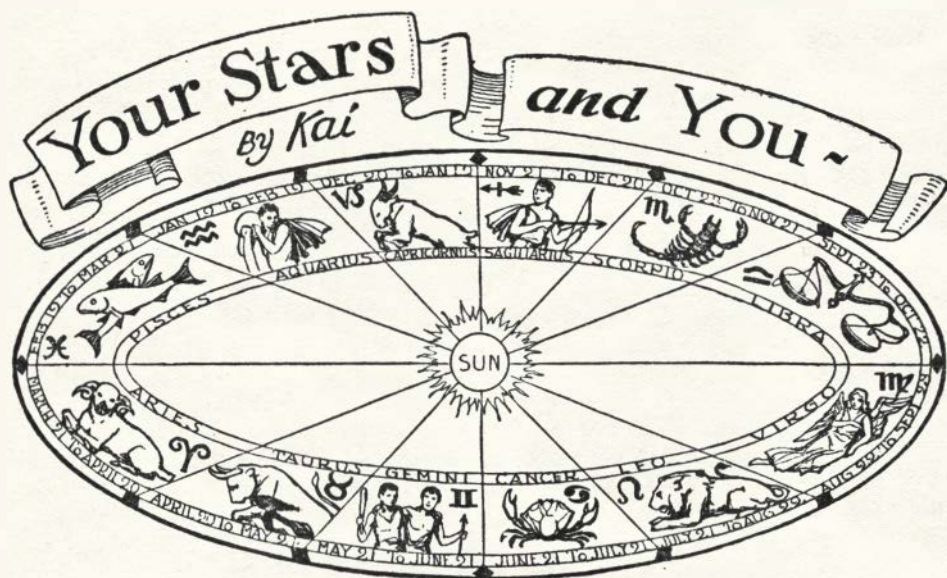
"Don't you worry about that, honey," Bob comforted. "The whole thing will probably blow over as it always has in the past." And, as he drew her close and set his lips on hers in a flaming kiss, Viola was no longer afraid. All doubts, all fears, were swept away in the great tide of love that surged over her, leaving only peace, and faith, and utter contentment.



CONSOLATION

WITH empty words which fail to comfort me
 My sleek, fat neighbors daily knock and sit
 Beside me gayly, while they rock and knit
 And tell me of the time when I will be
 Of this unhappy passion set quite free.
 The colt in time grows heedless of the bit.
 Flat platitudes they quote. No word of it
 At all can make me ever feel or see
 A pause or surcease of this timeless aching.
 What fools to think it ever could be brief.
 How can I tell them that I'd just as lief
 Go on forever with my heart a-breaking,
 Without a hope of sorrow's ever slaking,
 As risk forgetting you, too, with my grief?

FLORENCE SMITH.



YOUR WEEK

The planetary foundation for the week looks highly promising. The impetus of the influences will bring balance, the desire to readjust complications and to undertake new methods which will contribute to progress materially and personally. There are many excellent periods this week and, with few exceptions, general reactions will be satisfactory. Use the week and take advantage of the favorable heavenly conditions. Much of the routine and developments will depend upon yourself, but many delightful experiences will come along and when you review the current seven days, you will find a new spirit infused in your being and a determination to spend a constructive winter season. There is a New Moon on Tuesday, November 6th, at 11:42 p. m.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday, November 3rd

♃

The day begins in an energetic fashion. There is likely to be hastiness in speech and action, but if mental and physical energy are utilized in performing necessary duties and handling important matters as they arise, the results will be satisfactory. There is a period between 1:00 and 2:00 o'clock this afternoon

and another one this evening between 7:00 and 8:00 when there will be brief disappointments and delays. But the evening hours are favorable and you may proceed with your plans for enjoyment and recreation.

Sunday, November 4th

☺

Here is an unusually pleasant day. The morning hours are energetic and vital and pep is in the air throughout the entire day practically. Harmony will prevail, also, except for brief periods when the natural exuberance of the spirit overflows. Plan to make it a pleasant, inspirational, constructive and mental day, not forgetting to devote some time to spiritual growth. An excellent day and evening for making plans, reconstructing ideas and adjusting the tempo of living.

Monday, November 5th

♃

The morning hours bring harmony and mental agility. Handle important commercial activities before 1:00 p. m. The afternoon will bring seriousness, forcefulness and the tendency to be too opinionated. Quarreling and aggressive tactics will defeat your

purpose. Moderate your temperament, but utilize your talents. Clear away old matters which will hinder your program for the remainder of the week. The evening hours until 9:00 o'clock will be negative and unreliable in so far as impulse is concerned. Late-evening hours are expansive and favorable.

**Tuesday,
November
6th**

♂

There is a New Moon this evening at 11:42. This is an excellent day if used properly and you are not a soft person in character. It is a social day and most adaptable for functions, ceremonies, domestic adjustments and matters close to the heart. Any one doing creative, artistic or inspirational work will find the planetary conditions helpful. Live the day and evening intelligently and in a special way. Add something pleasant to your life and your memories.

**Wednesday,
November
7th**

♁

We have a quiet morning until 1:00 p. m., directly in contrast to yesterday. If you have any imperative duty, any details or disliked task, see that they are handled this morning, because there is a forceful and emotional impetus during the afternoon which will make it difficult for you to think of anything but your own reactions and outside pleasures that are not conducive to commercial activities. The afternoon hours will bring relaxation and stimulated feelings. The evening hours are favorable for ordinary matters.

**Thursday,
November
8th**

♃

The better influences prevail before 2:20 o'clock this afternoon. The morning hours are good, particularly for correspondence, literary effort, selling, interviews and discussions. The afternoon and evening hours will be uncertain and the late hours of the evening are most unreliable. Around the midnight

hours there is the probability of quarrels and hasty actions which can lead to accident and impulsive words which will lead to bitter quarrels.

**Friday,
November
9th**

♀

There are several good features to the day but the influences are so inclined toward emotionalism that very little can be accomplished if you concentrate upon yourself and ignore the necessity of performing important tasks. The hours before 9:30 a. m. are harmonious domestically. The late-morning hours are alert mentally, but there will be much talk about nothing of consequence. Coördinate your efforts this morning and afternoon, and plan to be serious between 4:00 and 5:00 o'clock this afternoon. The evening hours will carry an undercurrent of restraint, but there is enough energy to the planetary conditions to enable you to enjoy yourself and have an interesting time, if you remain on the mental side during most of your festivities.



IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between March 21st and 26th will be disturbed by financial affairs related to partners. There will be an unusual amount of thinking about this feature of your life, but no definite decision can be made at this time. If born between April 2nd and 11th, you will have a week which is nervous in trend and care of the diet must be exercised; not an outstanding week, except for the pleasure and efficiency to be derived from each day. If born between April 14th and 20th, you will feel turbulent, restless and desire changes, but judgment and conservatism will be a part of your life, too, and you will achieve balance.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taurus born between April 20th and 25th will have an emotional week and affairs connected with domestic and business

associations will be of paramount interest to you. It is a week when your feelings will be uppermost, but you will feel relieved that some of the strain of the past few months has been eliminated. If born between May 1st and 9th, this is a good week personally, but most of your attention will be given to affairs of the heart and the intensity will be a welcome relief after all the strain of the past few months. Do not overdo it, however. Inspiration, action, and harmony are the keynotes this week for the latter group. If born between May 15th and 21st, you will feel restless and shackled at the same time, but the delays will remain and the changes will continue. Work in these grooves which have become a part of your life and be patient, but use your mind, change your attitude, make plans for the future, and be ready for better conditions when they arrive.

May 21st and June 21st
(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and 26th will have a conflict in their emotional equipment this week and it will react upon your job and your health. There will be physical and mental eruptions, probably, which will confuse the program temporarily. Do not worry and do not be too temperamental. If born between June 1st and 9th, you will not like the trend of the week. Most of the difficulties will emanate from home and domestic conditions. The confusion and quarrels which are likely this week will not be helped by sentimentality, fits of anger or lack of self-control. Most of the difficulty will come from other persons, but you can help along the situation by remaining calm and unaffected. If born between June 13th and 21st, you will feel the serious trend of the planets and will be able to capitalize upon the steadiness and balance which were acquired recently. There are changes transpiring, especially in relation to friends. It is all right to make adjustments and travel, if it is in keeping with the program established recently.

June 21st and July 21st
(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 26th will have an interesting week. New contacts and emotional reactions will afford pleasure. Plan to enjoy yourself, but do not lose sight of the fact that this is a time of opportunity and reconstruction.

New friends will be interesting and helpful to you. If born between July 2nd and 10th, you will have a good week. There will be periods which are uncomfortable because of temper and strained relations, but your mind will respond to the new impetus; you will be intuitive and feel inspirational and there will be an unusual amount of pleasure in following your ordinary routine. If born between July 15th and 21st, you will not like the trend at this time. But you must recognize that the intensity and the changes are contributing to your future. Clear the way for better conditions ahead.

July 21st and August 22nd
(Leo ♌)

—Leo people born between July 21st and 26th will have difficulty in the home this week. Do not tolerate meaningless discussions. No decisions should be made at this time that are of a final nature. Investigate matters concerning property and holdings, but reserve your judgment and decision until later. This is an active, inspirational and pleasant week, if born between August 2nd and 10th. You will spend too much money, but you will have the opportunity to make extra funds, too. This influence is a temporary one, so make the most of it. If born between August 15th and 22nd, you will not like the trend of affairs at this time. It is an intense period and you will meet with delays, restriction and disappointment. Your ideas are good but conditions are not right for putting them into effect. Be patient.

August 22nd and September 23rd
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people born between August 22nd and 27th will have a good week, mostly because of your mental attitude. You will feel expansive and relaxed and your tolerant attitude will make new friends for you. Do not resist the current. If born between September 2nd and 10th, you will have an interesting week, but some of the developments will bring an intensity which will be hard to endure. Your best and worst qualities will be brought to the surface and the choice lies with you. Do not be nervous, hasty or impulsive with your emotional equipment. Remain balanced and take your pleasures lightly. Test your judgment before acting. If born between September 15th and 23rd, watch your health. Conditions surrounding employment will not be satisfactory, but there is

little you can do about it. Financial problems will arise concerning associates, but you must be very cautious about taking specific steps about any matter which is involved.

September 23rd and October 22nd
(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and 28th will have a very active and pleasant week. The mind will be active and social affairs enjoyable. This is an excellent money-making time for the above group and all affairs which have been pending for many months should be the foundation for capitalization. Neglect no opportunity. The same prediction as above is indicated for the group born between October 1st and 8th, too, but the specific time for final action does not arrive until a little later. However, be prepared. This is an annoying week, in some respects, for this second group but there will be pleasurable compensations, some of which will not meet the public eye. If born between October 15th and 22nd, you will have annoyances because of mental turbulence and changes. This is a stable period, however, and you are creating the proper foundation if you are progressing in any way. Good conditions ahead.

October 22nd and November 21st
(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 22nd and 28th will have an expansive, pleasant and mental week. You will use your head and see available opportunities. Take definite action and start the ball to rolling which will expand as the future months advance. This begins the best period you have had in several years. If born between November 1st and 6th, you will find your attention occupied by friends this week. Some of the experiences will be pleasant, others not so satisfactory. Do not quarrel. Use your intuition. Make contacts and participate in social affairs. If born between November 12th and 21st, you will meet with delays and some of your plans cannot be put into action at this time. Make no final decisions concerning property or holdings, if avoidable. Try not to allow your job to upset you and wait for developments. Voluntary decisions are not advisable until a later date.

November 21st and December 20th
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 21st and 27th will have a fairly pleasant

week, especially in their private lives. Be careful about taking action which will bring criticism from outside sources. If born between December 1st and 9th, you will have a turbulent week in business affairs, especially with those in higher positions. Do not quarrel, spend too much money, or allow your imagination to run riot. Control is imperative. If born between December 14th and 20th, you will find your new viewpoint and fresh ideas of procedure helpful in meeting current problems. You will be restless and desire changes. As long as your decisions are the result of deliberate thought and past experience you have little to fear. Proceed cautiously, but do not stand still.

December 20th and January 19th
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 20th and 27th will find affairs taking shape and will have the right to feel more optimistic. You will feel unusually emotional, but if you will keep your feelings separate from business decisions, your judgment is good. Make important contacts. If born between January 1st and 9th, you will have a very pleasant week. Social affairs are in order. There will be the tendency to quarrel, but your better feelings and judgment will dictate wisdom and control. Those in the second group engaged in creative work will find the influences most helpful this week. If born between January 12th and 19th, this is a period which holds stability, but your inability to increase your income will make you restless and irritable. However, there is little you can do about it until a change in planetary conditions arrives. Home affairs will be disturbing and you will find it difficult to establish harmony, mostly because of your own reactions. Be willing to tolerate some of the annoyances. Make no hasty decisions about property or holdings—none at all, if avoidable.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 19th and 26th will not like the trend of affairs this week. There will be petty annoyances, worries and nervousness. You will have to be most careful in all business matters and make your decisions about new business conditions only after deliberate thought. Proceed slowly and try to control your feelings when they interfere with your work. If born between February 1st and 9th, you will have difficulties with the

financial status as it relates to you between partners and associates. You are apt to be hasty and intolerant. Domestic affairs will not proceed smoothly. Be careful in your relations with the opposite sex. If born between February 12th and 19th, you will have to go along in the same groove as previously. You will be restless, but your resistance is low and you will have to take steps to increase your vitality. Do not make the mistake of procrastinating. Take care of everything at the necessary time. Change your ideas and be ready for better planetary conditions when they arrive.

February 19th and March 21st

(Pisces ♋)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 26th will like the trend of the current week. This is a favorable time to take trips, if desirable. Your judgment is good at this time and there will be visible opportunities which will help you to advance materially and personally. If born between March 1st and 9th, you will have an unsatisfactory week. Be careful in dealing with the opposite sex; do not quarrel with partners and associates. Try to establish harmony and do not allow your imagination to create a foundation or conditions which are the result of fear. Avoid any action which will lead to criticism. If born between March 15th and 21st, you will be restless, but will realize the wisdom of stability and conservative action. Create the foundation now by making changes and eliminations, which will enable you to capitalize fully upon your talents and opportunities in the near future.

YOUR FORECAST FOR 1935

Scorpio

There are many favorable indications throughout 1935 for those born under the sign Scorpio. True, there are factors with which to contend. Without some of the bad with the good there would be no balance. But our Scorpionians have the support and helpful influence of the planets to an extent which has not prevailed since 1923, which should renew hope and optimism. The entire group (born between October 22nd and November 21st, approximately) will not all be affected at the same time. Those who will have important opportunities coming their way during the winter months were born between October 22nd and November 1st. This group will have been able to make eliminations and changes that will permit them to advance their interests. The November folks will

have to wait until next year is well advanced, before they are able to capitalize fully upon their talents and chances for developing their schemes. All Scorpio people will have peculiar conditions surrounding their friends and some of these will remove themselves from your lives. Do not allow them to exert an insidious influence over you. Be firm if they try to swerve you from the program which you think is beneficial to you. This aspect to your existence is similar to one which existed in 1934. There is no doubt about it that there are many changes coming to all of you during 1935, most of it through outside channels and affecting you in your partnerships and associations. You will be restless and desire new contacts, either of an intimate or impersonal nature. There will be new contacts and frequent adjustments in relationships. Many of you will wish to divorce yourselves from personal and business alliances and any step in this direction must be considered carefully and separated from erratic impulses.

The favorable side of your existence includes a new expansiveness, fresh hopes, optimism, new spiritual growth, deep emotions and feelings, and increased sentimentalism. You will acquire new poise and stability. Fresh contacts will be pleasing and will have a permanent value in your life. It will be difficult to be entirely practical, but new foundations must be kept sound, normal, and solvent. Be careful of criticism and be reconciled to the fact that many affairs which have not met the light of day will be revealed. The undercurrent of hectic conditions must be acknowledged and handled as carefully as possible, because until October this will exist definitely, and any policy which can be classified as physically detrimental will have to be eliminated. As I said in the beginning, there will be so much emotional urge that excesses will be difficult to avoid. One of the chief traits in the Scorpio nature is what they are pleased to call "shrewd manipulation." Well, there is such a thing as trying to be too shrewd, too tactful, too managerial—and you think you are getting away with it. You may not have as much money as you want next year, but every single thing you do is important to your 1936 conditions. In 1936 you can almost sit back upon your oars and drift if you know the rules and regulations are being followed, as you knew them to actually be throughout 1935. This department hopes sincerely that you will capitalize upon all your talents and opportunities and have the content-

ment which has eluded you in recent years. Be wise, aggressive, tolerant, and progressive. KAI.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
 ★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

L. C. K., data omitted, by request: Allow me to express my sympathy in your loss. Such an event is close to the heart and is bound to create a feeling of frustration. As you know, I usually refuse to handle a question about the matter which is worrying you, but if you can repeat the experience in 1935 (by the fall months), I do not think you will have a similar experience. I believe you will understand what I mean. Try to reconcile yourself to this unfortunate experience. It was meant to be that way.

M. W., (N. S.), data omitted, by request: There is a marriage for you in the fall months of next year, if you take advantage of the opportunity when it is offered to you. However, there are indications for travel and creative influences which will enable you to capitalize upon your abilities. Just because you have reached thirty is no reason for you to become panicky about marriage. You will marry again, either in 1935 or 1936. It all depends upon the environment you create for yourself within the next eleven months. Sorry to hear about your hand and hope you are better by the time you read this. I appreciate your writing to me under such difficulties.

M. L. C., born July 15, 1892, Arkansas, 4:00 a. m.: The planetary conditions for you in 1935 are so favorable that you can do almost anything you desire. I believe you will wish to remarry, but urge that you undertake some creative work—preferably an occupation which would be followed in your own home. Have you thought of illustrating or writing? Your chart indicates an aptitude for both these lines and you are too talented to be wasting your time. Your restlessness will continue and you should have an outlet for this excessive energy. Do not be afraid to take chances in considering a career.

E. S., born October 23, 1907, North Carolina, 5:00 a. m.: You are absolutely right. It has been almost exactly nine years since

you have had favorable planetary conditions to assist you in living your life. But discard the despair and discouragement. A change and an improvement are imminent and you will have felt the effects of the stimulation by this time, I am sure. I never promise any one happiness. There is sufficient reason to believe in contentment as being the ultimate goal and if you utilize these good conditions ahead, I can promise you that you will create a very satisfactory basis of living. Have confidence in my observation and make a new beginning.

Miss L. E. M., born November 19, 1912, Alabama, 8:30 p. m.: On the contrary, I am advising you to continue with your writing. I believe you will succeed and you could not have embarked upon this career at a more auspicious time. All the conditions for you next year point toward creative and inspirational writing. I do not believe you will find the results as remunerative in poetry as you will in fiction. Concentrate upon dramatic writing and follow the love theme. You are quite ambitious in attempting a novel and you may be correct, but I suggest that you acquire more fictional experience by beginning with short stories. You have very little to worry about in the immediate future and November, 1935, ushers in an excellent period.

Miss A. F., data omitted, by request: There is no doubt about your being in the right profession. You are a born nurse and adaptable to all hospital life. I can understand your mental attitude, because there has been a discouraging slump in the nursing profession for a long time. Perhaps it would be a good idea for you to go into some other branch of this work, for instance, the dietetic end. I believe you would do exceptionally well in this. Next year will bring improvement in every phase of your life. Personally you will feel much better and you will receive unexpected assistance from your friends. There will be many changes in associations and you will be restless, but you will move around more than you have in the past. So much so, that you will desire such inactivity as you have had in the past. I do not think you should change your line of work. Retain your musical urge only as a hobby.

B. J., born March 2, 1907, Illinois, afternoon: There are many deep emotional experiences in your life within the next twelve months and you will have opportunities for

marriage. Your influences are favorable for this step, but you will have to weigh all factors in the balance and not enter into any alliances without deliberation. Indulge your emotions but do not allow them to influence you entirely when you make a final decision. The best time for you to marry is next summer, but you will have had a most enjoyable and happy period between now and that time. You are intuitive and when the right man comes along, I am sure you will know it.

M. F. H., born September 1, 1914, New York, 5:30 a. m.: It appears to me that your father should be able to capitalize upon his past experience, now that there are so many jobs open since repeal. Of course, he has not had the complete backing of the planets lately, but this is going to be remedied soon. Almost at the time you will be reading this, there will be opportunities and I have great confidence in your father's ability and his persistence. Being a Capricornian, he will not have such faith in me because of his hard practicality, but you can tell him I said that any diligent effort at this time will bring results. You can tell him, too, that he has the coöperation of the planets during 1935 for the first time since 1929. There are many things you can do yourself, but I assume you have no training. The only thing I can suggest is that you try to obtain a position until you are able to undertake a course of study. You will do well in the commercial world if you ever get a start. Hope everything turns out all right for the family. Thanks for your letter.

K. M. S., born February 19, 1876, Scotland, 2:00 a. m.: It is strange that you

feel toward your husband as you do. There are many pleasant and harmonious points of contact between the two charts and I believe you will change your attitude. He has had difficult conditions with which to contend for the past eight years and any one is likely to make a mistake. My sympathies are strongly with the male sex at times, because it is so easy for them to accept the tempting by-paths. All the diversions are at hand for them to grasp. Women have generations of restriction as a foundation of existence. I advise you to place your property on the market as soon as possible and keep your price high. You may not be able to sell until spring, but your influences are stable and most favorable. 1935 is a money-making year for you.

D. H. L. F., born September 1, 1914, New York, 5:30 a. m.: Your chart and that of your fiancé blend beautifully, but you must remember that he is very sensitive and dislikes criticism. You will be inclined to succumb to the desire to criticize as you become older and I warn you now that you must be extremely cautious and tactful about any suggestions you make to any one, especially the marital partner. I advise this marriage and approve of the young man going into business at this time. He is capable and ambitious and his planetary conditions are most helpful to a young man just beginning to carve his career. If conditions are conducive to marriage by the time you read this, it is all right for you to proceed with your marital plans. There are indications for marriage for both of you throughout 1935 and a happy viewpoint is in store for you. My suggestion to your fiancé is that he undertake the produce market. He is adapted for that particularly



and should always be connected with work which enables him to meet and cater to the public.

O. D. M., born June 3, Missouri, 9:00 p. m.: Do you know, my dear Gemini friend, that you neglected to give me your year of birth? I am sorry, too, because I liked your letter, understand your problem, appreciate your frankness and wished to send you a helpful reply. Speaking of this conflict within yourself: There is nothing to do but fight it unless you make up your mind that you will allow your will to succumb to that other side, which you consider weak. You will always have that restlessness, but in my opinion that vacillating uncertainty about life is a seed which is the nucleus of ambition. I do not know your age, but it is never too late to start to live your life according to astrology, and if you have the real desire, the battle is half won. Most of these observations are drawn from my knowledge of the sign Gemini. You are an intelligent man but you allow too many ideas to flutter through your mind without allowing them to take root, and doing nothing about them. Your ideas and resolutions are good, but you must act upon them. You can control that physical angle you mentioned if you want to. I can tell you nothing about that investment.

Mrs. R. McD., born October 7, 1908, Georgia, 10:30 p. m.: Before you will have read this, I think you made the change you contemplated because of the positions of the planets in relation to your chart. I hope you were able to get away and think things over so that you knew just what move to make. Unfortunately, your chart does not blend well with that of the January person, and I cannot see much permanent compatibility. Your influences during October and November indicate change and new opportunities. There is no reason why you should tolerate abuse and I think this cycle of association is definitely finished in 1935.

Mr. C. W. E., born January 7, 1913, New Jersey, 7:00 a. m.: You write very well indeed, and it is a splendid idea for you to enter the newspaper field, even though it would be a mere job in the busi-

ness office. There is nothing like a newspaper office for creating a background for the type of work you would like to do. I say to you frankly that I believe you can and will write and as you are a very persistent type of fellow, there is little which will stand in your way until you reach success. I know two well-known authors who have a chart similar to yours and you have my full encouragement. Waste no time in getting started. Change your environment to a metropolitan center if possible, but even experience on a small newspaper or publication will be good for you. By the way, your name is excellent for written work, I think. Let me know how you get along.

Miss D. A. T., born July 9, 1914, 1:05 a. m., place not stated: There is more opportunity for you to carry out your desire the last half of 1935 than now or during the first six months next year. The planets will cooperate with you next year and you have passed the major part of the crisis which has prevailed in your life during the past four years. Do not be discouraged. Try to be more optimistic and overcome your sensitiveness. This quality of looking for criticism or a hurt from other people will handicap you. Face the future with confidence, believe in yourself, and you will arrive at your goal sooner.



WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

Kai does not send answers by mail.

Miss K. M., Minnesota, data omitted by request: All letters to me are strictly confidential. I cannot give you satisfactory answers unless I have the complete birth data of all parties concerned.

Miss E. A. R., June 10, 1915: I do not give complete horoscope readings. If you will write again, asking *one* specific question, I will try to help you.

Miss E. N., February 22, 1888: I do not give complete horoscope readings. If you will write again, asking a definite question, I will try to help you.

Editor's Note: Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

LS-10C



The Friendliest Corner

By MARY MORRIS



Miss Morris will help you to
make friends



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

HERE is a plea from a young college man in India. He will tell you all about that interesting country. He is friendly, likes all sports, but most of all he enjoys writing and receiving letters, for he can't have too many. He is very eager to hear from Pals everywhere. So why not get busy, all you young men, and share your friendship with him?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am very much interested in corresponding with young men everywhere. I'm a fellow of twenty, attend college, and my hobby is collecting stamps. I like all sports, especially tennis, ping-pong, and billiards. I will gladly exchange snapshots and stamps with any one who writes to me. I can tell you many things about India, its people, and customs. I enjoy writing letters, and will be eagerly waiting to hear from Pen Pals all over the world.
K'SAMI.

She gets a good time out of life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of eighteen, in my first year of college. I go

in for sports, dancing, movies, and gay times. I have traveled a great deal, and am sure I can make my letters interesting. I really love to write letters, and hope to hear from many Pals.
CHARMING.

Let her advise you about the latest fashions in hairdress.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't some of you Pals please write to a lonesome twenty-year-old girl who promises to answer all letters promptly? I'm working as hairdresser. I have traveled some, and I'm sure that my letters will not bore you. I have very few friends, and would love to hear from Pen Pals everywhere. Please don't disappoint me, girls.
CANDY KID.

Write to this lonesome Canadian teacher.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find some true-blue Pals for me. I'm a girl, twenty-one years of age, live in Manitoba, and teach in a village school. My hobbies are dancing, knitting, skating, and tennis. I want to correspond with girls everywhere, and will gladly exchange snapshots. Drop me a line, girls; I'll be waiting!

MANITOBA MARJ.

A friendly Louisiana Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please help a friendly fellow find some Pen Pals? I'm twenty years old, keen on sports, and extremely easy to get along with. I enjoy dancing, reading, drawing, and music. Boys, you'll find me good-natured and a steady correspondent. I can also tell you lots of interesting things about New Orleans. How about it?

NEW ORLEANS MAC.

This Pal is never idle.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is an S O S for Pen Pals who like to embroider and crochet. Since the depression, I have fallen back on my trusty old needle to help fill in the time which I formerly devoted to more active hobbies. Would any of you readers like to exchange patterns and letters with me? I would be very glad to hear from every one of you. I am a married woman, friendly and sociable.

BUSY MRS. C.

Friendship comes first with Milwaukee Dot.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I get very lonely at times, and would appreciate hearing from Pen Pals who value true friendship. I am a middle-aged woman, enjoy all sports, especially dancing. I'm considered lively and easy to get along with. Won't some of you older married Pals please write to me?

MILWAUKEE DOT.

Interested in Canada? She'll tell you about it.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a very lonely bride of nineteen, as I am alone a great deal of the time. I really love to write and receive letters, and can tell you quite a few things about Canada. I'm interested in sports, enjoy making friends, and hope to hear from Pen Pals all over the world.

HALIFAX BRIDE.

He's fond of stage dancing, books, and collecting pottery.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young chap of twenty-seven and would enjoy hearing from Californians. I am fond of stage dancing, interested in books, poetry, and collecting pottery. Pals, won't you give a fellow a break? I promise to answer all letters.

LARRI.

Who wants to write to a hello girl?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a girl of twenty-three, tall, passably good-looking, and easy to get along with. I am working in New York as a switchboard operator, and live a stone's throw from the New Jersey Palisades. I love dancing, skating, movies, and swimming. I drive my own car, and love to visit strange cities. I hope there are many girls who will not hesitate to write to me. I'll answer all letters, and exchange souvenirs and snapshots.

CLIFFSIDE SUE.

She's ready to share her screen-star picture collection.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonely Chicago girl who would like to hear from Pen Pals everywhere, especially those living in California, Texas, and Hawaii. I have brown hair and eyes, am considered very pretty, and hope to be in the movies some day. I have a large collection of movie stars' pictures, and want to hear about yours. I promise to answer all letters promptly.

ADELINE.

A call for ranch Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a young girl working as telephone operator. I like all sports, and my favorites are tennis, hiking, and target shooting. I have always longed to live on a ranch, but since that is not possible, won't some of you ranch girls please write to me? I will answer all letters received, and will try my best not to be a "wrong number."

OPERATOR 113.

She's ready to meet all comers.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please find some space in your Corner for my plea? I'm a twenty-six-year-old tomboy, and feel as if I'll never grow up. I'd like to hear from Pals all over the world, and promise to answer all letters that find their way into my mail box. I like sports, and am fond of animals. Girls, won't you take a chance on me?

TOMBOY BESS.

Suzy wants to hear from other young mothers.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-seven, have three children, but manage to have some time for myself. I love to write letters, and it would make me very happy to hear from

other young mothers. Of course, every one is welcome. I'm tall, a bit plump, have black hair and dark eyes. I'm considered jolly and good-natured, and am sure I can keep you interested. SUZY.

Lanny is a San Francisco man.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man of nineteen, rather quiet, but like to have a good time once in a while. I enjoy tennis, dancing, and my pet ambition is to travel. I'd like to correspond with men who have done some traveling. I have a few friends, but I would like to find some real Pen Pals. LANNY.

All you sixteen-year-olds, write to Ethel F., of Virginia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please find room in your Corner for my plea. I would like to hear from sixteen-year-old girls everywhere. I'm also sixteen, was born in Florida, but my home now is in Virginia. I like outdoor sports, and adore dancing. I'll exchange snapshots, and promise to write long letters. So come on, girls, and write to ETHEL F., OF VIRGINIA.

You'll find Petite E. J. a regular Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm twenty-four, married, and the mother of a darling baby boy. I play bridge, paint, embroider, sew, like to cook, and enjoy entertaining as often as I can manage. I would especially like to correspond with Pals who are in the habit of writing long, chummy letters. I'll exchange snapshots with every one who finds time to drop me a line. Who'll be my first Pen Pal? PETITE E. J.

She has a good time wherever she goes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your wonderful Corner? I'm a girl in my teens, with brown, wavy hair and brown eyes. I adore dancing, and always have a good time wherever I go. I also travel a lot. I hope to see some of my Pen Pals, and promise to answer all letters faithfully. Who'll exchange snapshots with me? LA JEANE.

Help her to carry on.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonely young woman of twenty-nine. I have been divorced for almost a year, and as I have

three children to look after, I seldom go out. I love to write and receive letters, and would appreciate hearing from Pen Pals everywhere. It doesn't matter whether you are single or married, old or young; I want to hear from every one of you. Please, Pals, do write to me!

VIVIAN, OF OHIO.

He hopes to become an author.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please help me find some Pen Pals? I'm a young man twenty-five years old, and as I work late, I don't get a chance to go out much. I am interested in art and philosophy, and hope to sell some of my stories some day. I will try to make my letters interesting, so won't some of you fellows write? JUST FRED.

She looks at life in a cheerful way.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room in your Corner for another Pen Pal? I'm a young girl eager to write to Pals far and near, especially those living in the West. I'm always full of good humor, and promise a snapshot to every one who heeds my plea. Please, girls, do write to me; I won't disappoint you. FRAN, OF BUFFALO.

Girls, you'll have fun writing to Gay Dolly.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm not especially lonesome, but would love to hear from Pen Pals everywhere. I'm a girl twenty-seven years of age, interested in cooking, music, the theater, and collecting snapshots. I'm out to get all the fun in life I can. I promise to answer all letters promptly.

GAY DOLLY.

Only fourteen, but she'll keep you interested.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think some Pen Pals would be interested in writing to a fourteen-year-old Florida girl? I sincerely hope so. I'm very keen about art, dramatics, singing, and sports. I'm in high school, and am taking French and Spanish. Girls everywhere, please write to

CARMEN LUISA.

She hopes to spend her evenings writing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl twenty-two years of age. I'm interested in sports, making friends, and collecting all kinds of songs. I will gladly exchange snapshots

and post cards with any one. Won't all you Pals keep me busy writing letters every evening? I hope every girl who reads my plea will answer it.

IMA PAL.

You can write to her in three languages.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I feel so blue, and long to have lots of friends. I'd love to correspond with Pen Pals all over the world. I'm a college girl of twenty, with brown hair and black eyes. I speak Spanish and Italian, and like sports, especially dancing. I'm a stenographer and bookkeeper, am interested in every one and everything, and promise prompt replies to all letters received. Won't some one please write to me?

EMMALINA.

A lonely California girl.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a very lonely California girl of eighteen, greatly interested in writing letters to Pals in this country and abroad. Every one who writes will be sure to get an answer, as I have plenty of time on my hands. I will exchange picture post cards and snapshots. How about it, girls?

WAITING ANN.

He's lonely for some real Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm appealing to you for Pen Pals. I'm a young man of twenty-one, interested in almost everything, especially music and radio. I can play the piano and pipe organ. I'm lonely for some real Pals, and would appreciate hearing from fellows around my age. I'll exchange photographs, and answer all letters.

SHELBURNE.

Her hobbies are dancing, movies, and reading.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your Corner? I love to write and receive letters. I'm a girl twenty-five years of age, have light hair and blue eyes. I'll exchange photographs, and hope for a flock of letters. My hobbies are movies, dancing, and reading. Please, girls, write to me; I won't disappoint you, and will be a true-blue Pal.

LEONA S.

Texas is calling you!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any one care to write to a happy-go-lucky young married woman of nineteen? I'm a tall, fun-loving outdoor girl; enjoy horseback riding and writing letters. I have been in

several States, and hope to do some real traveling some day. I have friends, but would love to correspond with Pen Pals far and near. All you married and single girls, please write to

HAPPY, OF TEXAS.

She promises to answer all letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm very anxious to find a few Pen Pals who appreciate sincere friendship. I'm a Kentucky girl of eighteen, live on a farm, and enjoy horseback riding and basket ball. I want to hear from girls in this country and Europe, regardless of age. Girls, make the post office put another man on our route.

OPAL, OF KENTUCKY.

He boasts an aviator's license.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: How about a young aviator crashing into your Corner? I'm a fellow of twenty-five, good-natured, friendly, and have my pilot's license. I can tell you a lot about flying, boys, so let's get acquainted. Won't every one of you please write to me?

FLYING FOOL.

A Windy City Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: What chances has a Chicago girl to enter your Corner? I like dancing, outdoor sports, and love to write long letters. I'm five feet four inches tall, have black hair and dark eyes. I have a sunny disposition, and can tell you some very exciting things about the World's Fair. Come on, girls, and write. I'll surely appreciate your letters.

MISS L. L.

Girls, write to Singalee.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl fifteen years of age, part French and part Spanish. I am in my third year of high school, and long to correspond with girls in foreign countries. I live on a farm, and love it. There is always something interesting going on around here. Pals, won't you dust off your pens and get busy writing to me? I promise faithfully to answer all letters received.

SINGALEE.

This married Pal will round out your friendship list.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman, thirty-four years of age, and the mother of two children. I want to hear from Pen Pals everywhere, especially those living in the West and foreign countries. I'm fond of sports, like to embroider,

crochet, and am especially interested in writing letters. Come on, every one, and drop me a line!

CELLA.

Let her cheer you up.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very cheerful and good-natured girl of seventeen, looking for Pen Pals. I'm tall, have brown hair and eyes, and love pets. I'm fond of horseback riding, and want to hear from girls who also like this sport. Won't some of you girls write me long letters? I can promise prompt and interesting replies.

MONTANA SMILES.

Lonesome Tony will make a faithful Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely young fellow of twenty-three, six feet two inches tall, with brown hair and eyes. I am fond of fashion illustrating, sailing, horseback riding, music, and the movies. I also collect stamps, and will be very glad to hear from fellows interested in this hobby. Come on, Pals, and give me a break!

LONESOME TONY.

She likes good times and craves excitement.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: My pet ambition is to have lots of Pen Pals. Won't you please help me find some? I'm a girl of twenty-seven, love good times, and crave excitement. I enjoy sports, books, sewing, dancing, and adore shows. I want some real friends in whom I can confide. I'll exchange snapshots and picture post cards. Won't all you true-blue Pals drop me a line?

PEPPY CARRIE.

She's ready to share her post-card collection.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please give me a little space in your Corner? I'm a girl twenty-two years of age, interested in everything, but my hobby is collecting post cards. I'm very jolly and like good times, but I can also be serious. I enjoy reading good books. Won't you girls around my age please write? I'll answer all letters.

BLOND MERRY MILLY.

Two lonely Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two lonely girls of seventeen. We are high-school graduates, and our main hobby is tap dancing. We also enjoy indoor and out-

door sports, and try to find interesting things to do and talk about. We'd love to hear from girls around our age, regardless of where they hail from. Pals, we'll exchange snapshots. Won't you drop us a line?

GWEN AND KAYO.

Interested in the South? Then write to Merrilla!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I think your Corner is just the grandest way of making new friends, and if you will help me find some Pen Pals, I promise to answer all letters. I'm a brunet girl of twenty-seven, lively, good-natured, and devoted to sports. I have lived in the North, but at present I am working in a Southern town. I'm interested in people from every part of the world. Come one, come all! MERRILLA.

He promises true friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another S O S from a lonely chap of nineteen living in Texas. I am working as assistant book-keeper in one of the busiest offices in our town, but I have plenty of time to write letters, and would like all you fellows to write and tell me what's going on in your part of the country. I'm fond of good books, sports, music, dancing, and the theater. I promise prompt replies to all letters, and will exchange snapshots.

BALLINGER.

She'll introduce you to a well-known "science."

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please print my plea in your Corner? I'm a girl of twenty, instantly interested in the "science" of "letterology." I'm not really lonesome, but I want to have as many friends as I can. I'm five feet one inch tall, with brown hair and blue eyes. Who'll exchange snapshots with me?

PLEASRITE.

New York Ginger issues an invitation to all.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from married and single Pals all over the country. I am a married woman of thirty-five, and especially interested in fancy needlework. I also like to cook, bake, and will exchange recipes. Won't some of you Pals please write to me? I have quite a bit of spare time on my hands, so the more letters the merrier.

NEW YORK GINGER.

These Lakeview Girls need friends to keep them happy.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two very lonely girls sixteen and fourteen years of age. We like to make friends and enjoy sports, especially dancing. We would like girls from every State in the Union to write to us, and we will faithfully answer every letter received. LAKEVIEW GIRLS.

She spends her summers in California.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl eighteen years of age, considered nice-looking, and have a very happy disposition. I'm fond of swimming, and go in for dancing in a big way. Although I live in Ohio, I spend my summers in California. I'd like to hear from girls everywhere, and will exchange snapshots with any one. SEBRING MISS.

A West Virginia Crooner.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young musician twenty-two years of age, full of fun, like to meet people and make friends.

I want to hear from fellows all over. So break loose, boys, and address your letters to A WEST VIRGINIA CROONER.

Jean Isabel sends her plea from Nova Scotia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young girl in my teens, and am often very lonely as I live in a small mining town. Won't some of you girls between sixteen and nineteen years of age please write to me? I am tall, slim, and a great lover of books. I also like the movies. I will exchange snapshots and autographs with any one who is interested. So come on, girls, and keep me busy answering your letters.

JEAN ISABEL.

Little Boston Girl has lots of time on her hands.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I, too, join your Friendliest Corner? I'm an eighteen-year-old girl living in Boston. I like football, hockey, skating, dancing, and many other sports. As I don't go to work, I have lots of time on my hands, and promise to

KEEN-EYED *Match Wits with* **CLEVER**
DETECTIVES *with* **CRIMINALS**

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TWICE A MONTH **15¢**

AT ALL NEWS STANDS

answer all letters promptly. I would be interested in hearing from any one, anywhere.

LITTLE BOSTON GIRL.

A Pal from the West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a plea from a Western Pal. I'm a girl twenty-three years of age, am a great radio fan, and adore dancing. I don't mean to flatter myself, but I'm considered very good-looking and good-natured. I want to hear from Pals everywhere, and promise to be a true-blue friend to every one. Who'll be my very first Pen Pal?

WYOMING HELEN.

She hopes to receive lots of letters; don't disappoint her!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a sixteen-year-old girl looking for lots of Pen Pals. I'm tall, slim, with dark hair and eyes. I enjoy all sports, especially baseball games. I love to write letters and read good books. I promise prompt and interesting replies, so won't you girls please try me?

BUNNY Y.

She likes the Pen Pal idea.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like some cheerful, interesting letters from every little nook in the world. I am a young married woman of twenty-one, and have one child. I like to sew, embroider, dance, and write letters. I'd like to hear from married and single Pen Pals. Write and find out more about me, Pals!

BALTIMORE PAL.

This Pal guarantees her friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea for Pen Pals? I'm a girl al-

most nineteen years of age, quite tall, and have blond hair and green eyes. I like indoor and outdoor sports, and love to dance. I also sing a bit. I'll exchange snapshots with you, girls, so won't every one who reads this please write?

YOUR PAL CONNIE.

She's interested in Hollywood Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome widow of twenty-one. I am five feet tall, have black hair and brown eyes. I would especially like to hear from girls living in Hollywood, although every one is welcome. I enjoy dancing, music, and other sports. I promise prompt replies to all letters.

HELEN OF BOSWELL.

A real girl wants to be your Pen Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a seventeen-year-old girl with light hair and blue eyes. I'm interested in people, outdoor sports, and love to make friends. I work only two days a week, and have lots of time to write letters. I will exchange photographs, and hope to hear from girls in other countries as well as those living in the United States. I'm sure I can make my letters interesting.

LAWRENCE BEA.

Boys, you'll find Vincent B. an enthusiastic Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-six years of age, have a college education, and my various interests include sports, the theater, camping, books, and sometimes the opera. I live about thirty miles from New York City, and will be glad to send you interesting post-card views. I'll also exchange snapshots.

VINCENT B.



THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

THE real starting point of a happy marriage is when two people begin to realize that marriage isn't merely a question of luck, and that patience, courage, and understanding are the safeguards that can help them over the difficulties of matrimonial stumbling-blocks. And there is no more difficult period confronting most young married couples than their first year of life together, when rough corners are smoothed off, characters are developed, and when individual tastes should be met on the common ground of tolerance.

Most people enter into marriage with a sincere desire to make a success of it. But too often they become discouraged when the going is difficult. Any couple can find marriage a real joy, if they remember that if they *both* make an effort to succeed, it will be to their mutual benefit.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a little over sixteen years of age, and have been married almost a year. My husband is twenty, but we both look older than we are. We met when I was fifteen and still in high

school, and married after we had known each other only three months.

My father died when I was only nine years old. I was the youngest child in a family of seven. And when my sister, who is a few years older than I, married, I was the only one left at home with my mother. I've had my own way quite a lot. Although that isn't my trouble now, I'm anxious for you to know my whole story.

Soon after we were married, my husband and I found that we couldn't get along. We often quarreled over trivial things, but made up soon after the argument. But it wasn't long before I began to wonder if I loved him at all.

Before we were married I was sure that I loved my husband, but now I realize that a girl of fifteen can't be sure if she is really in love or not.

Until last spring my husband and I lived with my mother. Then we came to California, as I have a married sister here, and we stayed with her for a while.

I think my husband and I argued mostly about his drinking. One day we had a serious quarrel about it, and he said that he would stop drinking if I did the same.

You see, I often took a little drink because he did. Of course, I promised not to touch another drop. For a few weeks things seemed to be going better. But last week my husband's brother came to stay with us, and now things are bad again.

I don't like my brother-in-law, and I don't want him to stay with us. My hus-

band is selfish, goes out with his brother, and I am left home all alone. If I say anything, we quarrel. I've asked my husband to tell his brother to stay with some friend or relative, but he won't say a word.

I have tried hard to get along with my husband, but now I feel that it's useless. And when he came home drunk the other night, I felt as if I could never trust him again.

Do you think that I ought to leave him and start over again? I would probably be a little lonely, and I know that it is not easy to get work just now. But I think that I could manage to get along. Anyway, I feel that there is no use going on this way.

Lately I have been so discouraged and disgusted that I have even stopped cooking meals for my husband. We have arguments about that, too, but he doesn't seem to mind going out and eating in restaurants, and treating his brother. Is there any use in my trying to make a go of it? I often think that sooner or later my husband and I will part. **IN NEED OF HELP.**

No successful marriage is ever found ready-made, my dear. In marriage, as in all other things, we must give as well as take, and not try to run away when the first rebuffs and lessons of life come along.

Is there any use in your trying to make a go of it? Certainly there is! Trying to make a go of it is part of the job of marriage. However, if your husband has the mistaken idea that everything is entirely up to you, some one should make him see that it's as much up to him to make an effort to right matters, as it is up to you.

Instead of thinking that leaving him is the best way out of your present difficulties, why don't you two get together and talk over your pet grievances? Iron out the bumps of disagreement between you, and if you both try hard to make each other happy, your marriage is bound to be a success.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: When I was fifteen I was quite popular, and had lots of boy friends. I used to go around with a crowd

of young people who were older than I. We were always going to some party, drank, smoked, and petted a little.

Then I met a boy who was never serious about girls. He belonged to another crowd. However, we liked each other a lot, and went together for a while. But thinking that I was only a good-time girl, he always tried to make a fool of me.

We used to quarrel now and then, but not seriously. Then he dropped me, and I stopped going to parties. After that I seemed to be more serious, and although I still went out with different fellows, I didn't care for them.

Now I am over sixteen.

For the past six months I have been dating an out-of-town boy who is twenty-six years old. He has a good job, but he works nights and I don't see him as often as I'd like to.

I am crazy about him, and he knows it, but the thought of my first boy friend bothers me. Do you think that I am still in love with him?

This boy doesn't date, skate, or go to parties, and he doesn't want me to do any of these things, either. Of course, I am often very lonesome and discontented, and want to have other friends. But he says that if I ever date any one else, I'll never see him again.

He never tells me that he cares for me, and says that he is too old for love and marriage. But I think that he must care for me if he spends all his free time with me. How can I make him admit that he loves me? **DISCONTENTED DOT.**

They say you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. Evidently there are some humans who are just as stubborn. And unless a man is really in love with a girl and anxious for her to know it, it is doubtful if anything can force him to admit the fact.

I'm afraid, dear, that your second boy friend cannot be really in love with any one but himself and his own personal comforts if he tells you that he is too old for love and marriage. Besides, don't you think it is rather selfish on his part to expect a girl of your age to stay home, have no other friends, and sit around until he happens to come around?

Whether or not you are still fond of your first boy friend is something only your own heart can tell you. But it would be to your advantage to get out and chum with other friends, and have the fun and good times you long for. Men are apt to be more anxious about the popular girl than about the one who stays at home, thinking that in this way she can hold the man with whom she may be in love.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have been married two years, and have a six-month-old boy. My husband and I kept company for five years before we were able to marry. Every time we set the date, something came up and we had to change our plans.

All the time we were going together, Phil was very devoted to me, but for the past few months he has been very indifferent. After the baby came there were a few bills to be paid, and as Phil was helping his parents, I agreed to work until we were straightened out.

We are now living with Phil's people. He seems to be crazy about our little girl, but I can't imagine why he should be so cool and indifferent toward me.

I am a very good-natured person, and easy to get along with. I seldom lose my temper, although when that happens I feel justified in speaking my mind. We used to visit with our friends, and really enjoyed ourselves. But whenever I ask Phil to go out with me now, he always says, "Remember, you have a youngster to take care of."

My mother-in-law is perfectly willing to stay with the baby if we go out, but since the baby came, I have been out with Phil only three times.

Instead of staying home with me, or taking me out, he goes out alone. If I ask him where he has been, he usually tells me he's been with some friends. The last few times he went out he didn't return until four or five o'clock in the morning, and refused to explain where he had spent his time.

Mrs. Brown, I love my husband very much, and cannot see any reason for his present attitude. He just doesn't seem to realize that he has responsibilities. He is thirty-six years old, so he ought to know what he is doing.

Do you think that if I were to leave him

and take the baby with me, it would wake him up to the heartache he is causing me? I don't know what I should do to keep my marriage intact, and I'm so worried I feel almost sick all the time. LOLA.

I'm afraid that leaving your husband would not solve your problem, Lola. Separation is not always the best answer. It is very hard on the wife, of course, when for some apparently unexplained reason her husband becomes indifferent to her after the arrival of the first child. Just why this happens is often a mystery that defies solution.

Sometimes, however, when the man does not shoulder all the responsibilities, especially where providing a home for his wife and child is concerned, he loses something of the fighting spirit and the interest that adds zest to life. Perhaps if you and your husband could manage to have your own small home he would not be so indifferent.

Suppose you try, diplomatically, to have your husband take you places as often as it is convenient. You might ask some other married couple and make it a party. I know how hard it is to be patient, but don't give up hope that the relationship between you can be improved.

Another thing you might try, dear, is to have friends of your own, women friends with whom you can go out once in a while. Try not to let your husband see how worried you are. You might even pretend indifference as to whether he stays out late or not. Nothing wins like a calm, sweet temper.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I often wonder how it is that some people can say that they don't know whether they're in love or not. I mean, enough in love to get married. Of course, infatuation is often mistaken for love. I thought I was in love several times before I finally made up my mind.

I am a rather modern young woman of twenty. Ever since my seventeenth birthday I have been popular, and have always had many boy friends. I might say that I lived a gay life before I was married, and also since. I've been married two years.

Both my husband and I have had a serious crush since our marriage. But we soon found out that we were not really in love. I was fond of a man I met at a dance, and my husband fell for a girl, a friend of his introduced him to. It wasn't real love, and when the fog cleared, we were happy again.

I've gone to parties and dances with other men, and my husband has escorted other girls. I have seen various women flirt with him, and he has seen other men pay attention to me, but we are still in love with and are jealous of each other.

We often quarrel, but the making up is sweet. We haven't very much in common except our love for each other and our good times together. However, I really believe that our marriage will last.

I'm not very much interested in house-keeping, but my husband and I get along fairly well and I know I could never be happy without him. I am sure he feels the same way about me.

Perhaps some of the readers will say that my husband and I haven't a chance to keep our marriage going in the right direction. I wonder. Do they think our life is worth while, or not? Our ideas can't very well be called old-fashioned. That is, regarding marriage. But just the same, I believe that we'll get along

MRS. OPTIMISTIC.

No doubt your interest in the opinion of our readers will be gratified. What do you say, family? However, if you have stated the actual facts, your happiness and that of your husband hangs by a rather thin thread. It is true that making up after a quarrel can be sweet, but after a few years of it the sweetness often tends to wear off.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a young man twenty-six years of age, good-looking, have a fair education, and am very fond of good times and dancing. For the past four years I have been going with a very pretty girl. She dresses well, and is quite popular.

When we had been going a year we broke up. I thought that I could not live

without her. I used to see her once in a while, and after six months she let me take her out again. In fact, we started to go steady once more.

She sometimes said that she never intended to marry, because her parents were divorced and her mother had a hard time trying to keep things going for the other four children in the family. This girl was the eldest, and used to help her mother by working after school.

A year ago she promised to marry me, however, on the condition that we should never have children. I thought that I couldn't live without her, so I promised. I love children, but I would have promised her anything in order to have her marry me.

This girl is a hard worker, and very sensible. However, she does not care for dancing, and there are other things in which our tastes differ. I have been out of work for about eight months, and now our marriage seems as far off as ever.

This girl tells me she loves me, and that we'll hope for the best. But I feel so discouraged sometimes, that I wonder if it wouldn't be better for me to give her up and try to find a girl who is better suited to me. In fact, I even considered marrying a girl I didn't love, although she cared for me. I know this is very foolish, but I believe you will understand. NORDEN.

Life is often pretty hard for many of us, my boy. However, the thing to do is to keep hope flying as high as ever. Marriage is a glorious climax when two people are really in love, but if there are any doubts of any kind, the thing to do is to wait until things are clear in your own mind. I know that conditions may make you feel uncertain and impatient, but don't make any false steps on that account. Marriage is a serious, beautiful thing which should be entered upon only with a clear mind and heart.

Try not to feel so discouraged. Surely you will find employment sooner or later, and then you will be able to judge things more soberly. But remember, you will only store up unhappiness for yourself if you marry a girl you do not love.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl nineteen years old, and a divorcee. Until I was sixteen, I never had any troubles. Then I met a boy of eighteen, and although at first my parents objected, I started dating him.

We went together for over a year. One day, on the impulse of the moment, we were married. Of course, our families objected, and at first they were going to have our marriage annulled. But finally they let us alone.

My husband found a job, and for a while we were very happy. But one day I found out that almost since the very first day of our marriage, he had been running around with another girl.

I was terribly hurt and disappointed. We couldn't get along after that, and the only thing to do that I could think of, was to divorce him.

For about three months after my divorce I completely ignored my former husband. Then he tried to see me, and when we met on the street one night, he begged me to talk it over. The outcome of it was that he wanted me to marry him again.

However, right after my divorce I met a married man who appealed to me. He was planning to get a divorce because he and his wife didn't get along. He said that he was deeply in love with me, and wanted me to marry him as soon as he was free.

Please don't misunderstand me, Mrs. Brown. I am not the cause of unhappiness between this man and his wife. They didn't get along, long before I met him.

The trouble now is that I don't know what to do. Should I wait a year for this man, or remarry my first husband? I am crazy about them both. I have tried going out with other men, but I don't enjoy myself in their company.

My former husband comes to see me twice a week, and I also date the other man two or three times a week. I don't know which one to marry. I feel as if I am in love with both of them.

Won't you please give me your opinion?
LILLY.

It is difficult to find our way through the things that come up in the normal course of life, and to make important decisions when we are not sure of ourselves. Since love is so vital a factor in life, you should be very careful to avoid making any further mistakes. You may

love one man and be fascinated by another, but if you are not sure, then you are not really in love.

However, time helps us to prove whether we are in love or not. My suggestion is that you wait a while, and in the meantime give yourself a chance to decide. Knowing your former husband probably a bit better than you know this other man, it should not be so hard for you to decide whether he would be likely to play fair if you married him again.

Mistakes are easily made, and they bring heartaches. But sometimes we learn from experience, and you might be very happy if you remarried the man who was your first love. So give yourself more time, my dear, and remember that no one can really make up our minds for us. The urge that runs through human hearts helps us to find the answer to our problems.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a young fellow of twenty-two. Last year I married a very nice girl twenty years of age. Neither of us had ever had very much in the way of luxuries.

Right after we were married I was laid off. We lived with her folks for about six weeks. I tried hard to get another job, but was unsuccessful.

My folks have a farm, and they insisted that my wife and I stay with them for a while. They let us have three furnished rooms. My wife kept house while I helped my father in the fields, and I thought that we were getting along fine.

Several times, however, when I came home for lunch, I thought that my wife looked as though something had happened. I asked her if anything was the matter, and she said that everything was all right.

One day, however, she came crying to where I was working in the field, and told me that I would have to take her back to her folks right away.

The next day we went back to her folks, but whenever I asked her what had happened, she would start to tell me, and then not finish what she was saying. It looked

as if she didn't want me to know what was wrong.

Finally I asked my mother what she knew about it. She said that she had had a quarrel with my wife, and that my wife had talked rather fresh to her. She admitted that she had said more things than she had reason to, and that my wife had done the same thing.

Now, however, my wife says that she will not come to live with me at my parents' home. I love her dearly, and I think that she loves me, but sometimes I doubt it. Don't you think that if she really loved me, she wouldn't mind what had happened, and would want to be with me?

Of course, I see her every Saturday and Sunday, but I miss her terribly. I've begged her to forget everything and come back, but she won't do it. I feel that if she loved me as much as she says she does, she would forget what happened and make up with my mother.

Please tell me what I can do about this.

UNHAPPY ALBERT W.

Life is never a simple matter when a bride is obliged to make her home with her husband's family. Of course, when such an arrangement is an absolute necessity for a while, she might try to make every effort to avoid arguments with her in-laws, and adjust herself to the existing state of affairs. This rule should also apply to her in-laws.

However, it is not unusual for many young brides to fail to adapt this attitude, and few in-laws do things according to rules. One of our very human faults is to thoughtlessly do and say things without stopping to consider whether another person's feelings are hurt or not.

If you and your wife's happiness and the success of your marriage depend upon your providing a home for her which she can call her own, then you should try your best to make that possible as soon as you can.

Meanwhile, since your mother admits that she was a little hasty in

some of the things she said to your wife, do you think it might help if your mother asked her to return? She might feel more welcome with an invitation from your mother.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have tried hard to decide what to do, but I can't seem to think of anything. Won't you please help me? I'm a girl of twenty-three. After graduating from high school I fell in love with a boy and we were secretly married.

We did not tell my folks because I was afraid to let them know. My husband's home was in another town about three hundred miles away. After he went home to his folks, I told my family about the marriage. You can imagine the fuss they raised.

They didn't like the idea at all. My mother even wanted to have the marriage annulled. When my husband wrote for me to come to him, I couldn't go without having all my folks against me.

Then my husband decided to go with his folks to another State quite far away, and I didn't want to go there. I know I should have gone wherever he went, but I didn't. He couldn't make a home for me, and I knew that living with in-laws was no fun.

About six months later he wrote that he had saved some money and wanted me to join him. He said he had a job, and that he would send me the money for my fare. I was all ready to go, but he never sent the money. I have an idea that his family had something to do with it. I also think that my husband believed I didn't love him enough to go to him when he asked me.

It is four years now since we were married, and I am still living with my folks. Being married, I don't go out much, and I am tired of staying home all the time.

Recently I met a young man who is very much in love with me, and I think that I also love him. He wants me to get a divorce so that we can be married. His past is not what it should be, but he is going straight now.

I think that I love him more than I love my husband, but I'm afraid that if I do get my freedom, our love won't last and we'll never be married. Do you think that I should try to get a divorce, or make up with my husband? I really don't know what to do, and will appreciate your advice.

MILLYE.

A marriage that isn't a marriage is certainly bound to bring confu-