

STREET & SMITH'S

LOVE STORY

MAR. 22, '41

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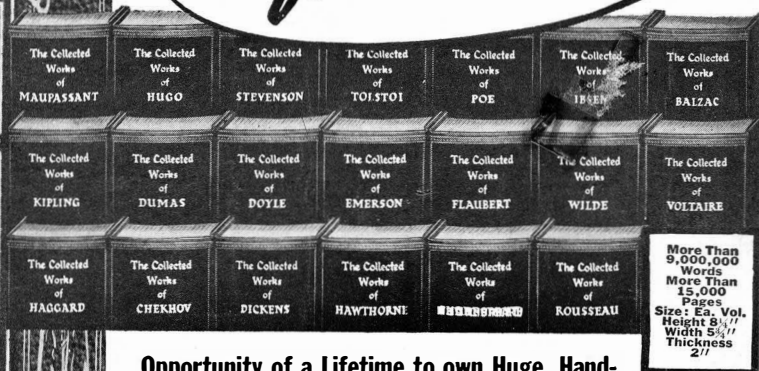
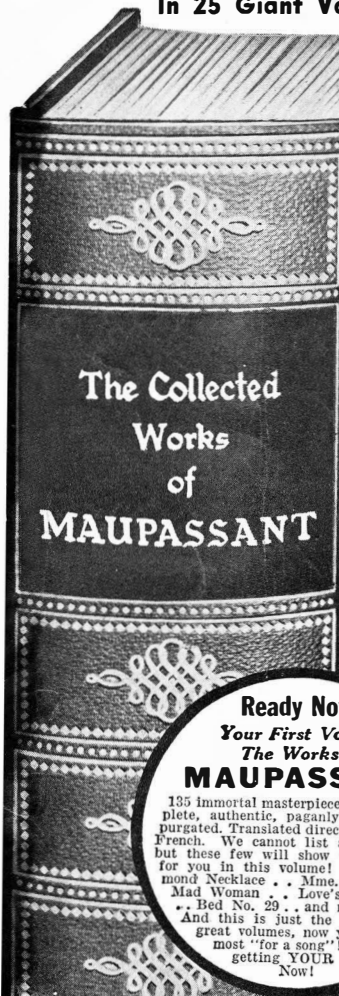
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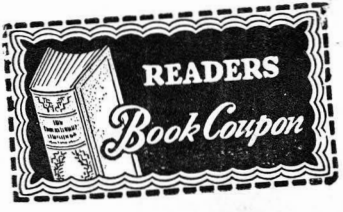
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STREET & SMITH'S

LOVE STORY MAGAZINE

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CONTENTS MARCH 22, 1941 VOL. CLXVI, NO. 6 EVERY WEEK

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All stories in this magazine are fiction. No actual persons are designated either by name or character. Any similarity is coincidental.

Publication issued every week by Street & Smith Publications, Incorporated, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York City. Allen L. Grammer, President; Henry W. Ralston, Vice President; Gerald H. Smith, Treasurer and Secretary. Copyright, 1941, in U. S. A. and Great Britain by Street & Smith Publications, Inc. Entered as Second-class Matter, April 21, 1921, at the Post Office at New York, under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Subscriptions to Countries in Pan American Union, \$5.00 per year; elsewhere, \$7.00 per year. We cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or artwork. Any material submitted must include return postage.

Printed in  the U. S. A.

STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC. • 79 7th AVE., NEW YORK

10c per COPY
\$2 Six Months
\$4 per YEAR

LOVE STORY NOTES

THEY call her "Illusive Marianne" because with practically every train and boat whistle, she has a way of disappearing. Where? Oh, we'll talk about that some other time. Anyway, Marianne Barrett did land once at the South Sea Islands, and that exquisite Tahitian romance, "Never, Never Change," in next week's issue, reflects her rapt wonder at its beauty. She has to grin, too, at the reflection of what the South Sea Islands once did to her. They inspired her to write her first book, a murder mystery. Though it's nothing to grin about, considering that she killed her villain twice, choked him for good measure and, to confuse the detectives, had him guillotined. Right now, Marianne's safely ensconced in a sweet little house in Santa Monica, with a sweet little garden and a very distinguished cat named Mr. M. C., whose temperament can match a prima donna's or a writer's any day. The important thing to remember about Marianne is that she believes in love—and believes in writing about it! We'll tell you more about her in an early issue!

FASHIONS: Suits are definitely news this spring. We've seen so many suits at the numerous fashion shows we've been attending that if we suddenly awake in the night and see a suit prancing along the foot of the bed we won't be surprised. We'll know they're "hauntin'" us. However, being fond of comfortable sports clothes, we liked very much the plaid

wool suit worn by Miss Joan Banks, lovely actress of the National Broadcasting Company, when we lunched with her the other day. Our heroine of "Love of Him" is wearing a copy of the suit this week and looks very smart (see page 21). Its bias pleated skirt and young turned-down collar are typical of the work being shown by the American designers who realize the value of the all-season suit and know that when a woman buys a suit these days it is worn all year round, instead of just a short season. The predominating colors in the plaid were slate-blue and dark red and the off-the-face hat that the smart young actress wore picked up the two colors. Her bag, gloves and shoes were of brown suède. The shoulders of the jacket were square and padded. Though we've heard lots of talk and seen models wearing suits with "fluid" shoulders we wonder how the average woman is going to like them. Frankly, we don't care for them and we heartily approve the stand taken by Mrs. Sophie Gimbel, star designer of Saks-Fifth Avenue—shoulders need not square off like a football player's; however, neither need they sag and droop. We hope the designers and manufacturers will reach a happy medium 'cause we like padded shoulders.





THE

Friend in Need

conducted by **Laura Alston Brown**

well-known authority on love and marriage

DOES a girl's popularity really suffer when she objects to petting? Can't girls be ideal pals, have lots of fun and be friendly with men, without giving the impression they can be made love to by any man who comes along?

So many girls write to me complaining that in order to have dates they are forced to allow boys to make love to them. And that, in the end, it doesn't mean anything, anyway, because after a few dates the boys lose interest. Perhaps petting cannot be entirely discouraged. But there certainly is a great difference between superficial love-making and kissing, and the deep, lasting affection that exists between two people who really love each other. And what some young people appear to forget is that emotions are not easily controlled, and therefore cannot always be taken lightly.

In the following letter Billie points out that a girl can have all the good times she wants by being sensible, and that the kind of popularity a girl wins by her lesser qualities is usually short-lived.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: After reading several letters from girls who say they have to pet or go dateless, I think they would have a better chance to keep boys interested if they didn't pet. That is, if

the boys are worth while and not the type who are out for what they can get.

I'm eighteen and quite popular, though I don't drink, smoke or pet. Once in a while I let boys I like kiss me. I used to pet when I first started dating, but the boys soon found other girls. I couldn't imagine why, until I decided I'd cut out petting.

Now when I'm out on a date I do my best to keep the conversation going either by encouraging the boy to talk, or by talking about the boys and girls we know in general. Believe me, it helps to keep a boy's mind off petting.

I'm not particularly good-looking, but I try to be jolly and good-natured. I don't always hit it off with every boy, but that doesn't worry me. What I want to say is that I have proved to myself a girl can have good times without letting every boy she dates pet her.

I think that a girl can always refuse in a nice way to kiss a boy, and that it's up to the girl whether or not the question of love-making comes up. I like to stand up for other girls, but they often do such silly things like drinking, smoking, and acting wild to make the boys notice them.

Some of the things girls should avoid

(Continued on page 120)



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PART I



Love
OF HIM

by Russell M. Coryell

LUCIA MORELAND'S heart was hammering with panic as she approached the wide doorway to the Ritz dining room. It was months since she had been there. The last time had been with her father. Her throat tightened at the memory. Then her chin lifted a little higher, reinforcing her courage. She managed a quick, friendly smile for the headwaiter, who was stepping forward so eagerly.

"Good evening, Miss Moreland."

"Hello, Pierre." She was grateful for the genuineness of his greeting. Practically everybody in her own set either cut her dead or looked at her with pity in their eyes and false cheerfulness in their voices.

"It is a long time that we don't see you, Miss Moreland. You are alone?"

He started to lead the way into the dining room, but Lucia stopped him, speaking swiftly, and by rote, the phrases she had previously determined on.

"You needn't bother to go in with me, Pierre. I'm joining someone." Her eyes were sweeping the room, going from table to table, her heart hammering. Many former friends had noticed her already, she saw, and their glances went through and beyond her with no sign of recognition. She was wondering whether she could go through with this after all when her glance encountered a man's steady, dark eyes, and again her chin went up. "He's just over here, Pierre. Please! I prefer to go alone." This last was very low and very firm. Then, with panic high up in her throat, she started

**For Lucia Moreland the word
"love" had only one meaning.**



toward the table occupied by the man with steady, dark eyes.

No one could have guessed, however, that Lucia wasn't entirely at ease. She moved with the quiet poise of generations of aristocrats. But her mouth was dry and her throat was tight. The man's dark eyes were so striking in that pale face. As she reached his table and stopped, smiling down at him, he got to his feet. She sensed his height and his fine carriage way back in her brain somewhere, but the rest of her mind was in tumult, ashamed, yet grimly determined.

"Please ask me to sit down," she said in a low, shaken voice. She smiled at him, but her lips were trembling, and her eyes were big with desperate pleading. It was more of a gasp than anything else. And her heart was clutching as she stood there, conscious of all the unfriendly eyes that were observing them, while she saw surprise leap into the man's dark eyes. She could almost read his thoughts: Surprise, reserve—and then sudden decision. The pallid face broke into a quick smile of welcome. Those who were watching couldn't guess that he hadn't the faintest idea who this breath-takingly beautiful girl was, and that he was simply responding to the desperate appeal in her young, frightened eyes.

He held her chair and pushed it lightly under her. Then took his place opposite her. He saw how pale she had gone under her rouge. He saw the faint quiver in the smiling lips. He saw the relief and the gratitude and the courage in the earnest face.

"Thank you." She caught a quick breath. She met his searching look steadily. "I'm not an adventuress," she said.

"I can see that," he answered quietly. And his smile was very nice. It had a somewhat wan, tired, but very sweet quality. Lucia knew instantly that he wasn't well.

"I'd like to explain why I have done this."

"I can't deny that I'm curious," he said, and the pale face lighted up warmly. The brown eyes studied her, smiling.

"Well"—she bit her lip—"I saw you from the door. You were alone and . . . and you looked— Well, you looked nice."

"I was thinking practically the same thing about you," he said, and bowed. "I'm flattered." His eyes were searching, questioning hers, but they looked entirely trusting. That made it easier to go on.

"I haven't eaten anything today," Lucia said. "And I'm hungry." She was looking him squarely in the eyes and speaking swiftly, trying to get it over with. Trying to be blunt and frank. "I'm dead broke. Haven't a cent. I know I look as if I ought to have money. I mean my clothes are nice," she said hastily. "But they're not mine. I'm just modeling them. Georges Lointain lets me wear them because he thinks it's good business. He doesn't have me model in his shop any more, however, because"—she lifted her chin in that gesture that indicated determination to go on in spite of everything—"instead of bringing him trade, I was causing him to lose it. My friends were going somewhere else on account of me."

"Wait a minute." His voice was quiet. He looked serious, but there wasn't any of that hardening that she had been afraid of. "You're going a little too fast for me. Let's get it straight. Do I understand that you are really hungry? That you haven't eaten anything all day?"

"Yes." She caught her lower lip between her teeth because it had started to tremble. "I know it sounds funny, but —" She stopped because he had made a motion to Pierre, and Pierre was coming. So was the regular waiter. In a

moment they were both there. And the man was speaking to Pierre.

"What have you that is nice enough to tempt a jaded appetite?" He looked at Lucia as if to indicate that he had had the greatest difficulty to persuade her to eat at all. "You'll have a cocktail first, of course."

"No, please." She looked at Pierre. "Some soup. Then steak. And vegetables."

"Yes, Miss Moreland. I know. I know exactly."

"And you'll delay my order until Miss Moreland's is ready." He said her name as smoothly as if he had known it for years.

Pierre and the other waiter moved off.

"Thank you," Lucia said very low. She looked into his eyes and tried to smile. She knew how many people were watching her. "Now you know who I am," she said.

"I know you are Miss Moreland," he answered.

"I'm Lucia Moreland." Then, because she could see that the name didn't mean anything special to him: "Richard Moreland was my father."

He nodded, but still he didn't seem to get the full significance.

"My name is Elliott--Webster Elliott," he said. "Now tell me how a girl like you happens to be broke and hungry."

"Are you being very polite, Mr. Elliott, or doesn't my father's name mean anything to you?"

"I've been in a sanitarium for the past six months, and for eight years previous to that I was in India. I'm sorry if I ought to know who Richard Moreland is."

"He committed suicide about three months ago," Lucia said. "There was a great deal of unpleasant publicity. Father had been very prominent socially and financially, but after his death we found he was absolutely penniless. In trying to save some bad investments he had lost

everything. And lost several millions of other people's money, too. They said he had misappropriated it and would have gone to prison if he hadn't killed himself."

"Oh!" It was short, expressing understanding, surprise, and polite disclaimer of further curiosity. His eyes were still quietly searching.

"I know, of course, that dad was never dishonest in his life." Lucia's clear, blue eyes met Webster Elliott's steadily. "And the people whose money he lost wouldn't have thought it dishonest, either, if he had earned money for them instead of losing it."

Elliott nodded.

"You had nothing at all left?" he asked.

"No. Everything--everything was gone. Mother's and my money as well. And since then I've made a failure at earning a living," she said. "At first I thought I could sing in a night club. But there is a big difference between a voice that your friends like and a voice that the public will like. I tried the movies. They gave me a test and dropped me. I tried modeling clothes." She drew a slow, tight breath and tried to smile. "Tonight I just got desperate. I had to have food, and I had to have money. I couldn't beg on the street"--she gave a little gasping laugh and then bit her shaking lower lip--"so I came in here. If I had gone into a cheaper place, I would have met cheaper people. And these clothes would have been out of place. I came with the intention of being very humble and asking help from some of the people who used to be friends. I didn't deliberately pick on a complete stranger. I just lost my nerve when . . . when the others cut me dead, and then I saw you. You were looking at me. You looked nice--"

"I'm glad I happened to look nice." He smiled wanly. "And you don't need to say any more. I've been hungry myself at various times in my life."

"You're being perfectly grand about this." Lucia's voice nearly broke.

"No, I don't think so. It's lots more fun to eat in company." He smiled at her. "You'd better have a roll while you're waiting," he said. "You look faint."

"I've hardly been able to keep my hands off them," Lucia admitted. "They look so good!" Her fingers trembled as she broke off a crisp piece of crust and put a dab of butter on it. "And smell so good." She put it in her mouth and she thought no food had ever tasted so delicious. "I never knew just plain bread and butter could be so sweet!" she said.

Webster Elliott watched her and she thought how kind his eyes were. And how large in that pale face! He was so thin, too! She wondered what he had been doing in India for eight years, whether he had got sick while there.

Their food came, and they were eating. Food tasted so good! Her spirits rose. Her courage came back. She didn't feel so desperate. And yet the worst of her ordeal was still ahead of her: Asking him for money. She must have money. Enough money so that she could know her mother would eat for a week at least. And during that week she would put her pride behind her and go to Monty. She would ask him for a thousand dollars. With a thousand dollars she and her mother could live while she was taking a secretarial course. There were always jobs for secretaries.

She knew she ought to have married Monty in spite of her father's suicide. She had been oversensitive. She should have had more faith in him and his love. But the disgrace had shaken her. She had loved Monty too much to be willing to risk going through with the wedding, if there was even a chance that he was doing it through pity. But she should have known that Monty wasn't afraid of what others thought. He had loved her. She was sure of that now. Now that it

was too late. Her mother had been wrong and still was. Monty hadn't jumped at the chance to squirm out of the marriage. And if he had married Joyce so quickly—well, it was because Joyce had caught him on the rebound, while he was hurt. It wasn't because Joyce was rich, as her mother said. Monty was no cad. He had really loved her. He still loved her—Lucia's heart clutched. She bit her lip. Her eyes stung.

"Your thoughts are very far away," came Webster Elliott's voice.

"Yes." She caught her breath. "With my mother." Then she sat looking at him. Her heart was beginning to beat with panic again. This was her chance to tell him about her mother. To ask for money. A little chill went over her. She hated to ask him for money now. He had been so nice about everything else. This was going to cheapen her. Well— She had to ask him. "I was thinking of mother," she said. "Back in our room. Mother is hungry, too. And she's waiting for me to come home. Waiting to see whether I'll bring her the usual bottle of milk and the loaf of rye bread." She faltered, smiled a little harshly. She had to smile like that or her lips would start trembling. "Yes," she went on, "you see, Mr. Elliott, I'm panhandling after all. I've got my dinner out of you. And now I want something for mother. Can you give me ten dollars?" She flushed to her temples and then went deathly pale. But her eyes didn't waver under his.

"Don't feel like that!" he said very low. "I don't think you're panhandling. And I don't think I'm being worked. Nobody can look at you, Miss Moreland, and not know that you're sincere. And it's never anything to be ashamed of to ask for food, either for yourself or anybody else who needs it. Everybody has a right to live." The pale face lighted up. "Of course I can let you have ten dollars."

Lucia had kept a tight, stiff face. But suddenly it broke now. There came a blur of tears and her mouth began to quiver. Her throat was all tied up in a knot. His voice had been so kind!

She put her napkin swiftly to her mouth, pressing it tight. How awful if she broke out crying! If she made a noise! If people saw her!

Presently she could take the napkin down. She could force a shaky smile. Her chest was still tight with suppressed sobs. But perhaps people imagined she had been coughing. She did cough a little, as if water had gone down the wrong way. And she put the napkin to her lips again.

"Could we take your mother out somewhere?" Elliott was asking.

"No, thank you. No, mother would much rather not. She doesn't go out much any more. She's not very well, as a matter of fact. And she's on a limited diet. Milk, butter and bread made of anything but wheat. And fruits."

"We'll prepare a basket," he said. "And have you, yourself, had plenty?" His eyes were searching hers with that nice, grave expression.

Then they were getting up together and she was conscious again of how tall he was. But terribly thin. He must have been very handsome once.

Monty and Joyce passed them as they were going out the door. Joyce pretended not to see her. Monty bowed slightly. Her heart caught and then her chin went up. Monty couldn't do more than that when Joyce cut her dead.

"There's a very nice fruit shop in the arcade," Mr. Elliott was saying. "We'll go there first." She wondered whether he had noticed how Joyce had cut her.

"You shouldn't be doing this, Mr. Elliott. Ought you really be walking at all? I mean . . . you said—"

"I'm not supposed to do too much." He gave a little laugh. "Doctors like to keep you sick as long as they can. It

pays. It ought to be the other way around, like in China. You pay the doctor to keep you well. When you get sick, he has to pay until you're well again. Good system."

She wanted to ask him what his trouble had been. But it seemed a delicate question. When a man is in a sanitarium for six months, and when he is so pale and so thin, with such big, wan eyes— She hadn't heard him cough, however.

"Do you really believe in this health-insurance plan that the doctors have been fighting so hard?" She tried to make her voice light and brittle. Just as if she were making polite conversation. But she was noticing the little flush that had come to the pallid cheeks. The brightness of the dark eyes. She was sure there was a fever there.

She scarcely heard his answer. She scarcely knew what she, herself, continued to say. She was thinking of that very kind, patient look in his big dark eyes. Eyes that perhaps had looked on death, that perhaps could see it now, standing in the background, waiting.

It was after she had got in the taxi with him and they were on their way to the cheap little room in East Seventieth Street that she heard him say:

"What are you going to do tomorrow?" And then he chuckled as her eyes went wide. "That did sound like a possible date in prospect, didn't it? I mean what are you going to do every day from now on? Have you any real hope of making good with your modeling clothes?"

"No. Not really." She sat silent, looking ahead. "What I really ought to do is study shorthand and typing. There are always jobs for secretaries. And I would make it my business to be a good one."

"Yes," he said. And he sat silent, too. After a time he gave a funny, grim laugh. "I don't know how long it takes to become an efficient stenographer," he

said. "But I'm going to make another suggestion. Try to understand it in the spirit in which it is given."

"Why, yes, of course!" She looked at him doubtfully. His mouth was grim and tight. His eyes were steady, but embarrassed.

"This is probably going to be the strangest proposal of marriage that any girl ever received."

"Oh!" Lucia gulped. Then she sat breathing very fast. Her heart was beating swiftly. They just sat looking at each other.

"I think I know how you feel," he said. "It's a good deal of a shock. But there are business angles to it. In the first place, I don't think I'm mistaken in believing that you are a girl much above the average. You naturally don't know anything about me. However, there's nothing much to know. I'm an orphan. No relatives. Very few friends." He looked at her quietly and again she got that definite impression of genuine niceness.

"I'm not shocked," she said. "And I appreciate your asking me, but—"

"Wait a minute, Miss Moreland. Don't refuse until I've told you everything. I said there were business angles to this. I'll be making an investment and you'll be making an investment. Your investment will net you over half a million dollars. I will deposit it with your bank, and let your lawyers draw up the papers," he said gravely.

Lucia caught her breath. A half million dollars right now would be a miracle. It would lift her mother out of misery. She could have a lovely place in the country, a nurse and a doctor's care. Perhaps get well. But even as she was thinking of that she was instinctively shaking her head. Marriage to her had always meant the most beautiful moment in a woman's life. She could never go into it as a cold business proposition, cheapening herself.

"Thank you," she said, her voice low. "But I just couldn't."

"I haven't finished yet," he said with slow earnestness. "I haven't explained why I am making such an offer. It's not because I think you are a beautiful girl and I'm sorry for you. I do like and admire you, what I've seen," he added quickly, "but I'm offering you marriage for . . . for another reason."

"What other reason?" Lucia looked into his dark, grave eyes and tried to read what was behind them. They seemed utterly frank and yet there was so much way deep in his soul that she couldn't fathom.

"Well," he said slowly, as if weighing each word, "suppose I tell you that I have a serious heart condition and know that I can't live very much longer. Yet I want an heir to carry on the Elliott name and to enjoy the money I have worked hard to earn."

"Oh!" Something happened inside Lucia when he said that. She didn't know exactly why, but it seemed to change everything. It changed the offer from charity to—to something else. Something in his expression as he had looked at her had made it seem quite different. The desire for a son, she thought, was really the basis of marriage. Love was just the means by which nature helped men and women find each other. And this man perhaps didn't have time to wait till he fell in love. Perhaps death stood closer to him than she knew. Perhaps that was why he had given that funny grim laugh a few moments ago. He knew he must act quickly if he wanted to leave an heir behind him. She felt quick sympathy go out to him. Her throat tightened a little as she met his eyes.

"I see, Mr. Elliott," she said softly. "And I understand."

Outside the taxi, traffic was rushing by. Horns honking. People crowding the sidewalks. The teeming life of New



"Please ask me to sit down," Lucia said in a low, shaken voice. She smiled at him, but her lips were trembling and her eyes were big with desperate pleading.

York. But Lucia was conscious only of the man beside her.

"To keep it very businesslike," he said, "I suppose I should stipulate that you will receive two hundred and fifty thousand dollars the moment you become my wife; and that you will receive another two hundred and fifty thousand when a son is born. At my death, you would be my heir, of course, you and my son."

Lucia bit her lip. Her heart was beating painfully. She hated to ask him, but it was better to be entirely frank.

"Mr. Elliott—" She broke off, looking distressed. "Mr. Elliott, maybe I'm going to hurt you."

"It's all right," he said quietly. "What is it?"

"It's . . . it's— I mean—you say you are quite ill and may not live long, and—"

"I see," he interrupted. He spoke very quietly. "Well, I don't know of course how long I may live. I can't guarantee to die at any stated time."

"Oh, I didn't mean that!" Lucia wailed. "Oh, please!"

"We're being perfectly frank," Elliott interposed. "There's no reason why you shouldn't mean that. A short-term investment with quick returns is certainly a better one than a long term."

"All right." Lucia bit her lip and sat very still. "I really didn't mean that, but"—she looked him squarely in the eyes—"we'll look at it that way, too. We'll be strictly businesslike. But what I really meant was that I understand your wanting a son. And it makes a difference to me. It isn't like receiving charity. It doesn't cheapen me in the same way. Do you know what I mean?"

"Yes."

"And I don't want you to think I'm . . . I'm just waiting for you to die. I'd rather get out of the cab right now and never see you again." Her voice broke slightly.

"Don't worry," he said quickly. "I've known you only a short time, but in that

short time I've learned more about your honesty and fineness than some men learn in a lifetime about a woman. I wouldn't have made you this very abrupt offer if I didn't know that I'm not making a mistake in you. And I want very much to have you accept it."

There was a tight silence between them. She knew he was waiting for her answer. And she couldn't give it. It unnerved her to think of him as dying soon, knowing he was going to. She admired his courage. She admired his quiet, downright honesty. She knew what it would mean to her mother to have money again. But the thought of a cold-blooded marriage!

There came rushing over Lucia the memory of Monty. A love that had had fire and thrills and glamour. Then this cold financial proposition by contrast.

"Will you let me think about it?" she asked. "Neither of us ought to rush into this without taking time to consider."

"I should want you to think about it, of course," he said.

Lucia thought about it every second after they had walked up the two flights of not-too-clean stairs to the small room she and her mother shared. She watched him and her mother together. She studied him, noticing his manner with her mother. Noticing her mother's reactions to him. She was thinking how different he was from the men she had known. How different his manner and his conversation. He had no small talk or social patter. Everything he did or said was sincere. Nothing was superficial. He was frank and simple, yet she knew there were depths that she hadn't fathomed. A profound and inscrutable reticence.

When he was gone, and she and her mother were alone, her mother's eyes looking up at her searchingly from the bed, Lucia said:

"Mother, would you think I was crazy if I told you I was going to marry Mr. Elliott?"

"No," her mother answered. She lay

looking up at Lucia thoughtfully. "He is very much in love with you," she said.

"Oh, no!" Lucia shook her head soberly. "There is no question of love or any sentiment, mother. It's a straight business proposition. He wants an heir to carry on his name. And I think"—she looked off into space—"I think I'm willing to give it to him." Her lips tightened. "Do you think that is terrible?"

"You're doing this for me, of course," her mother said quietly.

"Only partly, mother. It's mostly for myself. And a little bit for him, in a way. He's so nice. And so brave." There was no use explaining quite how awful the last months had been and what a relief it would be to have money and security again. No reason for telling her mother how it had hurt tonight to see Monty and Joyce together, cut dead by one and only furtively acknowledged by the other. No use to explain that no man could ever again mean to her what Monty had. No marriage could ever thrill her now. "He hasn't very long to live, mother."

"Oh!"

"And I'm trying to think of the future in a perfectly cold-blooded way. I mean what it will be if we go on as we are now. I've been deciding to borrow some money from Monty, a thousand dollars, maybe. I can study to be a secretary. I can get a job and make myself valuable to some business executive. I can work for him eight hours a day and make enough for us to live on. And if I work real hard," she said grimly, "and cater to him I can probably keep my job for ten, fifteen, maybe twenty years. And what will I have at the end of that time, after I've given him the best years of my life? I'll have gray hairs and the jitters." She pulled Georges Lointain's lovely gown off over her head and hung it carefully in the closet. Then she sat down and began drawing off her stockings. "No. If I'm going to give my life to a man for the money I can make, I may

as well be his wife, with a financial interest in the business."

"I've never heard you talk like that before, Lucia."

"I never have. I never even thought that way before. I guess I never did any serious thinking until recently. I didn't have to. All I had to do was live through each day as it came along and try to have as much fun as possible. That seems to be all any of our crowd did." She got up and went to the washbowl. She washed her stockings and her silk underthings and put them up to dry. "Maybe tomorrow morning I'll see this whole thing differently," she said as she put the light out and slipped into bed. "Maybe Mr. Elliott will have changed his mind, too."

II.

Morning, however, found Lucia very clear-headed. Calmly and cold-bloodedly she considered the marriage with Webster Elliott from every angle. It seemed to her she had nothing to lose. Except, of course, the beautiful dream she had always had of a breathless wedding day. And there was much to gain.

At ten o'clock Elliott came. He was quiet and grave, he looked very pale and tired, but his mind was unchanged. By twelve o'clock they had agreed upon a quiet civil wedding just as soon as the necessary arrangements had been made and the required three days' wait had been complied with.

Lucia wanted a quiet wedding with no publicity, but she had forgotten the news value of the Moreland name. Forgotten that license clerks are well taken care of by newspapers for keeping them posted when well-known people apply for a marriage license.

The very evening after she and Elliott went to the bureau every paper in New York carried a piece about Lucia Moreland, daughter of Richard Moreland. And it raked up all the old scandal. They

published pictures of her entitled: "At the height of her career as glamour girl." They published others of her entitled: "Lucia tried to capitalize on her beauty and former social position to get into the movies." They published pictures of her and Monty together: "Before her father's suicide she was engaged to the very eligible Monty Mathews, who promptly married wealthy Joyce Williamson." And another: "Miss Moreland and her mother have dropped completely out of social life and their names do not appear in the latest Social Register."

The newspapers forgot nothing that could please Lucia's enemies and gratify the cruel curiosity of the reading public.

Lucia was hurt but managed to conceal it. She cut out the most cruel and most accurate of the accounts and handed it to Webster Elliott.

"There are things here that I may have forgotten to tell you," she said. "You are entitled to know them."

He put his hand on hers in his quiet way.

"Don't let it hurt you," he said. "It isn't worth it."

No, it wasn't worth it. And yet it did hurt. It hurt with renewed bitterness when, on the day they were married, she was confronted by a row of cameramen waiting for them outside the judge's chambers as they came out. And it took all Lucia's courage to bring a gay smile to her lips; to hold her head up and look the smiling rapturous bride as the series of flash bulbs went off in their faces. But she managed it.

And when the pictures came out in the papers she caught her breath at the marvelous way they had turned out. She was radiant and Webb—funny how hard it had been to call him that—was magnificent. He had come out so tall and so handsome, just as if he really were the proudest and happiest bridegroom in the world. She hadn't realized how good-looking he was. And how sweet it had

been of him to play up that way, pretending for the sake of the reporters. A less considerate man might have made it very embarrassing. But he had carried off the fiction of gaiety.

Lucia had felt anything but the breathless bride, however. She had smiled for the photographers. She had clung rapturously to Webb's arm as they went down the steps and got into the car. But once they were out of sight of the newspapermen she had let go of his arm and drawn self-consciously away. There had been none of the thrilling rapture in becoming a bride that she always had dreamed of.

She hoped she wasn't too pale. She didn't want Webb to guess how hollow and panicky she felt inside. That feeling of finality and the knowledge that it was too late to change her mind. That realization that he was actually her husband.

Lucia couldn't help the little tremor that went over her. The quick tightening of her throat. It wasn't exactly fright. And it wasn't dislike of him. It was just the tense consciousness that the step had been taken.

"I knew what I was doing!" she told herself fiercely. "And I'd do it again. I'm not going to get shaky now. I'm not going to start feeling sorry for myself. I've done the very best thing in the world I could do. I'm not going to let him know I'm frightened or let him think I regret my bargain. He's too decent."

So she took a brave breath and held her chin high. She made herself look at him across the taxi seat—he was so pale and his mouth drawn to such a tight, grim line. But he smiled at her when she looked at him. The dark eyes lighted up.

"I'm sorry mother couldn't have been with us," she said. She hoped he couldn't guess how fast her heart was beating, nor guess the way the knot kept

coming up into her throat. "She thinks you are very nice," she added.

"I'm glad she does," Webb said. His eyes were looking deep into hers. "You're not sorry, now that it's over?"

Lucia caught her breath. He had read her mind so downrightly.

"No! No, of course not!" she cried quickly, and didn't know that her eyes filled with involuntary panic.

"I should be sorry if you were," he said gravely. His eyes continued to probe hers.

"No! No, you mustn't think that!" she cried. "I'm not sorry. I'd do it again." Then she looked him steadily in the eyes. "I wouldn't have married any other man I know like this. But"—her voice was low and a little unsteady—"you remember I said I thought you looked nice that very first time I saw you from the door of the Ritz. Well, now I know you are nice. I don't see how anyone could possibly have been nicer to both mother and me than you have been. So please don't think I'm sorry. We both know that this marriage is an unemotional, business agreement. You have your reasons for it and I have mine. I respect your reasons, and I respect you. I couldn't have married you if I hadn't respected you. And I couldn't have married you if I hadn't thought you respected me." She bit her lip and her throat choked up, but her eyes didn't waver.

"Thank you," he said. "I do respect you."

They sat in awkward silence. Lucia was tense and close to tears. But there was much still to be said. Much that had to be said. The record had to be clear.

"There has been so much else to do and to think of in the past five days," she said, "that we haven't talked about the future."

"That is true," he agreed gravely.

"Unless you especially want to," she said, "I'd rather not stay in New York." She was thinking how unbearable it

would be to her to meet Monty or Joyce and the others. "Not for a month or two at least."

"We'll go anywhere at all that you like," Webb answered.

"And before we go," she was speaking nervously, "I'd like to establish mother somewhere." She looked at him, biting her lower lip. "That's perfectly all right, isn't it? I mean, I may spend that money any way I want to, mayn't I? It's really mine?"

"Of course," he said. "I shan't know or question what you do with it. It's entirely yours."

"Then I want to get mother somewhere in the country, with a nurse and a good doctor available."

He nodded grave acquiescence.

"After that," she said, "we'll go anywhere you like."

Again he nodded. His dark eyes were on her face. She couldn't quite read their expression.

The next few days were tense and feverish for Lucia. Webb remained in New York while she found and bought a place about an hour away in Connecticut. She established her mother there and transferred to her mother's name the remainder of the entire two hundred and fifty thousand dollars that Webb had made over to her upon their marriage.

"I don't feel quite so much as if I had been bought, now that the money is yours, mother," she said. She caught her breath and her throat went tight. She put her arms around her mother, held her tight, then kissed her and gave her a bright smile. "Be seeing you, mom," she said.

Then she went back to New York. She telephoned Webb from the station. She thought it would be easier that way. And then she would arrange to meet him in public. She wasn't quite ready to be alone with him yet. That was coming soon enough.

Her voice was tense as she asked to

be connected with his room. When he answered, his voice was reserved. An inquiring: "Hello?"

"It's Lucia," she said nervously. "I'm back."

His tone changed instantly.

"Why, hello!"—quick with surprise and pleasure. "I wasn't expecting you."

"I just got in. I'm at the Grand Central Station." She found herself smiling into the mouthpiece, her tension dissolving. It was nice to be welcomed. Nice because it was sincere, she knew. That was the reassuring thing about Webb. Everything he did was genuine. "I thought perhaps you would meet me and we'd have lunch together."

Her nervousness was gone when she left the booth. His voice was so steady and sure. It came nicely over the telephone.

And when they met she felt the steady, searching quality of his dark eyes. His hand clasped hers firmly, then let go.

"Hello, Lucia." The lips smiled, gravely. The voice was quiet. It didn't have the spontaneous warmth that she had thought she sensed over the phone. There was a reticence, a controlled reserve. And she tightened up at once, reacting instinctively.

Both of them were ill at ease all during lunch. She felt his eyes go to her the moment she looked away. Drop to his plate when she looked back. And embarrassment grew on her.

"Had you thought where you would like to go?" he asked. And her heart clutched.

"No." It was a breathless gasp. Then she got control of herself. "Aren't there some places that would be better for you than others?" she asked.

His eyes raised quickly to meet hers then. So dark and large in the pale face. The cheekbones showed lean and high in the thin face. The jaw was very firm. The mouth firm almost to the point of grimness.

"It doesn't matter particularly," he said. "I've always been fond of New Mexico. I still have a ranch there." His eyes grew reminiscent. A little glow in them. "I haven't seen it for eight years. But perhaps you don't like mountains and deserts and plains."

"I think it would be very nice," Lucia said. It would be far from anyone who might know her. Probably as easy a place as any.

"I'll telegraph Chuck," Webb said. "Chuck is my foreman." He grinned. "He'll get the surprise of his life. He thinks I'm still in India." Then he said: "How soon could you be ready to go?"

"Why . . . why any time." Under the table her hands clenched tight. She didn't want to stay in New York. Not at the Ritz with him. "I could be ready tonight. I suppose I ought to get some clothes suitable for ranch life." She was speaking quickly. "What ought I have?"

Webb's eyes met hers steadily.

"I think we ought to give Chuck two or three days, at least, to get things ready," he said. "And I've some business in Philadelphia." His eyes dropped to his plate. "If you don't mind being left here for a couple of days."

"No. No, not at all." She drew a breath of relief. She didn't believe for a moment that he had any business in Philadelphia. It was just that he sensed her panic. And she promised herself that she'd never let him guess it again. Anyone as decent as that deserved a wife that made no excuses.

"You'll dress for comfort on the ranch," Webb said then. "If you ride at all—"

"I do. I love it," Lucia said quickly. She made herself enthusiastic. "It'll be fun buying an outfit. Come with me," she added impulsively. "Help me pick it out." And, having said it, she was glad of the impulse, for Webb had looked pleased.

It was really the first time they had

Plaid wool suit as worn by Miss Joan Banks, NBC radio actress (see page 5).



It took all Lucia's courage to bring a gay smile to her lips; to hold her head up and look the rapturous bride as the flash bulbs went off in their faces.

done anything together just for the fun of it. Before their marriage it had all been very businesslike and rather stiff. Just practical arrangements. She hadn't seen Webb drop his reserve and be just his simple, friendly self. And she found him very good company. She even got a little lift of pride to see the quick attention he got in the shops. And he got it without trying to get it. In fact, he didn't seem conscious that salespeople were particularly eager to please him.

It was the first time they had gone out together as husband and wife, Lucia giving the name of Mrs. Webster Elliott. It made her self-conscious, but Webb appeared not to notice.

And it was fun buying things again, not having to worry about price. Just buying what pleased her. And he didn't question price either. All he wanted to know was whether she liked it. And if asked his opinion he gave it easily and sincerely.

"Unfortunately, however," he said once when she had tried on a sports outfit that was very colorful, "you make any clothes you wear look nice."

Lucia hadn't expected a compliment from him, and she colored. After that their manner toward each other was kept on the lighter, gayer side. But under it, Lucia was always conscious of the weight of impending embarrassment. She knew they were just putting off the day of reckoning.

Her three days alone in New York, nevertheless, were a welcome reprieve. Then he returned from Philadelphia—if, indeed, he had really been there—and he made all arrangements. They were to go out by plane.

During the trip, Lucia hid her nervousness behind bright, brittle talk. Questions about his early life. About the foreman, Chuck. About the ranch in general. About India. Anything at all to keep them from falling into awkward silences.

And she knew he was embarrassed, too. She sensed it.

Well, she mustn't lose courage now. She looked at Webb's thin face, and the steady, kindly eyes. She had to go through with it. Her father had been accused of misappropriation of funds. She knew he hadn't misappropriated them. And she knew she couldn't either. That quarter of a million dollars that she had given to her mother had been advanced on the understanding that the rest of the bargain was to be fulfilled.

Her heart was in her throat, nevertheless, as the plane came down onto the airport field and she knew they were there. She didn't have much time for introspection, however. She found Western greetings were very cordial. Chuck and Webb gripped hands, looked each other in the eyes. Then Chuck began a suppressed but hilarious series of blasphemies while they continued to wring each other's hand and try to pound each other's back. She had never seen Webb so animated and she was rather worried at the strenuous handling he was getting.

Then she was being introduced, and Chuck had his big hat off, showing a stretch of untanned forehead where his hat covered it. His eyes were very blue in the bronzed face.

"This is my wife, Chuck," Webb said.

"I'm shore glad to know you, Mis' Elliott." Chuck pumped her arm twice and stood grinning at her. And Lucia knew those shrewd eyes were seeing everything about her and that this cowboy would either accept her as a good, cordial friend or take his cue from her and be a reticent, respectful foreman, whichever she wanted.

"I'm glad to know you, Chuck," she said heartily. "I've heard plenty about you."

There was a wild ride then in a dilapidated station wagon that smelled of feed and leather and insecticide. Chuck drove recklessly, turning in his seat to talk to

them and point out landmarks without slackening speed.

Lucia got a fleeting glimpse of red foothills and lavender-blue mountains, stretches of dry prairie, rocks, sand and tall cactus.

A little over an hour's drive from the railroad station, they dipped over a hill and she saw a green valley with grazing land, cattle scattered over it, a brook, and several low, unpainted board buildings. The station wagon careened down the hill raising a cloud of dust and skidded to a stop in front of the ranch-house with squealing brakes. A good-looking girl in blouse and slacks stood on the veranda.

"That's Tennessee," Chuck said with pride, "my wife."

Tennessee greeted them with a soft drawl of welcome, her eyes sweeping up and down Webb and then coming to Lucia, on whom she smiled.

"I expect you-all want to wash up," she said. Her smile was frank and easy,

a hostess welcoming guests. She led Lucia through the big living room with its stone fireplace, trophies and heavy furniture to a door that opened off it. "I've fixed this room up for you and Mr. Elliott," she said. "It's the biggest room and it's got the nicest bed." There was pride in her voice and she watched Lucia's face expectantly as the latter stepped inside.

Lucia had caught her breath, and her heart was pumping hard. Panic had gripped her, but she was saying fiercely to herself: "I mustn't let this girl and Chuck guess the truth! I'm not going to let Webb down now!" And then she heard Webb's voice directly behind her. He mustn't say anything either! She whirled to face him, her cheeks like chalk, her trembling lips smiling stiffly—and she looked straight up into his dark eyes.

"Look, Webb dear!" she cried. "What a lovely room Tennessee has prepared for us!"

Will Lucia stick to her promise to her husband or will she renege? Follow her story in this magazine next week.

DAUGHTER OF ARIES

Wait for the conquering lord of March
 Riding forth on the lion morning,
 Tearing the fringe of the virgin larch,
 Deafening me to discretion's warning!
 Off with my silver-embroidered cape,
 Flash its vermilion tulip lining!
 Tingle, my heart, when his tall cloaked shape
 Bends for me, passionate fingers twining!

Dance with my lord wind high on the mountain,
 Ride with him, shameless, into the sun!
 Drink from abandon's purple fountain,
 Time to be sober when spring is done!
 Homeward, my heart, with the red clouds flying—
 Weep through the night for a mad day's dying!

IRENE STANLEY.

A NOVELETTE



POWDER PUFF Jockey

Down Mexico way where women race against men.

by Mary Marsh

I.

THE late-afternoon sun lay across the Caliente racetrack. It fell upon the shining-coated horses thundering down the stretch in a cloud of dust. It picked out the brightly colored silks of the girl jockeys. For this was one of the "powder-puff" races when the thoroughbreds were ridden by jockeyettes.

Of them all, Nicki Brandon was the best known, and she heard her name

called from the grandstands as the horses rounded the last turn into the home stretch.

"Come on, you Ladybug! Bring her in, Nicki!"

But she paid little heed. Her eyes were on Enid Taft, riding under the same red-and-white silks of the Hamilton Stables that Nicki wore. Enid had her mount, Piper, ahead by three lengths.

But Piper was supposed to be ahead. Brian Hamilton had ordered it that way; had given Piper to Enid for a mount. And at the end of the race, Enid would take the applause—and Brian's praise!

"She won't!" Nicki cried aloud. "Come on, Ladybug! I know you're the better horse, no matter what Brian thinks!" And she brought her bat down very lightly on the filly's rump, taking care to ride wide of the rail. It was the only way. As a yearling, Ladybug had been forced through the rail and, ever since, been so shy of it that she would slow down if crowded close.

But otherwise, Ladybug was dead game. And now, hearing the familiar voice that had urged her on in practice heats and fed her sugar for reward, the horse spurted. A few more moments of blinding speed and the race was over with Ladybug the winner by half a length!

A shiver of pride and excitement ran through Nicki as she tossed her bat into a waiting hand and dismounted. This would be scored as the tenth winning for Nicki Brandon—and victory was no less sweet when she saw Enid, her face a mask of anger, hurrying toward the dressing rooms.

But there was no reason why she shouldn't win, Nicki told herself loftily, as she pulled off her cap and shook out her coppery curls. Racing was in her blood, her grandfather and father both having been champion owners, and her whole life had been filled with the sport of riding fleet-footed thoroughbreds to glory. It was the very reason, when hard times struck, that she had been able to slip into this job so easily and so naturally. The job of being jockeyette for Brian Hamilton.

Brian! Something tightened in Nicki's throat at the mere thought of the man, and when she turned to see him striding up to her she felt suddenly weak and breathless.

"Nice going, Nicki, even if you did disobey orders!" His brown eyes smiled down at her, and there were twinkling golden lights in their depths.

Nicki's head came up proudly. "I always said Ladybug was the best horse!"

For a moment Brian looked down at her and a quizzical expression crept into his eyes, then he said: "Get dressed and we'll go to the Feed Box. We'll have to talk this over!" His smile was teasing.

Nicki stiffened a little. She rode Brian's horses and he was her boss—irking situation though it was—but she wanted to be entirely indifferent to this fascinating charm that was his. Wanted to forget that she had never seen any man so good-looking, so laughingly, casually godlike as Brian. He was tall, sun-tanned and boyish, with dark, unruly hair and brown eyes that were gay and had a devil-may-care expression in them. But Nicki told herself that she couldn't like anything about him. Brian was just a wealthy, careless playboy with an outrageous reputation. Women spoiled him to death, ran after him day and night, only to have their hearts broken and tossed carelessly aside. Enid Taft was his current infatuation and Nicki didn't want to be another. So there was no smile on her lips as she faced him, her coppery head held back, her long-lashed gray eyes slightly closed.

"Are those orders?"

Brian's grin widened delightedly. "Streamlined but slightly frigid, aren't you?" he murmured, then nodded. "They're orders. I'll walk with you to the club and wait." And very deliberately he linked his arm through hers, drew her close to him.

The nearness of him sent the blood leaping wildly through Nicki's veins and, for a moment, she could only stand there, breathless, pressed against him. Then, suddenly, frantically, she was trying to pull away, away from the mad enchant-

ment of him. But Brian only laughed, tightened his grasp and led her away.

It wasn't fifteen minutes later that the two of them were walking past the long line of stables toward the eating house and cocktail bar known as the Feed Box. Nicki had changed into a clinging soldier-blue wool frock and tiny matching hat that perched provocatively over one eye. She was conscious of Brian's admiring gaze—conscious of it and yet wanting desperately to be unaffected by his charm.

"You're certainly a hard-headed little number, Nicki," he told her smilingly. "Cutest I've ever come across, though."

A flush of color rose in Nicki's smooth cheeks. The same line that he probably used on every girl he knew. She opened her lips to say something chilling, when Brian added quickly:

"Don't look so fierce, and you'd better swallow all those nasty things you were about to hurl at me."

She caught her breath and gazed up at him, at the infectious grin that, somehow, twisted her heart. You couldn't be haughty with a man like Brian; he was too adorable, too carelessly fun-loving.

"How do you know what I was going to say?" Nicki asked him quickly and a saucy smile came to her lips. "How do you know I wasn't going to tell you what a wonderful, handsome creature you are?"

She said it with as much flippancy as she could command, but her pulses hammered wildly. The feeling angered her, somehow, as she thought suddenly of Enid. She didn't want to be another victim, didn't want to lose her heart to this man.

But, to her surprise, Brian didn't smile. "I know you weren't going to say that," he told her seriously. "I feel sure you think me a conceited fool, as well as some other very uncomplimentary things. That's why I have to try to change your mind."

They were walking into the deserted cocktail lounge, for the program was only half over, and Nicki, in a daze, found herself being led to a secluded booth. She dropped down on the leather lounge and lost her breath, as Brian seated himself very close beside her and took her hand in his. Under his touch, her own fingers tingled and throbbed in a trail of fire that led straight to her heart. She scarcely heard Brian giving their order to the waiter. She could only sit there with delicious little shivers of excitement racing down her spine and hate herself fiercely for being so weak.

And then, Brian was looking at her and the teasing expression was gone from his eyes, leaving only warm golden lights.

"I've been wanting to talk to you, Nicki," he murmured. "Wanting to tell you that something's very wrong with me."

She stared at him. "Why, Brian, what do—"

"That's just it. I can't eat, can't sleep without forever having a vision of coppery hair and gray eyes. Oh, Nicki, say that under that hard little shell, your heart tells you something, too!"

Her breath failed her. He was drawing her into his arms, holding her closely, fiercely, and a white flame seemed to leap between them. She didn't want to resist him, Nicki realized; she was helpless against the mad desire that suddenly rioted through her veins. She could only relax in his arms and when his lips lowered to hers, give a little sigh of rapture. It was a breathless, dizzy moment when nothing existed but the warm sweetness of his mouth and exquisite ecstasy that came in a blaze, setting fire to every part of her being.

"Sweet!" Brian whispered, his brown eyes dancing into hers.

"Oh, Brian, I'm . . . I'm really sorry now that I disobeyed orders and let Ladybug win," she told him in a low

voice that seemed scarcely audible above the wild pounding of her heart.

"It's all right, Nicki. I knew Ladybug was the better horse. I was just holding her back for the big race."

It was like adding fuel to the excitement that already burned within her and Nicki's gray eyes fired with eagerness.

"Then Ladybug's going to run in the Sunset Derby?"

Brian nodded. "I entered her some time ago and made it final today."

"And she'll win!" Nicki said exultantly, and she thought how glorious it was going to be to ride Ladybug to victory for Brian. To win for this man who, somehow, had struck some mad answering chord in her heart!

A frown gathered on Brian's bronzed forehead. "I hope so. She's rail-shy, but she's faster than the rest. The only horse I'm afraid of is Flamingo from the Hartford Stables. That bay is a winged wild cat!"

Nicki smiled. "Don't worry about Flamingo, Brian!" There was a joyful song ringing through her whole being. She and Ladybug! She was so sure they would win against all the other girl jockeys and their mounts. Together they would ride to glory—ride with the vision of Brian's brown eyes and laughing mouth cheering them on!

The waiter came to the table with their drinks and, as Brian lifted his glass, his gaze met Nicki's in a message that brought a tremulous lift to her spirits.

"Well, here's to us and to Ladybug!"

A little shiver ran through Nicki and she nodded. She felt buoyant, vitally alive, and she had no illusions as to the cause of it. She had tried so hard to hate this man, and instead—

"There's Enid!" Brian exclaimed suddenly, and Nicki saw the sudden eagerness that came into his face. It stabbed into her, that look, brought back the realization that Enid was really Brian's heart interest.

Through a blur of agony she saw him put down his glass and stand up, smiling with pleasure, as the dark-eyed, ivory-skinned jockeyette came over to their table. In her fur-trimmed suit with her shiny raven hair, Enid looked stunning, startlingly attractive, and was, Nicki knew, well aware of that fact.

"Oh, hello, darling!" The girl's voice was a low drawl as she slipped her hand into Brian's and stood leaning against him in an intimate, possessive way. "Sorry I didn't win for you, but Nicki seemed to want all the glory!" She flicked mocking eyes at her.

Nicki opened her lips to make some retort, but Brian broke in quickly: "Forget it, Enid, and have a drink. Nicki didn't mean anything. She was just carried away by the race."

The girl's brows lifted. "Oh, really!" she exclaimed scornfully. "How very novel!" And with a faint laugh she sank down on the other side of Brian, settling herself very close to him.

Nicki couldn't bear to see them together. Brian hadn't taken his gaze from Enid's face, she realized. She couldn't blame him for being attracted to the girl and yet, there was a sense of primitive jealousy like a spear point twisting in her heart. Hurt and resentment overwhelmed her and her coppery head came up.

"Yes, really!" she repeated hotly. "I love horses and love riding them. To me, racing is more than just a means of making money—it's a real thrill!" She hoped the remark would strike deep. Enid only raced for money and publicity, and had no real love for horses. She used her bat more than necessary, too.

Enid didn't answer, but her black eyes filled with hate. Then, deliberately ignoring Nicki, she smiled up at Brian, laying her hand possessively on his arm.

"Darling! I'm so thrilled about the Derby. There's no question but that I

can win on Ladybug! Keep her away from the rail and she's got speed!"

The words hammered into Nicki's brain sickeningly, stunningly. "Ladybug!" she gasped. "You . . . you're not riding her in the Derby?"

Enid's glance slid over to her and her mouth twisted a little. "Naturally," she purred. "What else did you think? Brian promised me weeks ago."

"No! Brian!" There was agony in Nicki's heart as she turned to him. "It's not true! Say it isn't true!"

He looked at her, startled, and his forehead wrinkled a little. "Why, yes, Nicki, I didn't think it would matter which one of you rode. When Enid asked to—"

"Didn't think it would matter!" Nicki echoed shrilly. "Didn't think it would matter! After I've made friends with Ladybug, taken care of her and learned all her little tricks! You . . . you'd dare let this creature ride my horse!"

Brian's mouth tightened. "Ladybug happens to be my horse," he said sternly, "and Enid is riding him! You'll have a chance on another mount."

He loved the girl or he wouldn't be defending her like this! Nicki found herself on her feet. She was trembling with rage and stinging humiliation and something else that she couldn't explain herself.

"I'll not ride any horse but Ladybug!" she cried. "And I despise you, Brian Hamilton, as I've never despised anyone! You did this to me deliberately. Up until now I've been aloof to your so-called charms and this was your way of getting even!" And with that she turned and fled from the cocktail lounge, not stopping until she reached her car. There were hot, stinging tears in her eyes as she flung herself behind the wheel of the little car and drove furiously away.

The natives were having a fiesta in Caliente that night, and, all around her was a wild rush of preparation. Gig-

gling, dark-skinned Mexican girls hurrying up and down the sidewalks, the music of guitars on every corner and brightly dressed cavaleros riding along in small groups.

But Nicki saw nothing. She drove in a blur of anger and hurt that blinded her to everything else. Brian letting Enid ride Ladybug in the Sunset! And doing it because he was in love with the girl! A shiver ran through Nicki as she remembered the thrill of tasting his lips on hers. That poignant awareness of him. But Brian hadn't meant anything he had said. He was utterly ruthless! He could kiss her the way he did, and yet really care for someone else!

Oh, she had tried to build up a defense against him, knowing that this might happen, but it had been useless. Helplessly, unable to fight the desire that burned within her, she had offered her heart—to be broken!

It was all so humiliating and so maddening!

Nicki's hands clenched tightly on the steering wheel. She wasn't through fighting, however. In some way she would even the score with Brian, make him suffer for everything he had done to her!

But how? Nicki's forehead wrinkled in thought, only to smooth away as a wild idea presented itself, a plan that was so daring, so utterly wanton that it took her breath. And yet, she didn't care, she told herself defiantly. She just couldn't be denied!

II.

A few moments later, Nicki was stopping her car in front of the big house where she rented a small apartment during the racing season. Cheeks aflame, she rushed into the house and, without pausing, flung herself into a chair in front of her tiny desk. A pen and a piece of paper, and she was writing



Nicki felt the blood rush to her face, felt her heart pound. Brian had jerked away from her and was staring at Enid. There was a terribly grim look on his face.

feverishly, the words spilling themselves across the page:

ENID!

Perhaps you will understand when I tell you that Brian and I have been more than friends! If you will come to my apartment this evening, I will explain many things you should know.

NICKI.

She didn't reread what she had written. She didn't dare. She had started this thing and she was going through with it. The room was almost in darkness now and Nicki stood up to turn on a light. Then she was walking swiftly into her bedroom, to the door of her closet. A blue chiffon negligee was swept from its hanger and a few minutes later was draping itself down the curved length of Nicki's slender figure. Captivating, daringly revealing!

She was beautiful and she knew it, but her mind was on something else. She was thinking that Enid and Brian had left the club by this time and were probably at their respective apartments, dressing for dinner.

Nicki was trembling as she picked up the phone by her bed and called Brian's number. She was plunging headlong into a dangerous complication and yet, curiously, she wasn't afraid. There was only a sharp sense of excitement, of breathless expectancy.

And then, Brian answered and her heart seemed to cease beating altogether.

"Oh, Brian, it's Nicki." She drew a deep breath and rushed on. "Brian, I . . . I want to talk to you right away. It's very important. Will you come to the apartment?"

She could sense his hesitation, then: "All right, I'll be over in a few minutes." And the phone clicked.

For a while, Nicki could only sit there, then she was rushing for the note on her desk, hastily scribbling Enid's address on the back of it. Now to find someone to deliver the message.

She opened the front door and gave a little cry of delight. She had almost forgotten about the fiesta that was going on, but now, the noise and excitement of the crowd rushed to greet her. Men wandered up and down, strumming guitars. Vendors shouted from the colorful stalls that were a blaze of light along the street. The tantalizing odor of sizzling *tacos* blended with the fragrance of perfumed candles. Somehow it wasn't a night for unsavory thoughts or actions and, for just a moment, Nicki found herself weakening. Then, very quickly, she stuck the note and money into the hand of a little Mexican boy who was loitering nearby.

"Deliver this message right away!" she told him. "Pronto! Understand?"

"*Si, señorita!*" He grinned good-naturedly and stood watching her as she went back inside.

Brian came almost immediately afterward, but it took Nicki several seconds before she could open the door in response to his knock. There was a tightness about her heart that, somehow, wouldn't let her breathe. Still, she didn't forget her plan, remembering to leave the door slightly ajar, resting on the catch.

The young horseman strode into the apartment and suddenly, the place seemed to be filled with his bigness, his handsome vitality, all the warm friendliness of him. But there was no sympathy in his manner now, only a cold sternness as he faced her.

"Well, Nicki, what is it?" His eyes swept over her sheer negligee and for an instant little fires kindled in their brown depths only to die away again.

She felt a twinge of anger at his tone. He was determined to be unyielding and stubborn, and it would take all her patience to break through that defense.

"I wanted to talk to you, Brian. Let's sit down for a moment." And, slipping her hand into his, she drew him over to the divan. Her pulses were throbbing wildly and she felt a queer, dizzy excite-

ment as she watched Brian seat himself rather stiffly beside her. She felt as if he had placed an invisible barrier between them, but it only goaded her on.

"Well, Nicki?" he repeated.

She lifted her gaze to his. "I'm sorry I was so nasty this afternoon, Brian," she said softly. "But I love Ladybug so much—I just couldn't bear the thought of Enid riding her."

"There's nothing wrong with Enid. She's a fine rider," Brian returned in a level voice, but some of the sternness vanished from his face.

Nicki leaned toward him then, a soft smile on her lips.

"Oh, I know, but, Brian, darling, wouldn't you rather have Nicki riding for you?"

He looked at her for a moment, his eyes darkening with sudden intensity, an odd excitement.

"You little devil! Little gray-eyed devil!" he whispered hoarsely and reaching out, caught her to him. Time stopped for Nicki and she forgot everything except that his lips were on hers.

Then, suddenly there was a rustling sound at the door and a startled gasp echoed in their ears—mocking, incredulous. Finding the door unlatched, Enid had come in without knocking, as Nicki had hoped she would, and was standing before them like some goddess of vengeance, in a black crêpe gown with a short fur jacket flung around her shoulders.

"So it's true!" Her dark eyes were black with fury. "I couldn't believe it, but now I know!"

Nicki felt the hot blood rush to her face, felt her heart leap high into her throat. Brian had jerked away from her and was on his feet, staring at Enid. There was a terribly grim look on his face.

"What is it you know? What're you talking about, Enid?"

The girl laughed hollowly. "Stop pretending! It's you and Nicki, of course!

And this note!" She waved the paper before him. "All along this has been going on and yet you let me think—"

Brian's face turned scarlet. "What do you mean—"

"I mean that you've deceived me, Brian Hamilton, and that I'm going to smear your name all over the place! And Nicki's, too!" Her voice had risen to a shrill pitch. "And when I get through with you, neither of you'll dare show your faces on any racetrack!" She whirled to the door, jerked it open. "Furthermore, I'm no longer working for you! Hartford Stables needs a girl jockey and I'm going to apply!" The door slammed as she left the apartment.

There was silence after that, a strained, taut silence. Nicki couldn't move, couldn't say a word. She had succeeded in her plan—Enid wouldn't be riding Ladybug in the Derby tomorrow—yet, there was no triumph in her heart. There was only stunning, blinding conviction. The realization that she loved Brian and had always loved him! It was jealousy and pride that had driven her on to hurt him, and now she had done him an irreparable wrong! She couldn't bear to see him standing there, looking at her so accusingly, so scornfully!

"Brian, I want to tell you—" she began.

"Don't bother!" he interrupted savagely and strode into her bedroom. A moment later he emerged with one of her coats he had picked from the closet. "Here! Put this on and come with me!"

She stared at him. "But why?"

"Well, you don't deserve this consideration, but I'm not going to have your name and mine dragged through every scandal sheet." His mouth twisted. "This is fiesta night and the natives love weddings. We'll be married immediately!"

Nicki gasped and then began to laugh shakily, hysterically, through tears that choked in her throat. Here was the man she loved forcing her to marry him. Not

because he loved her, but because he hated her!

And yet, no matter how great the indignity of it all, no matter how much her pride rebelled, Nicki knew that nothing on earth could keep her from going with him. She loved Brian. She had to be with him; otherwise, life was nothing.

"I never knew I could despise anyone so much!" she cried, but her heart was sobbing against the lie on her lips. "It's your name you're trying to shield, not mine!"

"Nevertheless, you're going to marry me!" Brian's eyes burned with a strange, feverish intensity. "We'll get an annulment when this blows over. Come on!" His fingers closed around her arm and he was half dragging, half carrying her from the apartment.

A few moments later they were pushing their way through the singing, hilarious crowds toward the dusty adobe courthouse. There were questions in Spanish. Nicki signed something and then they were standing before a grinning official in his own home.

Why hadn't she run away?—she kept asking herself. Why was she submitting to this grotesque, pride-shattering escapade? She couldn't think, she could only stand there, limp, helpless.

The official's wife held a candle and by the solemnity of her face Nicki knew that the ceremony had begun. A beautiful, solemn ceremony no matter how or where held.

The mumbled words blurred in her ears as she looked up at the man who stood beside her. The glow from the candle caught the lights in his brown eyes—eyes that were stern, unfathomable. She felt a little shiver. He hated her and yet, tonight at least, he was hers!

Brian turned, gazed down at her, and everything was quiet. "And now, do I kiss the bride?" he murmured, but far back in his eyes there was a tormented look, perhaps remembering that other kiss.

The bride! A wild throb of excitement was pulsing in her heart. In spite of everything they were really married!

She raised her mouth for his kiss, felt a thrill of rapture as his lips brushed hers, lightly, carelessly. It was a caress that seemed to draw out her very heart and she knew from the sudden tension in Brian's body that he felt it, too.

They accepted the congratulations of the official and his wife and in silence left the house and went back to Nicki's apartment, to close the door on the noise and gaiety of the fiesta. It was only then that Brian said in a strained, muffled voice:

"No, don't turn on the light. The light makes you see things you wish you didn't! You're lovely in the glow from the window, Nicki. A saintly look on your face, just as if you hadn't tried to destroy me."

A sob swelled and ached in her throat. "Brian!" She came close to him. "Brian, you'll never understand why I did it, but maybe some day, I can make it up to you."

"You're a lovely, alluring little devil, Nicki!" Almost roughly, his arms swept her close to him so that the uneven pounding of his heart blended with her own. "Maybe that's why I really wanted you to marry me!" His lips crushed down on hers.

She couldn't bear that kiss—it stirred her so unutterably. "Brian, I love you!" she murmured with shameless abandon. "Don't you know that by now? I love you!" And she clung to him wildly.

His arms tightened and he buried his face in her throat. "Don't say that! Tell me to go, Nicki!"

"No, Brian! Don't leave me!"

Madness was throbbing through them with a beating, pulsing insistence that could no longer be denied. The ecstasy of drowning moments throbbed in Nicki's veins. Rapture as fairylike as the shifting pattern of shadows on the floor and



Brian was waiting for her as she stepped down from the scales. There were queer lights in his eyes. "Do you still want to ride Ladybug?" he asked.

yet real. the realest thing that had ever happened to her. Moments slid by, each one as long as eternity and as brief as a heartbeat.

Sanity again. Sanity that came as simply as snapping on a light, as the sick look in Brian's eyes when he said harshly:

"Heaven forgive me, Nicki! I was crazy mad! I thought you were just after my money and I wanted to fool you. I had no right to marry you. You won't believe it, but I dropped a fortune in a bad investment not long ago and have been going on my nerve ever since. I was pinning everything on Ladybug winning the Derby!"

Nicki didn't answer. She could only stare at him helplessly. At the agonized look on his face. He was going to the door and she held out her hand as if to stop him. "Brian!" For she had to tell him that money didn't matter.

But he shook his head. "We've done each other a terrible injustice, Nicki. I'll always hate myself for this!" And the door closed after him.

He was gone! And with him life itself! Hot tears stung her eyes as she huddled on the couch. They had betrayed each other, only in the end to betray themselves. Love, a thing of madness and dreams and tears, had been driven away by bitterness. And yet, she couldn't give up now, Nicki told herself desperately. She could ride Ladybug for Brian in the Derby tomorrow, prove that she could fight for something that meant more to her than life itself—Brian's love!

Derby day! A day of golden sunshine and gentle breezes. At two o'clock in the afternoon Nicki was putting on her silks and boots. Then she got her tack, reported at the scales and weighed out. Brian was waiting for her as she stepped down and something tightened around her throat at the sight of him.

"You still want to ride Ladybug, Nicki?" There were queer lights in his eyes.

Her coppery head came up, but her pulses throbbed wildly with awareness of him. "Ride and win!"

Brian said nothing and together they walked down the runway to the saddling stalls. It wasn't until he gave her a leg up that he spoke again.

"Enid's riding Flamingo from the Hartford Stables. The race will wind up between you two."

Nicki's heart twisted, then deliberately she leaned forward and stroked the filly's neck. "Ladybug won't fail us, Brian. She can't!"

The bugle sounded then, and for an instant Nicki's glance locked with Brian's. She wanted so much to read a message there, but his face was inscrutable. He was asking for nothing, his whole future was at stake, but there was no supplication in his eyes. They were both so much alike, Nicki thought with a little stab, both so proud, so unyielding.

She nudged her horse and left the paddock then, following the red-coated rider on the fat lead pony down the track in the parade to the post. Following Ladybug was Flamingo, with the other horses behind in a shining, dancing chain.

An appreciative shout burst from the crowd as they came onto the track, but Nicki scarcely heard it. She was thinking of Brian, and Enid riding Flamingo. Enid with her rage-filled eyes boring into Nicki's back.

The horses passed the starting line, turned and came dancing back again. There were a couple of bad actors in the field, but Ladybug and Flamingo stood quietly in the midst of the commotion. They were veterans with equable tempers.

Nicki, hunched on Ladybug's saddle, couldn't stop thinking about Brian, the man she loved, and how much the Derby meant to him. She had to win, had to hope against hope that she could keep Ladybug away from the rail!

And then, the bell jangled! The gate went up!

Ladybug broke like a streak of lightning, running smoothly with the even, powerful stride that was hers. And Nicki, perched high, urged the little horse forward. There were a couple of hot front runners in the pack, horses that would set a slashing pace for a few furlongs and then fold up. But she wasn't

afraid of them. It was Flamingo, the powerful bay Enid was driving, a good length ahead of Ladybug, that counted.

The field rounded the clubhouse in a thundering pack. Down the back stretch they moved in a sunny cloud of dust with the stands echoing with frenzied yells.

Nicki was yelling, too. "Come on, Ladybug! It's for Brian! We've got to win!" And she brought her mount up on the inside of Flamingo so that the two were out in front running shoulder to shoulder. The sound of the rail, ripping by, was usually music to Nicki's ears, but today she kept her eyes averted from the ghostly white, tried to close her ears to the weird swish.

Suddenly, like a flash, she saw Enid's whip come up and cut through the air. Flamingo lunged and came in—closer and closer, the bay bored toward Ladybug!

Nicki's heart dropped sickeningly. Enid knew Ladybug was rail-shy and she was out to break the little filly's stride. The race would be lost and Brian ruined!

A sob tore from Nicki's throat. There was only one thing to do. Brian would probably think she was throwing the race, but she had no choice!

It was a strange thing that Nicki did. A reckless, daring thing. She pulled up, letting Flamingo—and three others—rush on, then brought Ladybug around on the outside. She had lost almost two lengths! Leaning far forward, Nicki strained close to Ladybug's ear.

"Come on, darling!" she shouted. "For Brian and for me!" Her bat came down lightly on the filly's hide.

And the little horse responded, lengthened her stride!

Nicki sobbed a little. Past one horse—two! Hoofbeats rumbled all around her like voodoo drums, the rail hummed like a crazy dynamo, and the finish line

was in sight! Past the third horse and only Flamingo ahead now, going like a streak.

"Ladybug! Go! Go!" The little horse rushed on. Her head at Enid's stirrups. Gaining inch by inch. But not fast enough. The finish line was almost upon them.

"Go on—for Brian!" Nicki yelled frantically into the horse's ear—and at that cry the filly seemed to summon some hidden source of energy. She charged, leaped, plunged ahead, to Flamingo's shoulders, then nose to nose, at last to break through the finish line with her shoulders catapulting out in front of Flamingo's. They had won for Brian!

Nicki was shaking with excitement, crying for joy as she pulled to a walk and turned to jog back to the judges' stand. She saluted with her whip, called "Judges!" and slid down—into Brian's waiting arms!

"Nicki! Nicki!" He seemed choked for words. "You won for me! You took such a desperate chance. Why?"

She looked up at him and there was tenderness in her gray eyes, rapture in her heart.

"Because I love you, Brian," she said simply. "All along, I've loved you and been too blind to see it."

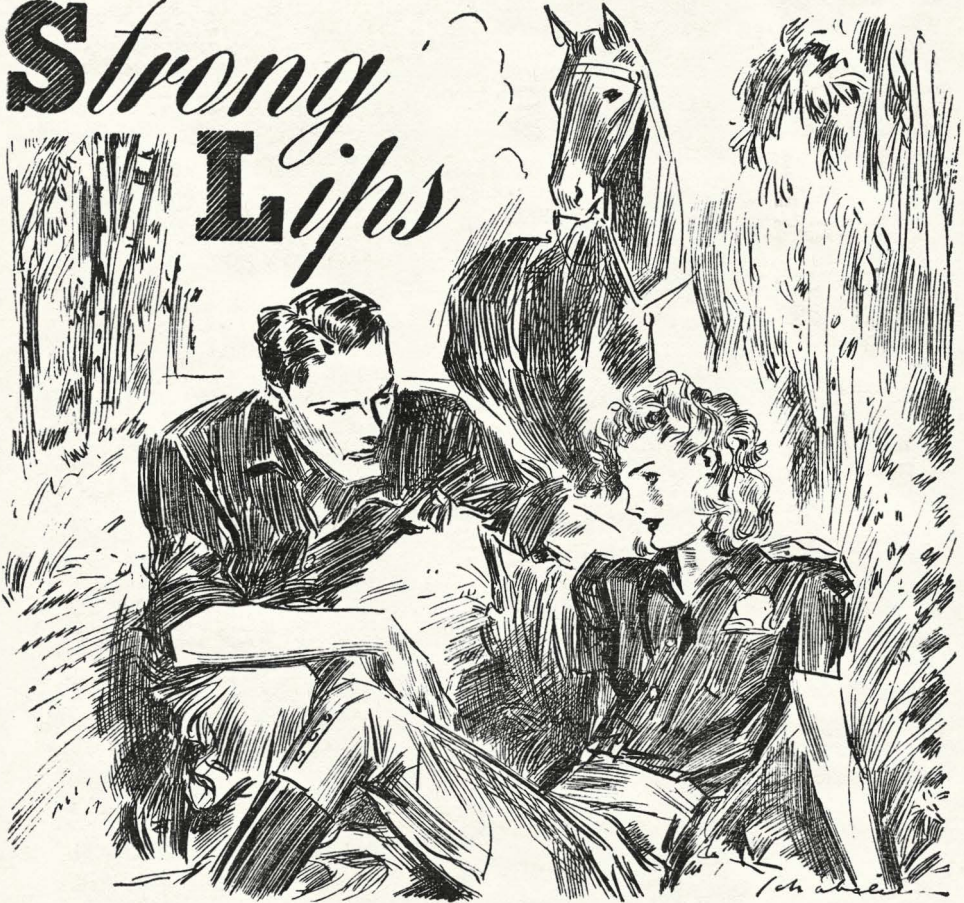
"My precious!" His arms were tightening around her. "And I've always loved you, Nicki—you're the only girl I've ever loved. But I've been a stubborn fool! Oh, my darling, forgive me. Let's forgive each other for all that's happened!"

She smiled up at him and raised her lips for his kiss. Around them was a bewildering kaleidoscope of noise and cheer—the winner's circle, garlands of flowers over Ladybug's neck, cameras clicking—but Nicki and Brian were alone. Alone in a world of magic, everlasting happiness!

THE END.

Have you read our Fashion Notes on page 5?

Strong Lips



by Libby Lawry

**She was engaged to be
married but she didn't act it.**

SHERIDAN FLEMING, her green eyes narrowed with anger, urged her horse to a gallop past the new Tucker Dam. She hated every inch as it rose between the river banks to remind her why she and Carl Adams had had to postpone their wedding.

Life didn't seem fair! Why should Harrison Howe, with all his money, his polo ponies and his yacht, be building Tucker Dam? He didn't need that con-

tract and Carl Adams did. Poor Carl! Though it wasn't true, people were saying that he'd lost out because he was too hard, almost unscrupulous in his methods.

Sherry rode faster and faster. The wind made cornsilk streamers of her hair and whipped the soft riding shirt against her firm young figure. She wished violently that she could meet this Harrison Howe. She'd like to tell him what she thought of him for taking the contract.

Suddenly, a man stepped out of the bushes. The horse shied, catching Sherry unaware. She came to face up at the side of the road, with a throbbing pain in her foot and the blackest eyes she'd ever seen bending over her.

"You know," a deep voice drawled, "that neck of yours is much too pretty to break. May I help you up?"

Sherry stared at the man above her. He was tall, with dark hair and steady, definite features. Although his tone was bantering, his face was white and strained.

Guessing that she'd given him quite a scare, Sherry tried to step on her foot. A thousand needles pricked her to dizziness. She swayed and the man caught her, lifting her easily in his arms.

"I'd better take you to my cabin and see what can be done for that foot," he said gently. "I'm sorry I frightened your horse."

Sherry smiled gallantly over the pain. "It wasn't your fault," she insisted. "I should have been paying more attention to him."

The sturdy arms tightened about her, sending a strange elation coursing through her slender body. She looked up only to drop her eyes in confusion as a dangerous excitement filled her.

The young man carried her into a cabin that had been built on top of the finished part of the dam and laid her on a cot. Then he bent over her foot. His clothes were the clothes of a workman—jeans, a rough shirt and worn boots. But he wore them with an air, as if he could be equally at home in formal dress. Sherry wondered who he was.

"This boot has to come off before your ankle begins to swell," he announced firmly. "I'll do my best but I'm afraid it's going to hurt."

He was swift and sure, but Sherry had to stuff her mouth with the blanket to keep from screaming. Then he put her foot into a bucket of hot water and salts.

"You're a good sport," he told her. "Your foot's only bruised. Let it soak a while and then I'll—" His hand brushed against hers and Sherry knew instantly that the touch stirred him as much as it did her. He moved abruptly to the door.

Sherry watched him staring down at the activity below. He was most attractive. But the grim expression around his mouth and the tight hardness of his jaw made him seem unnaturally grave. Suddenly he spoke. "I'm not very pleasant company just now. A few minutes ago I saw a man injured for life."

So that was it. That was why he looked so haggard. Sherry's heart went out to him with a rush of pity that bewildered her.

He went on huskily, "This fellow has a wife and three children and the accident needn't have happened. It was the second one this week. The second planned accident. I don't seem able to stop them." There was bitterness in his voice.

"Planned? What do you mean?" Sherry cried.

"Somebody is trying deliberately to slow up the work of the Howe Construction Co., and whoever it is doesn't care what methods are used."

"How terrible!"

"Yes, it is. You see, I'm responsible for the welfare of the men, and—"

"Oh, so you work for Harrison Howe," Sherry interrupted with a toss of her yellow head, the old anger blotting out her sympathy. "Well, what can you expect? When a polo player starts building dams anything can happen." She tried not to remember an article she'd read once on Harrison Howe. It had called this polo player "a brilliant young engineering genius." Sherry knew she was being unfair, but she didn't care. Anger forced her on. "You can't get me to feel sorry for your dear Mr. Howe! Frankly, I hate him!"

"Really?" The man's voice quickened. "Why?"

"Because he took the Tucker Dam con-

tract, which he didn't need, away from the man I'm going to marry."

The dark eyes watching her narrowed queerly. "So you're Sheridan Fleming," he said unexpectedly.

The girl gasped. "How did you know?"

"I know a lot of things," he retorted wryly.

"But I . . . I don't know you."

"That's right, you don't. Well, call me 'Mitch,' short for Mitchell." He went to the door again and for an instant the silence between them was so acute that the noise of the workmen below rang out sharply.

Sherry only had time to wonder if Mitchell was his first or last name when he turned and strode over to the cot. His black eyes flickered over her face and wandered to her lips. A frightening tide of feeling made her helpless.

Without speaking, the man picked up a towel and started to dry her foot. Then before Sherry knew what was happening, he bent swiftly and lifted her in his arms. His lips came down over hers with a passion she could not deny. She tried to push him away. Then she went limp in a rush of emotion. He held her close against the hardness of his chest and his mouth on hers made her whole body throb so that the pain in her foot was dimmed to nothing.

When he let her go, she sank back, shaken and unnerved. Something had come alive inside her that no one had ever touched before.

"Don't you think I'd better take you back to Carl Adams?" Mitch asked, his eyes burning. They locked with Sherry's and she had the awful feeling that she couldn't look away. There was something challenging about him, something reckless and fascinating that made her breath catch momentarily in her throat.

Without speaking, Mitch put her in his car. Both were conscious of the abrupt, physical attraction that hung over them like a sword. All Sherry could think of was that he would have to carry her into

the house. There was both pleasure and fright in the idea.

But Mitch was quite impersonal when he lifted her out of the car. Suddenly, Sherry wanted to shatter his control. She ran her fingers along his brown arm and a wild, sweet fire spilled through every vein. "Will you come in?" she asked, her voice trembling.

He shook his head. "I've got to get back." He put her down at the door and bent forward. Sherry thought he was going to kiss her and her heart hammered in her ears. But instead he took a deep breath and moved away. "I'm afraid I spoke out of turn. Don't tell anyone those accidents were planned," he warned. "And let me know how your foot is." He grinned over his shoulder and was gone.

That night, Sherry slipped a lime-green chiffon dinner dress over her tumbled curls and looked at herself in the mirror. The skirt fell in narrow pleats from her tiny waist and her shoulders shone a clear golden through the wisp of jacket. She stepped closer, touching a slender finger to her full lips. The memory of other lips, stronger, firmer than her own, brought the hot color flooding to her face.

With a guilty shrug she piled her hair on top of her head and dusted powder across the tip of her upturned nose. Then she went downstairs, limping slightly.

Knowing that Carl wouldn't understand, Sherry decided not to tell him what had happened. As a matter of fact, she didn't understand these halcyon feelings herself. She determined to stop thinking about Mitch. After all, when you were engaged, you didn't go about letting strange men make love to you no matter how thrilling.

Carl was waiting in the living room to pull her close, his thin, severe face happy. And because Sherry wanted to blot out the memory of other kisses, kisses that had torn her wide open, she let herself melt into Carl's arms with an eagerness she never had shown before.

"Sherry, darling," he murmured in surprise. "Why, Sherry!" Then his eyes narrowed. "You've never kissed me that way before. What's the matter? You haven't done something you shouldn't?"

Carl was always suspicious. But Sherry couldn't let him know that this time he had reason to be. She couldn't tell him that a dark, exciting man, whose full name she didn't even know, had touched her emotions in a way no one ever had before.

The hard, sharp twist of Carl's mouth frightened Sherry. But that was silly. She wasn't afraid of Carl. She couldn't be. They were going to get married.

"Aren't you being a little foolish?" she parried.

The icy expression faded. "I suppose I am. It's just that I— Sherry, let's get married next week, Tucker Dam contract or no."

Instinctively, Sherry drew back. A few hours ago she would have been thrilled at the idea. But now, when she tried to say "yes," a shock of unruly black hair and impertinent dark eyes got in the way. She found herself putting Carl off, making excuses. She didn't intend to fall in love with Mitch, but she had to see him once more.

Carl took her to the Fawn Inn, a quaint building clinging to the side of a hill. He wanted to dance, and Sherry's refusal put him in a bad humor. She didn't dare use her foot as an excuse. It might precipitate too many questions. He was rude, almost unbearable. They left early.

On the way home Carl stopped the car and caught Sherry to him. She was bewildered to find herself pretending that Carl was a bigger man, a man whose arms would hold her in a more intimate, powerful way.

After managing to stay away from Tucker Dam for three days, Sherry finally went riding in that direction.

Reining in near his cabin, she pretended to watch the activity on the river

bank below. Suddenly hoofs clicked behind her. She turned to see Mitch, riding his horse with an insolent grace that spoke at once of many hours in the saddle. He was hatless, eyes narrowed against the sun, and his shirt was open at the neck.

Sherry's temples throbbed and her throat went dry. One thought filled her mind. This was the man she loved, not Carl. It had happened like a streak of lightning. And by the same flash, she knew with absolute certainty that her life would be wasted unless she could share it with this man whom she hardly knew. Shaken by the overwhelming force of her discovery, she could only murmur, "Hello."

"What are you doing here?" Mitch demanded, his voice hard.

Sherry looked up quickly. There was no warmth in his face. His easy grin was gone. "I . . . I came up to see the dam," she faltered.

He scowled. "I don't believe you, but that's beside the point. Just see to it that you don't come back."

"What are you saying? What do you mean?" Sherry stammered uncertainly. Her mind raced in circles. He must be joking. She was completely bewildered. A muscle twitched in Mitch's lean cheek. He seemed to be riding hard on his temper. Sherry started to speak, but he motioned her to silence.

"It was a cheap trick," he burst out. "to repeat to Carl Adams what I said about those accidents being planned."

"What in the world is he talking about?"—Sherry thought. "What has Carl got to do with it? Why should I want to repeat that to anyone?"

Her words came out tight and strained, vehement in her effort to convince him. "Mitch, you're making a mistake. I didn't tell anyone."

"Well, then, how did Adams find out?"

And at that Sherry lost her temper. Mitch was being unfair. This whole meeting was so different from what she

had expected. "After all," she flung at him, "it can't be any great secret if the workmen on the dam know about it!"

"Meaning—"

"Meaning that if you know, a lot of other people must know, too."

"I see. And you expect me to believe that a very attractive young lady, supposedly engaged to a rising engineer, would waste her time on a—shall we say workman of a rival company because of love?" His deep, black eyes bored into hers. "I'm afraid I'm a bit cynical, Sherry. It looks to me as if your interest is inspired by the fact that I may divulge further information."

"Mitch," she appealed, urging her horse closer. "Mitch." She laid a hand on his knee and looked up into the stern face. Of course he didn't understand. Hadn't she told him that she loved Carl? How could he know that she'd changed her mind? That she'd gladly give up the security of life with Carl for the chance to be with him? "I didn't do it, Mitch. You must believe me. You see, I did come back here today because I'm—" She lowered her eyes in confusion.

Mitch tipped up her chin with fingers that trembled. She couldn't read his face, but something in his eyes gave her hope. Then almost instantly the veil was drawn and they were again cold and hard with a hint of mockery.

"It's a good act, Sherry, but not good enough. So far it's cost me two men and a lot of equipment. I don't intend to be fooled twice. Now go along and in the future stay off dam property."

Sherry was astounded. He didn't believe her. He was ordering her away as he would a naughty child. She had to convince him.

Just then a man came running toward them, waving his hat. "A special for you, Mr. Howe," he shouted. He handed Mitch a large envelope and hurried off. Mitch slit it open.

All at once the truth hit Sherry. Mitch was Harrison Howe! A forgotten para-

graph in that long-ago magazine article came back to stare at her mind. "Young Howe, whose full name is Mitchell Harrison Howe, is owner and manager of this successful construction company."

And she'd thought he was an ordinary workman! How he must be laughing at her. Laughing at the way she'd made a fool of herself.

A wild fury possessed her. If she could only make him suffer as she was suffering. Grabbing the end of the rope coiled on her saddle, she lashed Mitch across the mouth. She had a brief glimpse of his face gone suddenly white with a red mark across it. Then she was digging her heels into her horse, urging him to a run, crazy with rage.

Suddenly Mitch rode alongside. Sherry was jerked off her horse and one of his arms held her like a vise against his chest. She beat at him with her fists, trying vainly to break away.

She was conscious of Mitch's face above hers, white and haggard, with that bright-red welt cutting diagonally across it. His eyes had the same glaring brightness as a piece of coal. Then his head came toward hers, lips parted.

Sherry tried once more to struggle. But those lips came down on hers, hard, demanding lips that blotted out today, yesterday and all tomorrows.

Shamelessly, she threw her arms around his neck and gave him back kiss for kiss. He loves me, she told herself. Mitch Howe loves me.

When he took his lips away, Sherry couldn't open her eyes. She wanted to shut in forever the ecstasy that held her. When she did she found Mitch was laughing, a soundless, terrible laugh. Scorn and contempt lined his face and the mouth that had tightened so possessively against hers such a short moment ago was stern and bitter.

"Hasn't anyone ever told you that fire burns?" he asked in a mocking voice. "When you undertook this little campaign

for Carl Adams you didn't know that you'd be caught in your own trap."

She lay in the hard confines of his arm and her whole new world shattered around her. She had found love, tasted its glory and then had had it snatched away. Snatched away because Mitch thought she was leading him on to secure information for Carl. It didn't make sense.

If she could just explain everything would be all right. But Mitch didn't give her a chance. His voice told her better than words how much he despised her.

"You couldn't see where all this would lead, of course. You're a lovely picture, Sherry, desirable, too, but I'm giving you back to Carl Adams." Letting her slide to the ground, he bowed insolently from the saddle. Without a backward look he cantered off.

Through the pain and hurt and misery, Sherry knew she had never loved anyone in her whole life as she did Mitch Howe. She had a good idea that it was the kind of love a person feels only once. How could anyone misunderstand her motives so completely? Tears flooded Sherry's eyes and the hot color that Mitch's kisses had brought to her face slid away, leaving it pale and miserable. Mounting her horse, she rode home, a forlorn, little figure bent wearily in the saddle.

Carl was waiting for her at the house. He ran to meet her, shouting, "Sherry, I've got it! The contract for that dam in the next county! We start work next week. It means we can be married right away." Gleefully, he lifted her out of the saddle.

And because a man with stronger arms had broken her heart to pieces, because she needed someone to love her and take care of her, Sherry agreed to marry Carl at the end of the week.

Genuinely fond of him, the girl was honest enough to admit that had she never met Mitch, she wouldn't have known that her feeling for Carl was not the real thing.

Determined to make the best of it, Sherry threw herself into a week of hurried planning. It was a week so hectic that she fell into bed at night too tired to remember a head of dark, unruly hair and strong, brown fingers that left trails of fire in their wake.

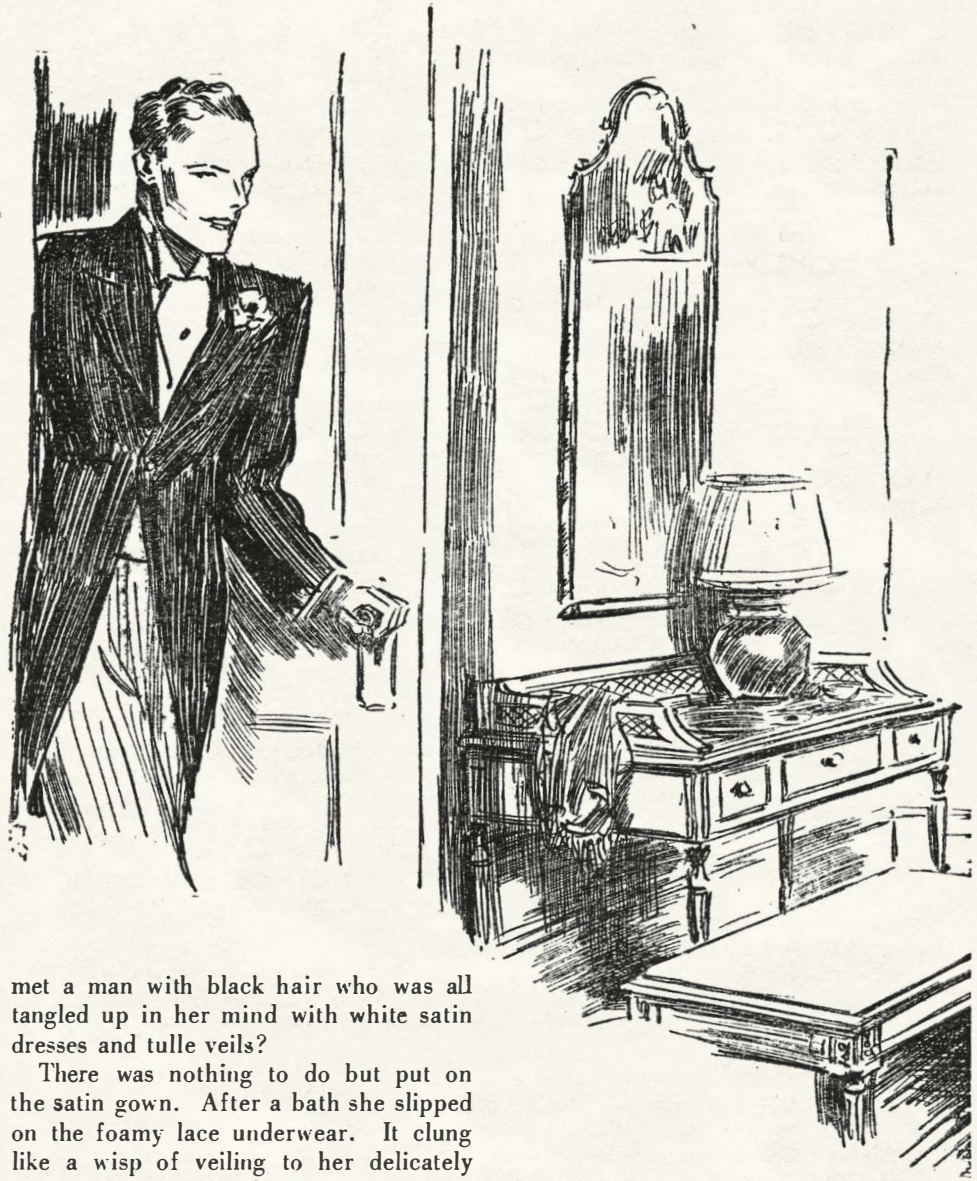
She saw Mitch once, walking down the street, his face cold, white and haggard. It was as if he'd had too little sleep. Her heart jumped a million miles and his curt nod left her trembling. She wondered if it would always be that way when she saw him. It made her afraid. Would it be better to run away? She'd like to but pride held her back. Pride and a sense of fairness to Carl.

Carl worked day and night all week. He said he was getting things cleaned up. Under ordinary circumstances, Sherry would have been a little hurt at his pre-occupation. But she was under such a strain that she let it pass.

Even the rumor that the Howe Construction Co. was having trouble made no impression and she was too sick at heart to care when Carl boasted that his company would probably finish Tucker Dam.

The night before the wedding was warm. The perfume of the roses climbing over the house held a promise of summer. Until the last, Sherry had hoped that Mitch would make some effort to see her. But he had made no move.

Sherry had postponed again and again trying on her wedding dress. She hadn't wanted to wear one in the first place. It was her mother's idea. One short week of formal engagement had shocked and dismayed the older woman. She had become more and more upset at Sherry's plans for a small home wedding, with no attendants and only their closest friends to witness the ceremony. But the thought of her daughter being married in a simple suit had made her cry so hysterically that Sherry had given in. After all, what could she say to her mother? That she'd



met a man with black hair who was all tangled up in her mind with white satin dresses and tulle veils?

There was nothing to do but put on the satin gown. After a bath she slipped on the foamy lace underwear. It clung like a wisp of veiling to her delicately curved body. Then she drew on the gossamer stockings and the tiny, white sandals. Next her wedding slip, with its delicate tucks and finally the white satin dress.

Piling her hair in tiny curls on top of her head, she brushed the rest in a soft cascade over her shoulders, where it hung as naturally blond as a tow-headed youngster's.

As she fastened the misty veil, with its Juliet cap of rose point lace, there was a sharp knock at the door. She opened it. It was Carl. He tried to kiss her, but she held him at arm's length.

She knew he must never know how she felt. She must be gay, loving. With a lift of her yellow head, Sherry put a



Carl must never know how she felt. She must be gay, loving. With a lift of her head, Sherry put a smile on her soft red lips.

smile on her soft, red lips. "Carl, you crazy thing!" she teased. "You're not supposed to see the bride in all her finery until the wedding. Go back downstairs. I'll be with you in a minute."

But Carl only reached out to grab her with a grip that hurt. She saw that he had been drinking. She tried to pull away.

"Good news for you, baby," he said thickly. "The Howe Construction Co. is on its last legs. After tonight we're going to take over. It will mean the best of everything for Mr. and Mrs. Adams." With scant regard for her clothes, he crushed her in his arms.

Just then the doorbell rang and Mrs. Fleming called up to Carl. He went down and Sherry saw him go out on the porch with two burly men. After a short consultation, a car door slammed and Carl came back. He seemed to be exceedingly nervous.

Sherry asked him what was wrong and he turned on her almost snarling. "Nothing's wrong! Just mind your own business and everything will be all right!"

Sherry drew back as if struck. The anger rushed from Carl's face at her involuntary fear. He caught her roughly by the shoulders. "Look here, there are some things you don't understand, Sherry. Some things I have to handle my own way. Now remember! You didn't see those men. That's very important. And you don't know where I've gone. You mustn't know anything about it."

"About what?" Sherry was genuinely baffled.

Carl bit his lower lip. His face held a brutal expression she had never seen before. This was another Carl, a Carl she didn't know at all.

"I suppose I might as well tell you," he exploded violently. "I don't intend to have secrets from my wife and you're almost that. I'm going with those men to blow up the finished part of Tucker Dam. With such a setback they'll never be able to finish. Their workmen will

walk out and when that outfit leaves, I'm taking over!"

"Carl!" Sherry felt the room swaying toward her.

"Don't be a little fool! You didn't think I'd let Howe take that contract away from me without a fight, did you?"

"Then those men who've been injured and—"

His eyes shifted. "I . . . I don't know anything about that. But I haven't time to stand here arguing with you. I have to go."

"You can't. I won't let you," Sherry protested.

Carl took her by the arm and dragged her to her room. "It's not for you to decide whether I'm right or wrong. Just to make sure that you don't try anything I'm going to lock you in until I get back."

Sherry heard the click of the key as she leaned against the door. Slowly, things straightened themselves out in her mind. She realized that she had been too filled with heartache and despair to see what was happening. Now it was clear. The destruction of dam equipment, the injured men, were all Carl's doings.

No wonder Mitch thought she was working for Carl after the way she'd talked against his company. Mitch must have suspected Carl. Could it be that Mitch had held his hand because of her? And now Carl was going to blow up the dam and with it all Mitch's work, his reputation, his—

Sherry covered her mouth to suppress a scream. That cabin on the edge of the dam—Mitch stayed there at night!

With trembling fingers, Sherry tore off her veil and threw it in a heap on the floor. She knew what she had to do. No matter what Carl did to her, no matter how the town gossiped or her mother might be hurt, she had to warn Mitch. She pulled off her dress and kicked her sandals across the room.

She looked frantically for something to put on. Most of her things were already packed in the new suitcases marked with

those unfamiliar initials, "S. A." Even in her haste she had time to be glad she'd never use them now.

She grabbed a sweater and a pair of denim shorts. Slipping on a pair of tennis shoes, she turned out the light and climbed out the window to the roof of the back porch. The old wisteria vine made a natural ladder to the ground. It was a way she had used many times in her childhood.

Sure-footed in the dark, the girl made her way to the stable. When she opened the door her horse whinnied. Catching up the bridle, she forced the bit into his mouth and jumped on. There was no time to saddle him.

It was a wild ride, across fields and over ditches. The horse, apparently sensing the urgency of his rider, was fleet-footed in the dark. Sherry knew that Carl and his men had a head start, but they had to follow the road. By urging her horse in a straight line she stood a chance of getting there first.

Tense, expecting at any moment to hear the dread explosion, Sherry reeled when the dark outline of the dam flashed into view. She was in time. Galloping up to the cabin, she swung to the ground and burst through the door.

Mitch was sitting at a table writing. He jumped up. When he saw Sherry in shorts, her hair a cascade of gold tumbling to her shoulders, his jaw clenched and he gave her a queer sort of smile. "So you couldn't stay away!"

Embarrassment painted Sherry's cheeks a vivid red. She knew what Mitch was thinking. Panic gripped her. What if he refused to believe her reason for coming? There was so little time.

She looked very small and very lovely as she faced him. "Mitch, three men are on their way here to blow up the dam. You must get out right away."

His face might have been carved of stone but for the mocking eyes. He laughed harshly. "What kind of a game are you playing now?"

Desperately, Sherry reached for his hand. She had a crazy idea that touching him would still the laughter. An electric shock flamed through her, setting up an inner trembling she could not control.

Mitch stiffened. "Suppose you listen to me," he ordered abruptly, pushing her into a chair. "I don't know what you're up to, but I've already been warned about those men. The sheriff is going to arrest them as they come on our property."

"Then you're safe!" Sherry gasped.

"I seem to be," the man told her. "Because of your interest in Carl Adams, I refused to sign a warrant for him. From now on it's up to you to see that he behaves."

"You saved Carl because of me?" Sherry questioned hoarsely. But a sudden hope about why he'd done it died quickly before his cold silence. She felt that she'd made a fool of herself again. Dashing in to rescue a man who so obviously was capable of taking care of himself.

Fighting the tears that welled into her eyes, she stood up, her face blazing. Being so near Mitch kept her senses reeling. She started to go when they heard someone running toward the cabin. Mitch strode to the door as Carl burst in. He was wild and his bloodshot eyes were filled with a murderous anger.

He stopped short when he saw Sherry. "Why, you dirty little double-crossing—" He caught her by the arm, twisting it so that she cried out. "What do you mean by squealing on me? So this is what you have been doing. Playing the devoted fiancée and all the time seeing Howe behind my back."

Mitch stepped between them. "Let her go," he ordered, "and get out!"

Carl lunged for him, catching him with a terrific punch that sent Mitch sprawling. Sherry screamed.

Mitch gained his feet and went after Carl. The little cabin was filled with the thud of fist against flesh and the crash of

falling furniture. Sherry was afraid for Mitch. Carl had such a vicious look on his face. But she needn't have been. He soon knocked him out.

Panting, a deep gash in his lip, Mitch picked up the telephone and gave a curt order. Without a glance at Sherry he went over and stood above Carl. "He'll be all right," he announced through clenched teeth.

Two men hurried in, listened to Mitch's instructions, and carried Carl outside. Sherry remembered thinking that they were crazy to let Carl go and then Mitch's eyes touched hers. For a minute she thought she saw something deep inside their blackness, something eager, hungry that defied analysis. But abruptly it was gone and they were again blank, imperious.

Wearily, Sherry went outside. Her heart was heavy with anguish. She didn't know what to do. She could hear the gossip flaring about her canceled wed-

ding. She could see her mother's horrified face. There'd be nothing but talk. She'd have to go away until it was over. That was all there was to do.

Abruptly, she was swung off her feet and like another time Mitch was carrying her to his cabin. He put her down, holding her at arm's length. His eyes bored through her with an intensity that hurt. Defiantly, she lifted her head. Their glances met and locked.

All at once, as if he read the truth, Mitch's eyes went soft. He pulled her into his arms and crushed her against his lean, hard body.

"Darling," he whispered, "will you forgive me? I've been fighting you with all my strength. Oh, my darling, my sweet, sweet Sherry, I've loved you since I first saw you. Can you forgive me?"

Sherry could only nod before she gave herself up to the ecstasy of lips that kissed with a completeness that sent a swift, stinging tumult along every nerve.

THE END.

TREASURE HUNT

"Go look," they said,
 "For a pewter spoon."
 But we discovered
 A fair young moon.

"Bring a china pig
 "And a peacock quill."
 But we found solitude
 On a hill.

How futile to look
 For an old kid glove—
 While others were searching,
 We found love!

MARJORIE HUNT PETTIT.



Lady FOR AN EVENING

**For every new man, a new
line — that was her slogan.**

by Pearl Bank Steward

At the Cockerel the music was urgent, the food good. The food, in fact, was not only good but, to be honest, darned welcome. But, in spite of it, Daphne was beginning to sink. She'd handled men who had been one up on their cocktails before, but this freshman was definitely callow. And, decidedly, he didn't think he was getting his money's worth.

He sat across the table now, his big boy's shoulders determinedly erect, his eyes glassy, his mouth sullen.

"See tha' one, tha' redhead?" He pointed two tables down. "I wanna dance with her."

"Sorry, but I don't know her." Daphne said patiently. This sort of thing had been going on for hours.

A thick lock of hair kept falling over the freshman's nose. In a slow motion his big hand wavered up to the right, missed, to the left, missed, then centering angrily, he shoved. His head snapped back, then forward. Down came the recalcitrant lock again.

"I wanna dance with the redhead," he repeated truculently.

Daphne shook her head. The girl was the fabulous Barbe Santon. With her long coppery bob, her slim figure set off by a swinging white skirt and a shining jacket of satin bugles, she was luminous. No wonder the freshman wanted to dance with her. For that matter, Daphne thought, she'd like to dance with the big man who was the girl's escort. With very brown skin and blond hair, he was almost as spectacular as Barbe Santon.

The freshman pushed back his chair. "I'm gonna ask her—"

Daphne put out a coaxing hand. "Please, dance with me."

The boy looked down owlishly. "You're just another college girl," he said disgustedly. "An' I don't have t' pay ten bucks to take 'em out."

She looked like a college girl! Well, wasn't that what she had broken her neck to look like? Her blue dress with the white coin dots was smart, so was the halo hat with the red-and-white-striped silk cord tied close under the brim. They gave her a frsch, young look. But it turned out the kid wanted glamour.

Her fingers tightened on the boy's sleeve. "Suppose we move on to the Golden Stag? Ted Harley is master of ceremonies there—awfully clever."

"Want t' dance with th' redhead." The freshman moved stubbornly toward the other table, pulling Daphne along.

"Oh, no, no! You can't!" Daphne was really panicky now. Her first client, and she was muffing it. This thing just had to work, she thought grimly, or else!

Slipping her arm through the boy's, her slim round body pushed off at an

angle toward the dance floor. But it was no good.

They reached the Santon table. The boy steadied himself.

"May I have this dance?" he bowed with drunken formality. The lock of hair fell down. He went through his routine, right, left, center uppercut. The last blow was so violent that he lost balance. Daphne grabbed at him frantically.

"I'm so sorry—" Color burned her cheeks.

Miss Santon's escort rose, amusement in his eyes.

"Won't you two kids sit down?"

That burned Daphne. Couldn't the dumbhead see that she was a woman of the world, not a half-baked collegian?

"I wanna dance," the boy reiterated stubbornly.

Daphne's eyes, shamed, met the Santon girl's. Barbe patted a chair.

"Park, fella. I'm so bored I'd begun to settle in the bottom of the glass."

The boy hesitated, then slid uncertainly into the chair.

"Terry Redmond and Barbe Santon," the big blond man introduced himself and his companion.

Nodding gratefully, Daphne took the chair he held for her.

"Daphne Best. And may I present—" For one awful moment the boy's name eluded her, then she completed hurriedly—"Gray Davis, down from the U?"

Barbe Santon lit a cigarette, blew smoke lazily.

"I've been simply mad to know what's behind canceling that last U game," she told Gray. "Got any pay dirt?"

Daphne turned to Terry Redmond. "She's an awfully good sport. And she's perfectly beautiful."

"Pretty tasty," Terry Redmond agreed. "We grew up together and still I can stand her around." He threw a quick look at the boy. "Little hard going?"

"A little," confessed Daphne. "You

see, I thought he wanted a college girl, and he wanted glamour."

Redmond laughed. "And when you didn't produce, he took to his cups. I'll bet you've been into every way station in the swank belt."

Daphne relaxed. "If I had only known what he wanted!"

"All things to all men?" Terry's eyes scanned the vivid face beneath the halo hat.

Daphne nodded. "The customer is always right."

"Watch the curves on that one," Terry warned.

"I always watch the curves." Daphne glanced anxiously at the boy. He was grinning fatuously at Barbe Santon's smart talk.

Terry nodded toward the dance floor. "Good music. Care to try hurdling the crowd?"

Terry danced divinely. Daphne gave herself to the rhythm. But, finally, curiosity stirred.

"What do you do when you're not rescuing ladies in distress?"

"I don't roust out until noon," Terry said. "Then sometimes I hibernate a bit in a lab."

"And in the evenings?"

"I swarm." Terry grinned down at her.

"Not a very useful life," Daphne said, disappointed.

"That's as you take it."

They were back at their own table now. The freshman sat gulping a tall drink, his eyes almost closed.

"Been pickling ever since you left," Barbe told them. "It's about time to put him down."

"If I can only get him into a taxi," Daphne said worriedly.

"We'll see you through," Terry promised.

"Awfully good of you." Daphne could have cried, they were both so swell.

Barbe picked up her bag, said to

Terry, "You help Miss Best get a taxi, darling, while I do a reconstruction job in the ladies' room."

It was only after they had poured him into a cab, and the driver waited for an address, that Daphne realized she didn't know where to send the freshman.

"Know any of his friends?" Terry asked her.

"I don't know anything about him," she admitted. "He just said to meet him in the lobby of the Casterleigh. He wanted to do the night clubs."

"Good thing he had pin feathers," Terry said. "Safer for foolish little girls who make blind dates."

Anger flooded Daphne. Here was the most attractive man she had ever met treating her like a child again. Under her juvenile hat she glared up at him.

"Handling men is my business, Mr. Redmond. Only this time I wasn't quite prepared."

Terry shrugged. "It's your funeral, sweet. Seventy-five dollars, complete with flowers. Suppose we ship this one back to the Casterleigh, prepaid?"

That was what they did. Then Daphne and Terry said "good-by" very formally.

A half-hour later, Daphne, putting her key in the lock, paused to regard the sign on the window of the little ground-floor studio:

LADY FOR AN EVENING

Daphne Best, Mgr.

It came darned close to sounding like "ladies of the night!" She'd begun to think that perhaps all the new escort bureau would rate was a police raid when this rattlebrained kid had phoned. The slogan just beneath the bureau's name should explain everything, of course, or almost everything, "See the town with your best girl."

Daphne sighed as she went through the outer office with its Louis XIV desk, rose brocaded sofa and crystal chandelier,

into the room behind the partition which had once been part of a small shop. It contained a cot, one chair, an electric plate and a long rack of clothes.

Cissy Campden had sent the clothes, four gorgeous trunks full, when she broke her engagement to Caleb Benton to marry Peter Sloan. Pete just wouldn't have the clothes around which had been picked out to live with Caleb. It was Cissy's clothes which had given Daphne the inspiration for the Lady-For-An-Evening Bureau. What else could a girl do with no assets except a good figure, dancing feet and finishing-school credentials?

Daphne wondered if Terry Redmond ever needed a lady for an evening. Probably not. Too good-looking and too many Junior Leaguers around.

She flung herself into the chair. The place seemed pretty empty after the warmth and chatter of the night clubs. Loneliness nested inside her like a brooding hen, she thought resentfully, and pecked at her whenever she had a quiet moment. Somewhere a spot was beginning to hurt. It had hurt to see Terry Redmond so gentle with Barbe Santon.

And the evening had been a flop. Daphne tightened her jaw. But, at least, she had learned something. First, no matter whether he was a freshman or Terry Redmond who had been brought up with it, a man wanted glamour. Second, you needed a line.

Getting up, she looked at her engagement book—beautiful white pages with only a sprinkling of black notes. All the dates by telephone, so far. The next one—"September 10th. Mr. William Cooley Green. Night clubs."

Be nice if someone just wanted to go somewhere quiet to talk and eat a lot. Preferably someone with brown skin and blond hair. Anyhow, she hoped Mr. Green would at least be adult.

He was. He was at least sixty. Tall, gaunt, and a gleam in his eye. He met

Daphne at her studio. Daphne wore the most glamorous job in Cissy's trousseau. A white crêpe skirt swung on a narrow band, and a blouse which had long, demure sleeves but for the rest looked like a heavenly braş.

Mr. Green's face mottled to an apoplectic purple. It made Daphne feel a bit squeamish. She couldn't deny that Cissy's gown was daring to say the least. Hastily, she put on her evening coat.

As they started out in a taxi, Mr. Green spoke through his long, hay-feverish nose:

"I want to go to all the fastest places. You know, floor shows, drinks—that sort of thing."

"Of course," Daphne said brightly. "We'll . . . we'll shag at all the shambles." There, that was a line!

"Shag?" snuffled Mr. Green. "Shambles?"

"You know, dance at all the hot spots."

"I don't dance," said Mr. Green.

"That's fine," returned Daphne with her first enthusiasm.

She steered away from the Cockerel. Terry had said it was his favorite. She'd like awfully for Terry to see her in her glamour dress, but not with Mr. Green.

At the Barbour, Mr. Green ordered ginger ale for himself, a champagne cocktail for Daphne. No food. Daphne sipped carefully. If the old goat thought he was going to soften her up for his nefarious purposes he was much mistaken. These old men who wanted to renew their youth!

But, of course, this was business. Mr. Green had paid his ten dollars, which translated into exactly twenty-five quarts of milk and twenty-nine boxes of crackers. So, of course, she would have to show him a good time, within limits.

After a half-hour of sipping, she said languidly, "I'm beginning to settle on the bottom of the glass."

"Huh?" Mr. Green didn't take his gaze off the half-dressed girls prancing

with balloons. The gleam in his eye had quite visibly increased its wattage.

They finally went on to the Zoo. Mr. Green again ordered ginger ale and a champagne cocktail.

Two champagne cocktails were distinctly Daphne's limit on an empty stomach. He hadn't been forward yet, but his bright brown eyes devoured the floor show, tabulated the women at tables, came back periodically to fasten on her own face.

Then at the Top Hat they ran into Terry Redmond, worse luck. He took a table near them. He was with a slender girl with a plethora of blond curls. Her full-skirted dress had a quaint drop shoulder, and she clung to Terry's arm like a limpet.

But Daphne couldn't watch Terry with the girl because Mr. Green had at last come out of his mist of ginger ale and was asking questions.

"Have you a family, Miss Best?"

"No one close."

"You live alone?" The brown eyes were brightly intrusive.

"Yes, at present." What was the man up to? Maybe she'd better invent a big brother who wrestled. Mr. Green leaned across the table, his eyes almost hypnotic.

"No one to keep an eye on you at all," he murmured thoughtfully. His eyes narrowed, his tongue ran over his thin, dry lips.

"Have you ever been married, or—" He hesitated.

Daphne stared at him, her face crimsoning. But Mr. Green didn't wait for an answer. His eye had caught the clock above the door. He gave a perturbed exclamation, murmured, "Pardon me." Then he hunched his shoulders over the table and put his face in his hands.

The seconds ticked off. Daphne gathered herself together.

"Mr. Green!"

Mr. Green did not move.

"Mr. Green!"

LS—4F

Mr. Green sat with only the rise and fall of his breathing proving he lived.

Curious glances began to come their way. Now, what was she going to do?—Daphne thought wrathfully. She couldn't just leave him.

She ordered a sandwich and ate it deliberately. Twenty minutes trudged by. Their waiter, an elderly man, hovered protectively.

"Anything wrong, miss?"

"I . . . I don't know." Daphne crumbled the last bit of sandwich nervously. "The gentleman has perhaps over-indulged?"

Daphne giggled hysterically. "—in ginger ale."

The waiter looked puzzled. "Would you want me to speak to him, miss?"

Daphne nodded. The waiter laid a firm hand on Mr. Green.

"Sir, sir!" He shook gently. Mr. Green did not move. A voice spoke behind Daphne:

"You should always check the gallonage before you stop at the first filling station."

It was Terry Redmond, of course, and he was grinning down at her maddeningly, the limpet clinging to his arm.

"He isn't drunk," Daphne said shortly.

"Then what does seem to be the matter?"

The whole room seemed centered on them now.

"I don't know. He just asked a lot of questions and then went into this . . . this trance."

The limpet raised big blue eyes adoringly. "It's suah handsome foh you-all to botheh, sugah."

Daphne could have killed her.

"What kind of questions did he ask?" inquired Terry. When Daphne didn't answer, he said gently, "We'd like to help."

"Well, he wanted to know if I had a family, if I lived alone and whether I . . . I'd ever been married!" Daphne confessed in an outraged rush.

"The old rip!" Terry said it vehemently, but his eyes crinkled. Daphne had just laid him mentally in a funereal row with the limpet, when the girl spoke again:

"Jus' shows how you suah should be cahful who-all totes you aroun'."

Terry shook Mr. Green, with no result. Then, slipping his arms under Mr. Green's, he heaved. Mr. Green dropped his hands from his face, glared.

"Take your hands off me!"

"Certainly," Terry obliged. "But would you mind telling us just what you think you're doing?"

Mr. Green brushed off his sleeves as though Terry's touch were contaminating.

"Though it is no business of yours," he said haughtily, "I will tell you. I was taking my silent time."

For a moment they all stared at him. Then Daphne asked weakly:

"What is a silent time?"

Mr. Green's bright-brown eyes grew arrogant. "I have the power to withdraw into the infinite and commune with my inner self." He pulled out his watch.

"It should have been a full half-hour," he said aggrievedly.

"Sorry I broke your connection," Terry told him. "Can't you dial again?"

"Young man, you are one reason why a silent time is necessary," Mr. Green told him sternly. "Careless, unthinking. And this poor lost girl—" He turned to Daphne. "Naked, drinking—"

Daphne only half heard the rest of the sermon. But she gathered that Mr. Green was one of the blessed exponents of some sect girded to save the world.

Terry took hold. He parked the limpet, squealing with protest, with a friend. He steered Mr. Green out of the place. In a few minutes Daphne found herself once more on the curb with Terry, while a taxi took her escort off to new pastures.

"Well, that's that," Terry said, as though dusting off his hands. He stood looking down at her with that same mad-

dening grin. "This one couldn't have been sold short on glamour."

Daphne pulled her coat closer around her. She was cold, anyway.

"Well, all men want glamour, don't they?" she asked crossly.

"You get awfully fed up with glamour. Sometimes it's nice to have something simple, uncomplicated."

"Something with curls on the brain?" snapped Daphne.

"Now, is that nice?" Terry lighted a cigarette without offering Daphne one. "A feminine woman makes a man feel a man. Shall we go in?"

"I'm going home, thanks," Daphne was close to tears.

Suddenly, Terry took her shoulders in his hands, his smile gone.

"Listen, infant, it's none of my business, but you're headed for trouble picking up just anybody. That man was a little crazy, and even boys like the kid from the U get a little crazy when they're liquored." He gave Daphne a gentle shake. "How about hitting the hay at night?"

Daphne glared up at him. "How about doing that little thing yourself? All you do is sleep all day and dance all night. I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself."

A taxi pulled up. Terry helped her in. "Maybe I am," he said softly. "Be seeing you."

The taxi moved off. Daphne leaned her head against its window and tried to think it out.

Two customers, two mistakes. Men didn't want college girls, and they really didn't want glamour, except the very young ones. What they wanted was women who looked like old-fashioned Valentines, and talked like bottles of saccharine. Ye gods! If she had to go around drooling like that she'd better buy a bib.

Once home, Daphne undressed quickly and went to bed, then lay awake. If only she had someone to talk to. She was



They danced slowly around the floor. When they got near the bar, Daphne's hand tightened on Terry's arm. "There he is!" she whispered.

scared. Supposing she couldn't make a go of this—what then?

Daphne tried to figure her third date out while she was dressing for it.

"Sept. 15, 11:00 p. m., Slug Shilton. Usual racket."

Eleven p. m. probably meant he'd been around. "Slug" sounded like one of those college-boy nicknames, though the

voice over the phone had been sort of hoarse. Maybe it hadn't finished changing.

Carefully, Daphne chose her gown—white cotton lace with an organdy ruffle at the hem, a big pink bow pinned to the modest bodice. There were white lace mitts to go with it. She did up her hair in coquettish curls, and the very last

thing. she pasted long eyelashes on her own short, thick ones. If the whole job, plus a little technique, didn't make her a limpet, then nothing would.

She couldn't figure that "usual racket," though. She had asked a second time where he had wanted to go, and the boy had distinctly said, "Usual racket." Probably trying to sound sophisticated.

Her bell didn't ring until eleven thirty. She threw a wisp of pink chiffon over her curls and minced out into the reception room.

"Mistah Shilton?" she cooed, then stopped. This couldn't be a college boy. He must be thirty, at least. His face was brown and full of little lines, like soft dirt after rain, his mouth slanted precariously. He was in a dinner coat that didn't fit, and he had a battered old hat under his arm.

"Hi, babe, sorry to be late, but I had t' check on a little murder," he said hoarsely.

Check on a little murder! He talked like a gangster—he looked like a gangster. Daphne took a deep, quivering breath. Perhaps Terry was right, maybe this escort-bureau business was dangerous. But she raised her chin.

"That's all right, Mistah Shilton. It was suah nice of you-all to come when . . . when"—Daphne swallowed hard—"when you-all were so busy."

"Don't flatter yourself, babe—this is business." Slug took out a big cigar, bit off the end, spit it out, then stuck it in his mouth without lighting it. "C'mon, let's shove."

Preceding him to the taxi, Daphne asked in a voice which shook a little:

"Wheah would you-all like to go?"

"It's your racket, babe," Slug answered. "Choose your own poison."

"Take us to the Cockerel, driver," she said. She didn't care if it was humiliating, running to Terry, but she was scared. All this business about rackets and murders and poison!

But Terry wasn't at the Cockerel. And Slug didn't order ginger ale, either. He took his whiskey double and straight. After looking over the crowd with quick, impatient eyes, he turned to her.

"Well, babe, let's get down to business. What kind of guys do you take in this racket?"

"Ah don't know what you-all mean, Mistah Shilton. "Ah—" Daphne began, but he interrupted her.

"What kind of guys—what kind of guys? Guys in from the sticks wanting a drink-around, kids wanting to wear long trousers before they shave—what kind of guys?"

"Well—er. Ah guess most ev'ry kind of fellow, Mistah Shilton." Daphne shook her curls. "Mah last date was with an oldah man, but the one befoh was with a boy from the U." Leaning toward him, Daphne clasped her lace-mitted hands dramatically.

"But let's doan talk about they-all. Let's talk about you-all." she said softly, and blinked her new eyelashes.

"Cut the act," Slug said curtly. "That phony Southern accent gripes me. I'm after facts, see? Now, what about your rates—do they vary with the sucker?"

Daphne's tongue felt numb.

"C'mon, give," Slug said impatiently. "I've got t' crack a guy uptown before the night's over."

In Daphne's brain something clicked. Gangsters "musced in" on "rackets." They collected fortunes. Maybe if she answered him honestly, he'd think she wasn't worth bothering with.

"My rate is always the same," she told him. "Ten dollars an evening and expenses."

"Price go up as the night goes on?" he asked with a wise look.

Daphne flushed. "No."

"No extras?"

He said it that way. Daphne's hand twitched up to slap him, then halted. Maybe if he got mad he'd knock her

down as they did in those Apache dances. Trembling, her hand went on up, smoothed her curls.

"Have to have a license to operate?" Slug asked.

"Why, I never thought of that," Daphne faltered.

"Better be nice or I'll turn you in." Slug suddenly grinned, and all the little lines in his face ran into each other.

Panic mounted in Daphne. Now he "had something on" her. That was the way they did it. They "got something on" you, then they "turned on the heat."

Her eyes sought the door frantically. If only Terry would come in! Then, at a corner table, where he must have been all the time, she saw him. He was with the most fascinating girl she had ever seen. Her hair made two dark wings on either side of her creamy oval face, and between them were set slanted eyes of cobalt-blue.

As Daphne watched, Terry and the girl rose to dance. The girl's dress spelled Paris, but she was as exotic as an hybrid orchid. Daphne sighed. She just couldn't compete with that, not possibly. This girl spelled mystery and adventure with every turn of her lovely body.

"Listen, babe"—Slug's voice broke the spell—"I see one of the gang. Sit tight. I'll be back."

He walked briskly toward the bar. Now, thought Daphne, now was her chance to escape. Her eyes found Terry again. He and the girl had stopped to talk to a navy man. The girl's face was no longer inscrutable, but animated. After a moment she danced away with the uniformed man and Terry went back to his table. Daphne got up slowly and went to him.

It was humiliating, but this would probably be the last time. She just wasn't cut out to be all things to all men. Especially when you never knew just what thing to be to just what man.

"Terry"—she couldn't seem to make

her voice sound definite—"Terry, would you help me just once more?"

Rising quickly, Terry pulled out a chair.

Daphne shook her head. "I daren't stay. I . . . I've got a gangster this time."

"You—what?"

"I've got a gangster. He"—Daphne gulped—"he wants to muscle in on me. Please, could you stay with me until I get a taxi?"

"It's getting you, sweet." Terry grinned. "You've got the night-club jitters. Gangsters don't bother with infants like you."

Daphne didn't have time to be offended. "But he did. He wanted to know what I make, whether I get a percentage—everything."

"Where is he now?"

"Talking to one of his gang at the bar."

"We'll dance around and you show me."

They began to move slowly around the floor. When they got near the bar, Daphne's hand tightened on Terry's arm.

"There he is, the man with the crooked mouth."

Terry took one look, then laughed. "That's Slug Shilton, feature writer for the *Herald*. He bring you here?"

Daphne nodded. Terry would know, now, she was just a kid from the sticks. A tear trembled on the ambuscade of the new eyelashes. Terry stopped laughing.

"Here, here, infant, we can't have that. Chin up. I'll tell Slug I'm taking you home. Then you can tell uncle all about it."

"But your escort—" protested Daphne.

"The lady found a friend from Singapore."

Wordlessly, Daphne followed Terry. There was a quirk to his mouth as he spoke to the reporter:

"Hi, Slug. I'm taking your date home, if you don't mind. She's, er, upset."

Slug looked at Daphne's wet lashes. "O. K., O. K. I wasn't getting far."

"Get your wrap," Terry told Daphne.

Going home, Terry started in on her. "How about staying home nights for a while? I'm losing sleep wondering what you're up to." He looked at the lace mitts, the curls and false eyelashes.

"What are you made up for now?"

"I was trying to be feminine," Daphne said weakly. "I was trying to make Slug feel a man."

Terry shouted with laughter. "Slug, the toughest male on the dailies."

Daphne began to cry softly. Terry put an arm about her, drew her head to his shoulder. It felt good.

"I know how it is. You're young, want a good time, maybe don't know anybody here—"

Daphne made a little protesting sound, but Terry went on:

"Well, anyway, it's a bit cheap, and you're taking chances."

Daphne sat up, tears beading her lashes, but her chin firm.

"It isn't cheap to want to eat. But there's no use trying to make you understand. You don't have to work, and you don't know my kind of girl."

The taxi drew up in front of the studio.

"There"—Daphne pointed to the sign, "Lady For An Evening." "You know, now."

Terry stared, then began to laugh again. Only this time he couldn't seem to stop. After a while Daphne began to be worried. She pulled at his sleeve.

"It's too good," he gasped, and went off into fresh spasms.

"I don't think it's funny," Daphne said with dignity.

"No? Well," Terry choked, "take a look at this." Taking out a card, he handed it to her.

The letters, magnified by her tears,

jumbled and blurred. She blinked rapidly, and they settled down:

TERRIS REDMOND

THE MCMAHON ESCORT BUREAU

55 WEST 42ND STREET

NEW YORK CITY

Slowly, Daphne raised her eyes to Terry's. "You mean, you're one, too?"

Terry nodded. "It's been bread and butter until I start a job next month, research chemist."

"And . . . all those lovely ladies?"

"Barbe and I grew up together—we both had a free evening. The pain-in-the-neck from the deep South was a stranger from Geo'gia. The girl you saw to-night—well, I'm sorry for her. She's Eurasian. First time in the States, wanted to see the sights, called up the bureau. Check?"

"Check," said Daphne. She opened the door, turned on the light in the swank little reception room.

"Nice layout," Terry approved.

"But all front." Daphne flung open the door to the bare back room. "I inherited the clothes, and it all seemed a good idea. But I guess I should have left it in the oven longer. Now I don't know what to do."

"Looks as though it might be cozy to stay right here." Terry's smile was very special. "I think we'd better get acquainted. I've met the college girl, the glamour girl and this little Southern beauty, but I've never, you know, met Miss Daphne Best in person."

"Maybe you wouldn't like her," Daphne said in a small voice.

Terry came over and, putting his hands on her shoulders, looked into her eyes.

"You don't believe that, do you?"

For a long moment Daphne looked back at him. Then, suddenly, her lashes dropped. "No," she answered softly.

"Bright child," he said, and kissed her.

THE END.



**Why is it that men
deceive the women they love?**

by Ruth Wood Cadmus

A TRIM, graceful yacht swung idly at anchor in Drexton Bay. A girl stood at the rail, staring toward the mainland. She was a slim girl with red-gold curls that stood wildly erect as slender, impatient fingers combed through them slowly. The curls shone bright, untarnished, un-

der a full, silver moon, but Aimee Barron saw nothing but the twinkling lights on the shore line.

Over there, in Drexton town, was Barron's. For years the catering shop had been her father's pride and joy. At his death, two years before, she took over,

but it was all so different. Not only that the great Allenbee chain was buying more and more into Florida towns along the East coast, but Barron's was a rich plum with its long-established prestige, and that note dangling over the shop and her, thought Aimee dismally, made Barron's an easy plum to pick—what with the note due in three days and nothing to meet it!

The Drexton bank had extended that note several times in those two years. She had paid off so little on the principal. No wonder her last extension must be the final one! Aimee scowled at the shore and its merry lights. They should not be so gay when Barron's was in trouble!

Oh, yes, she had known all along that she would sell sometime, but she hated being forced to sell to Allenbee, the grabbing monopoly!

The chain had not the name of being a generous buyer. But Preston Bishop, Drexton's successful young realtor, was trying to put through the deal with them. Any day now she expected a phone call from Pres to tell her that all was ready for her signature.

Pres was very wealthy. This was his yacht, his party. And, on the shore of Drexton Bay opposite the mainland was his beautiful estate. More than once he had asked her to quit business and marry him.

Only that night he had started talking marriage, when Bill Grace cut in on them and whirled her away. Pres was angry about that. She could tell by his quick, jealous glare. Pres had looked jealously at Bill and her more than once in the weeks since Bill Grace arrived in Drexton, on what Aimee supposed to be a pleasure trip.

Pres said only a few days before, "Just because that ape and I were in Yale together doesn't give him the right to monopolize you. Aimee! And I'm not going to have it!" He was extremely

irritated when Bill showed an avid interest in her. Aimee's smile was dreamy, satisfied. She liked that interest. Bill Grace was as tall, lean and alive as Pres was short, stocky and indolent.

How often Bill's eyes were saying, "You're lovely, you're precious, you're so sweet, Aimee!" But in the two weeks she had known him he had been all too discreet with his lips!

"There you are!" Bill's gay tones cut in on her confused thoughts. "Such a place to hide! And to run out on the party, on everyone, and on me! Come on, dance?"

She caught her breath. "Not just now, Bill. Just look at that moon! Who wants to dance when there's all this beauty—moonlight shimmering on the quiet waters, twinkling lights on both shores like tiny stars—"

He laughed. "And best of all, moon-rays in your lovely hair," he whispered, while his arm stole about her, drawing her toward him. Aimee felt a delightful, strange quiver pulse through her. His lips rested on fragrant curls.

"I shouldn't let you do this," she murmured.

"Why not?" Bill demanded. "I'm loving you so, Aimee!"

"Oh, no, no!" Suddenly, tears overflowed the brown eyes and then, to her utter surprise, he was holding her very firmly and her head was comfortable on his shoulder. Bill was tucking a large linen handkerchief into her hand and saying anxiously:

"Aimee, Aimee! Don't cry, please. I can't stand seeing you so unhappy. Tell me, sweet, what is the trouble?"

"But I can't tell you, anyone!" she began.

"You must, you will tell me!" he commanded.

"Barron's," Aimee whispered with a sob. "We're so terribly in debt and I've got to sell and I'm so worried. If Allenbee ever finds out! Oh, I . . . I—"

"Allenbee? What about Allenbee?" he asked sharply.

"N-nothing." She closed her lips firmly.

"There's no need to worry, sweet. Don't ever do it again, do you hear? Let me do your worrying. Promise me, darling?"

He held her close. After a moment he said softly:

"Aimee, sweet little name. Did you know your French name means beloved? But, of course, you do. Everyone, all the men, would be telling you that." He laughed gently, and then his lips touched hers and all the silvery world dissolved in a blaze of glory as Aimee sighed, relaxed in his arms.

"You could love me, sweet?" he asked.

"I—well, I suppose I do, Bill." Her laugh was unsteady. "If one falls in love so quickly."

His arms tightened about her. "One does—I did!"

"Oh, Bill, what . . . what are you doing to me?" she faltered.

"I hope just what you've already done to me, beloved. Making you very sure that you do love me, that you will always love me," he declared, "and never leave me."

"But I must leave you this very instant! It's high time I was seeing to the supper and my duties." Aimee wriggled out of his arms. "I'm not only a guest, Bill, but a business woman." She ran along the deck toward the service quarters. As she came through the doorway an arm reached out, caught her, whirled her about to face Pres Bishop. He was scowling blackly.

"Aimee! First you disappear, then Bill vanishes. What's going on?" he demanded.

"Let me go, Pres. I've work to do— if you and your guests want to eat." Her voice was unsteady. She was afraid that he could read in her eyes the happy tumult in her heart. If eyes could mirror

souls, hers must be brilliant, filled with stars, she was so happy yet so uncertain, sort of confused. All that had happened out on deck had come so fast!

Pres drew her into a corridor. She was impelled into a small room and he closed the door and stood with his back against the panels.

"It's time for a showdown," he said crisply. "The way you've been wearing your heart on your sleeve whenever Bill Grace's about these days is pretty obvious! You've held me off for months but you fall for him in two weeks!" he accused.

"I have not— Well, what's it to you if I have?" Aimee cried.

"Plenty," he said soberly. "You are a little fool to be fooled by Bill's charms. He doesn't mean a word of his accomplished love-making, pet. It's just his way and he did the same thing all through college. He has a reputation that way in the social world."

Aimee hated the rich color that flowed swiftly, warmly, into her cheeks. The crimson banners were a silent betrayal. Pres shrugged, and she flared into defense of Bill.

"I don't believe you! Bill's always a gentleman. For all the ill temper and jealousy you've shown, he never even mentions you or says a word against you."

"Why would he, my pet?" Pres drawled. "It's nothing to him, the way I feel about you. After he's left town I will have you to myself again, but I want you heart-free from everyone but me, Aimee."

"After he is gone?" Aimee repeated slowly. "But—"

"You didn't expect him to stay on and on, did you? Or did you expect to be leaving with him?"

"Oh," she cried softly. She hadn't once thought of it until that instant, but Bill had said nothing about marriage!

Pres said dryly, "Did Bill tell you who he is?"

"He's Bill Grace, of course," she answered rather hesitantly. "Since he is a friend of yours, Pres, I naturally supposed he was just what he said he was—William Grace of New York City, in Florida for a pleasure trip—"

"Hm-m-m!" Pres snorted. "Yes, he's old Bill all right, but I'll wager he hasn't yet told you he is Allenbee!"

"A-Allenbee?" she quavered.

"Exactly!" Pres' voice was filled with triumph. "Now will you believe me when I tell you once again Bill's a devil with the gals? If he'd meant his sweet chat, wouldn't he have told you the whole truth?"

"I don't believe—" But, somehow, she had to believe him for Pres knew Bill of old. He had gone through college with him. And in spite of his jealousy, Pres would have no reason to lie about Bill's being Allenbee. That kind of lie was too easy to refute. But if Bill really was Allenbee, then why hadn't he told her the truth, knowing that she was Barron's, that Barron's must sell, that—

"Allenbee was bought by a syndicate," she murmured out of the chaos of thought.

"And Bill is head of that same group," Pres added maliciously. "You can't get around it, pet. He has deceived you, and a man who's truly in love with a girl doesn't do that to her."

No, a man who loves a girl doesn't deceive her, trick her into telling her secret troubles. Why, Aimee thought, horrified, she had told Bill Grace—Allenbee—all about that note! What a fine weapon she had placed into his hands if he wished to be unscrupulous and use the knowledge to force a better price for Allenbee.

"Let me out of here," she said slowly.

"First, I want to put this on the proper finger, pet." His tone was suave. On his palm lay a huge, expensively set star sapphire. Aimee stared at it. She was beginning an indignant "no," when a

thought struck her. It was a perfect, sure way of proving to Bill Grace that she, too, had been playing at love. She winced but she held out her left hand.

Pres slid the ring on her finger. He took her in his arms. She endured his caresses silently. After a moment, he laughed in triumph, and released her slowly.

"You may go now, pet. But you won't be working like this very long. My wife is going to be busy looking after me and my comfort, Aimee. Thank goodness that deal is going through with Allenbee. Sure, I got Bill's O. K. on it this afternoon, but I kept it as a little surprise for you tonight, baby."

She ran out of the room, hurried along the corridor toward the service quarters. So Bill was undeniably Allenbee! And he had not thought it necessary to tell her. But why should he? He was just one of those love-them-and-leave-them men. Pres said he had that reputation even in college.

Aimee glanced down at the sparkling ring on her finger. Bill would see it. That would be her revenge.

Red-gold curls rampant about her head, Aimee went into the dining salon. Why must she, first of all, see Bill's eyes? Why must his eyes lie and tell her that he had been missing her all those minutes? How could he keep up the pretense? She moved across the large room and ignored Bill's soft, "Beloved, wait." She went to Pres, put her hand on his arm, the hand that wore his ring.

She caught Bill's quick move as his eyes saw the gleam of light reflected in the huge star sapphire.

Aimee smiled up at Pres and said, "All set to serve when you say the word."

For the rest of the evening she was very gay, but she kept close to Pres and ignored Bill when he started toward her. Once, when he tapped Pres' shoulder and



"Stop!" she cried softly. "What right have you to think I came out here to you?"

said, "Cut in!" she laughed, shrugged and said, "No, thanks!"

When she saw the surprise and hurt in Bill's eyes, Aimee's heart wavered. Could a man who didn't mind taking a girl's heart and twisting it in his hands, wear a true hurt in his eyes, or was he dishonest even in looking at a girl?

Fool to have any such thoughts about him! Aimee bit her lip. She'd save her thoughts and her words until she could confront Bill Grace and tell him that she knew what a lying, unfair person he was!

He could have said, "I am Allenbee, Aimee. Don't tell me anything you will regret later, darling. Let me first prove my love by my purchase of Barron's at a fair, just price!"

But he didn't, and she hated him for it.

More than once in the following days, Aimee found herself wavering in her steadfast decision to ignore Bill Grace. When he came into the shop and asked for her, at least once a day, it became increasingly difficult to tell her clerks to say, "Out," each time.

She was busy in her service room on an afternoon a few days after Pres' yacht party. There was a dinner dance on at Pres' mansion. The dinner would bring announcement of their engagement and early marriage. Would Bill Grace be present? She was quite sure that Pres would see to that!

Aimee herself had suggested that Barron's be permitted to serve the banquet to the selected list of guests. It was to be the final gesture of Barron's under her ownership for, on the following morning, at eleven o'clock, she would put her signature on the sale papers.

She would feel lost, Aimee mused, and then she smiled. How could a girl so soon to marry a fortune and a great estate feel so forlorn as she thought herself to be? And yet she was uneasy and—yes, unhappy! Always, Bill's gray eyes rose between her and her work, her thoughts, fight them as she would.

She shook her head, rumbled the red-gold curls once again, and determinedly fixed her mind on other thoughts. There were those just past two years. From the time since her father's illness and death, this trim, one-story stucco building that bore a conservative sign, "Barron's," above the front door, had been more her home than the apartment she rented a few doors down the street. Only by hard work and persistence had she kept Barron's moving, for times were hard, money tight, collections increasingly slow. Labor cost money, so very often she herself had taken over even the unpleasant manual jobs. But she regretted nothing. Nothing, except Bill's deceit, his pretenses.

"Aimee! Quit your thinking about him," she said half aloud, and jumped when someone said:

"Who's 'him'?"

Bill Grace stood in the open doorway leading to the side street and the waiting delivery truck. Aimee scowled. He said, half laughing, half rueful:

"Sorry. Did I frighten you?"

"I am very busy." She was curt.

"Aimee, beloved!" he coaxed. "Please tell me why I'm suddenly poison to you? I thought that night on the yacht—you said—"

She broke in, "I said nothing that counted. You should have taken that silly episode as I did, just an episode. I am engaged to Preston Bishop—"

He reached out to touch her, but she drew away haughtily.

"Don't!"

"So I can't even touch you now and yet, that night, you were quite content in my arms. Or was that all a farce, a joke? Why, why, Aimee?" he persisted.

"I've nothing to say, except that I'm busy and cannot be bothered." Aimee shut her lips tightly and went on into the street to hand a tray of pastries to one of her assistants. If she had stayed in there a minute longer she would have told

Bill Grace just what she thought of him—lying, scheming—

Her fingers ruffled the red-gold curls unconsciously. She turned and almost bumped into Bill.

"You still here?" she demanded. "I wish you'd let me alone, Mr. Grace."

"You do mean it, Aimee," he said slowly. "You are going to marry Bishop."

"Yes," she snapped. She sailed past him into the shop, not once looking at him.

Unless he was the thickest-skinned person, she thought he'd get the idea! And, of course, he would not be present at Pres' dinner dance now that he knew she despised him.

But Bill was there! He sat almost opposite her and when a grandiloquent Pres rose to announce sonorously, "My dear friends, tonight I am the happiest man in all the world. Of course, you guess why. Aimee Barron has honored me by accepting me. We are announcing our engagement—" she could see a slow, wry smile starting about Bill's taut lips, but she could not see his eyes for they were lowered.

She lost all track of Pres' words. She was thinking, wondering, in spite of her sternest resolves, did Bill care? He didn't, she told herself angrily. He had made of that short meeting on the deck of Pres' yacht a mere incident. She, too, would make it so!

During the long evening, Aimee was ever conscious of Bill's presence. He did not ask her to dance with him. He was never far from her, though, and it troubled her because through her discreetly dropped eyelids, often she could fairly feel his burning gaze.

Must he persist in tormenting her? Aimee turned to Pres during a dance.

"I'm tired, Pres. Please give me a few minutes to rest and relax," she begged.

"Pet, you do look tired. It's this damn business. I know. I'll be glad when to-

morrow morning is over and the shop is out of your hands," he said significantly. "Go out on the terrace, baby. I'll bring you a cool drink."

Aimee slipped through the open French window and was grateful for the cool darkness of the terrace. She found a low, deep armchair and sank into it with a sigh. From a nearby chair she heard:

"Aimee!" It was Bill.

"Oh!" She started up but he rose, came quickly to her. He caught her hand, held it firmly while he knelt there on the stone flagging before her.

"Aimee, beloved! You came out to me. You were so lovely, so infinitely beautiful, coming through that doorway with the lights behind you, reflecting a thousand glints in your golden-auburn hair."

"Stop!" she cried softly. "What right have you to think I came out here to you?"

"But you've been unkind, unfair, lately. You've avoided me pointedly, and right after you said you loved me—"

Aimee interrupted him, "You dare to talk this way to me? You, who lied to me, who posed as a man in love—" She could not go on.

"But I am a man in love—with you," Bill said gravely.

"Indeed? Allenbee!"

He started. In the dim, shaded terrace lanterns, their glances clashed. Then Bill was speaking in low, even tones. "So you know that I am Allenbee. But only one person in Drexton knows that. Preston Bishop! And I thought he wouldn't tell because—well—"

"Go on!" she commanded.

"You are engaged to Preston Bishop, Aimee. I'd rather not go into a discussion of him." He was turning away when Aimee gripped his arm.

"You must tell me!"

"Bishop warned me at the very start that I was never to mention that I am

now Allenbee, Aimee. You so hate the very name of the chain that was forcing you to sell out."

"Oh, no. Pres couldn't do that— But why?" she faltered.

"I believe your fiancé is—was—jealous. For what reason, I cannot imagine since you so plainly preferred him to anyone else."

"Bill!" Her voice was unsteady. "What is going on? What has Pres been up to? He said you hadn't told me that you were the new head of Allenbee because I wasn't worth the truth! That you merely wanted a little fun with the small-town girl, on the side!"

"The dirty—I'm sorry, Aimee! I shouldn't speak like that about the man you love." Bill sounded bitter, hurt. Aimee's hand on his arm tightened in response to the plea in his voice and, suddenly, she was again in those strong arms. His lips were touching hers, and he was whispering:

"Beloved, my darling!"

"Oh, Bill, Bill! My heart was almost breaking when I thought you were just a cheat in love."

"Marrying Pres, angel?" he asked after a long, silent interval.

"Oh, no, Bill. I couldn't marry him now. And in my heart I never downright believed what he told me. It was my head that refused to allow my heart to rule me."

Out there on the softly lighted terrace there was a happy little respite until Aimee thought of something. She put Bill's arms from her reluctantly.

"Pres was coming out here. He mustn't find us together like this, Bill."

"Would you mind very much if he did?" the man asked gently.

"No, dear. It is because I want to tell him tomorrow, in his office. You and I, together—or weren't you invited to the final session of Barron's?"

"I wasn't, Aimee. I signed all the

papers this morning. But why not return his ring tonight?"

"And spoil his grand party? I can't do that to him with all these guests thinking I'm to be the bride, Bill!"

"Then it's tomorrow, angel, tomorrow when you and I can begin making our plans?" he urged gently.

"Tomorrow, Bill, and it is going to be a marvelous, happy day, too." She lifted her lips for his kiss, then she said, "I'd better go inside. Let Pres have this night, in spite of his lies."

Barron's would no longer belong to her, thought Aimee, but be theirs, Bill's and hers. And there was going to be another merger, a delightfully happy one, Bill and her, so very soon. She smiled dreamily at the young man who sat in the car at her side. She drove up to the curb and shut off the motor.

"We're here, and I'm a little bit scared, Bill darling!" she quavered.

"Don't be, my sweet." The tall young man reached for her and lifted her out of the car. He tucked her hand carefully under his arm.

Together, they entered Pres' office, and that young man rose slowly from his chair behind the desk. His eyes narrowed.

"You didn't need to come, Grace," he said shortly, his eyes moving to the slender hand still cradled in the crook of Bill's arm.

"I asked Bill to come, Pres." Aimee's tones were quiet.

"It doesn't matter, of course. Here is where you sign, Aimee." Pres offered her his pen, but she was busy searching in her purse. She drew out a small box, placed it on the desk and said:

"Here is your ring. Now I'll sign, gladly." Her eyes lifted to Bill's, a gentle smile on her soft lips. She put her name on the document and laid down the pen.

Pres said sharply, "What do you mean, Aimee? You and Grace— Have you

forgotten or do you take his word in spite of all my warnings?"

"I shall always take Bill's word before anyone else's!" she declared proudly. "You lied to both of us, Pres, and I almost let you spoil my whole life with your lies!"

While Pres stared at them, Aimee took Bill's arm again. She said, "Shall we go, Bill? I'm tired of lies."

In the deserted corridor, Bill whispered to her:

"Darling, I love you, do you know that now? But I felt almost sorry for him, he looked so taken aback."

"I'm not a bit sorry for Pres!" she cried. "Oh, let's forget him and talk of us, Bill darling!"

"I'd like that best of all, sweet. Shall we be planning our own special and private merger, Aimee?"

"Yes, oh, yes, of course!"

"Life sentence, Aimee, with me?" he said softly.

"Forever, with you, Bill." And when his lips came down on hers, she knew there was no greater joy under heaven. For in his arms was her paradise, and in his love and understanding was life's brightest promise for all peace and joy.

THE END.

MEMORIES

I can recall a pink plaid gingham dress
My grandma made, and one of linen, blue,
School holidays, and how I wore my hair,
Gray mist, the lichen on a wall, and you.

I can remember still a lamp-lit street,
That one, shy kiss, and how I ran away,
How blond your hair was, and a book you read,
The flowers you sent me on commencement day.

A June night after rain, a dripping road.
The heavy scent of roses, wet with dew,
And fireflies that starred the velvet dark,
A breath of honeysuckle, voices, you.

And I remember, too, the little church.
The fragrant petals strewn along the aisle,
The way a sunbeam kissed the altar place,
Where you were waiting with your tender smile.

GERTRUDE HAHN.



NEWSPAPER

Gisel

You must conquer your own world before you can conquer others — that was the advice this successful man gave her.

by Vivian Grey

THE STORY SO FAR:

Star Haliday is caught between her love for Jere Malcolm, a young veterinarian, and her ambition. Gerard Geddes, her boss on a great newspaper, encourages her to stick with her work, and on Thanksgiving, when her family and Jere are expecting her home, he asks to drive her up. They are caught in a snow storm and have to stay overnight at an inn.

V.

It was still snowing when Star rejoined Geddes at the table. Great soft flakes that clung to evergreens and shrubs, blanketing the ground in white beauty. A radio orchestra was playing the "Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy." There was something magic about the moment. Star's lovely eyes glowed as they met Geddes'. He gazed for an in-

stant as if entranced, then reached for her hand and lifted it to his lips in silent tribute to her loveliness.

There was a little stir in the room. The headwaiter moved toward the door. He returned ushering a man in. Star glanced at the newcomer who was seated near them—a distinguished man a trifle past middle age who gave Star first only a preoccupied glance, which changed as he became more aware of her, to a sort of interested study. Geddes, who had just released her hand, didn't even turn. He was himself accustomed to being the one who attracted attention.

But when, later, they went to the bar for a drink, the other man was standing there. The two men opened conversation and Geddes invited him to drink with them.

He was polished and polite and quite flattering to Star, but for some reason she was glad when they went to separate tables. Night was like a soft gauzy curtain at the window through which a magically white world was visible. Lovely, with a sort of poignant, touching loveliness that made Star just a trace sad. Geddes caught and understood the look in her eyes.

"Thinking of the displeasure at home?" he said, smiling gently at her. "Please don't, Star. Please be the girl I think you are, strong enough to make people like you and accept you as you are. Always, my dear, act as if you're right, whether you are or not. But in this case you are and very much so."

"I keep thinking they're worrying about me," she said.

"You make me doubt their real affection for you, Star," was Geddes' answer. "If they actually were concerned about you you'd know they'd rather have you safe here under any circumstances than out on that dangerous road. I'm beginning to think you have a family of tyrants; that their love for you is not love at all but a sort of tyranny which masquerades as affection."

That could be true, Star thought, during the silence that followed. Then Geddes was speaking again.

"You'll have to throw that off before you can conquer any other world. Your own world first, my child, and then others."

Star had been given a pleasant room with a big fireplace. Firewood was laid while they ate and a match touched to it. As their coffee was served the headwaiter told them its pleasant cheer was waiting for them. He had misunderstood, Star thought; had taken them for lovers and no wonder.

Two comfortable chairs had been drawn up for them with a small table nearby for cigarettes or drinks. They left the door open so the fitful shadows from the flames danced in lovely pattern along the hall. Geddes talked quietly some of the time, and some of the time they just sat silently. Occasionally someone passed in the corridor. Once Star was sure the person passing was the distinguished man who was the only other guest at the inn.

"It's only real companionship can be like this." Geddes spoke softly, as if loath to break the silence, as his hand found hers in the shadows. "Quiet is the most difficult thing to share, Star. Words, noise of any sort can be shared with a stranger entirely unattuned. But not silence."

He took both her hands in his when finally he rose to leave her. His dark eyes, looking down into hers, glowed with a sort of passionate warmth. It seemed for an instant that he was about to take her more intimately close.

"This has been a day to remember," he said, the gentleness of his voice etched with deep feeling, "happily, Star, most happily for me. And I hope for you. My life has been beautified by it."

"You say things so beautifully that I never quite know how to answer you," she murmured.

"Honestly, Star, as you feel."

She smiled up at him.

"Then," she said, "I think I've never felt more important in my life, taking a whole day out of the life of a man like you."

He smiled indulgently.

"That should be turned around," he said. "Good night, my dear."

There was something as intimate about the last as if he had taken her in his arms and kissed her.

She was slightly flushed as she met her own face in the mirror, and undressed slowly, thinking of a great many things. The people in the big, ugly house a little way up the road. They were probably asleep now or, at least in their own rooms in bed after having discussed her thoroughly. Star knew they weren't even trying to understand her situation. Her mother never had bothered to regard life from anything but her own personal viewpoint. If it hurt her, disappointed her, disarranged her schedule, it was wrong, and with blind, unreasoning violence she rebelled against it. Margery was ever on the alert for something that made Star seem like an undutiful, careless daughter and sister. And Rod was too easy-going to think anything out or bother about anything as long as lovely, fragile Margery was near him.

And Jere. It was unlike Jere to pout. To bear grudges. To purposely misunderstand.

Yet there had been no communication from him after that brief, sharp telephone conversation.

And under it all was a sensation of tingling warmth as if Geddes' lips were pressed against hers, as if his arms folded her close.

There was peculiar intimacy being with him the next morning. He was the first man Star had ever breakfasted with alone, but the uneasiness that she thought she would feel was quite dispelled by Geddes' accustomed air.

"More butter for those cakes, child! And here, sirup—real maple sirup, no dosed up excuse for it, this!"—as if every morning of his life he breakfasted with and served a strange woman. And then bending toward her with an air of young romance:

"Breakfast with you, my beautiful! The one meal of the day at which every man wants the most delightful woman of his acquaintance sitting opposite him! Yes, two lumps because your lovely fingers must touch each one! Star, if you could know what an occasion this is for me."

"They'll miss us at the office." Star said seriously. "Both of us gone, you know."

Geddes shook his head ruefully.

"Still all female, aren't you? Can't forget other things and devote yourself entirely to the business in hand. I had quite forgotten that the world held anything besides you opposite me at breakfast. The thrill of that excluded everything else."

"I want to learn to be that way." Star said, smiling, but quite earnest. "I know that's the difference between successful men and women who play at it."

They were lingering over their coffee and cigarettes when Geddes said:

"I'll remember this breakfast all my life. Star"—a note of muted emotion in his voice—"it's generally a very lonely time for me. It's been years since anyone has come to the table with me. The kids used to up to their early teens, but often only because they wanted to tell me something they wanted. However, even that was something. Now there's only the butler. And it's pretty sad business when life gets like that."

Star knew a moment of pity for the man. Strangely, the fact of his wealth seemed to make it a little sadder that he should be lonely.

"Mind you," he was going on, "I'm not blaming anyone. I subscribe thoroughly to the theory that we make our

own lives. Somewhere I must have missed it with them, but that doesn't lessen the loneliness."

"I'm sorry," she murmured, her voice weighted with a sincerity that was etched with tenderness. "I wish there was something I could do."

Geddes smiled.

"That's something, my dear," he said softly. "Something to take to my heart and hold there always."

Geddes had sent to Croton for chains. They had been put on by the time they finished breakfast.

"I'm going to take you home now," Geddes said. "You take the day with your family, the week end if you like, child. I'll push on back to the city. With chains I'll make it nicely."

The car moved quite easily with its chains on the snowed highway. Only as they turned into the road which would take them to Star's home did it slow and labor a little. Chains robbed the riding quality of the car of some of its pushed luxury, but they made the grade to the foot of the steep drive of her home. There, as Geddes was shifting to first to attempt the hill, Star spoke quickly.

"Please don't try the hill. It's too bad and turning up there is a trick in good weather. Leave the car here, and won't you come in?"

She was a little glad when Geddes refused, saying he must get back to town.

"I'll help you up with your things, however," he added.

Rod had seen them and met them half-way up the drive.

"Help you with the packages, sir?" he asked as Star hurriedly introduced them, sure of Rod's friendliness.

"Take your sister's, I'll manage these." Geddes' tone was friendly as he smilingly looked Rod over. In the little entry way at the kitchen door Geddes put his packages on a table.

"I'll push along now," he said to Star. "Have a nice week end. See you Monday."

Star was aware of Ma'msie's frigid eyes staring through the door, and of Margery, curious, behind her, and was a little glad Geddes hurried away. Ma'msie was in one of her moods.

"Well, he's certainly handsome!" Margery said, but not pleasantly.

"About time you're getting home." Ma'msie's tone was like ice.

Rod stood for a moment looking from one woman to the other and then back to Star.

"Don't let 'em get you down, sis," he said easily and then was off. He was late, as it was, for his work, but, then, that was habitual with Rod.

"Has Jere called?" Star asked and wished immediately she hadn't.

"Jere!" Ma'msie made no effort to conceal her displeasure. "Isn't one man enough for you? Haven't you just spent the night somewhere with one?"

"You know why I didn't get here." Star said patiently. "It was taking your life in your hands to travel. I tried."

"If you had come on the train you'd have been here."

"He's my boss, Ma'msie," Star pointed out wearily.

"That doesn't make him any less a man, does it?"

"No, but it does mean that I wasn't trying to make him. We were together because we work together. He drove me up here only because he had a day on his hands that was going to be long and empty with his family away. And the storm surely couldn't be blamed on either of us. Neither of us could foresee it. Who'd imagine there'd be heavy snow on Thanksgiving?"

But Ma'msie's eyes were already on the packages that lay on the table. Only Margery was still watching Star's young and vital loveliness with lips that curled and eyes that were coldly hard with jealousy.

"Out with the boss, so it's business!" she said. "I've heard that tale before! You aren't kidding me, smoothie! You had a room there at the inn even when you called so you intended to stay all night!"

Star turned to her swiftly, startled to silence, but Margery answered the question unasked.

"I called the inn back after you had finished talking, so you can't deny it!"—triumphantly, as if she had accomplished something.

"I wasn't going to," Star said quietly as she searched among the packages, handing some of the things to Ma'msie, and then finally finding the box with the rose silk sheets. "Here. Marge, these are for you. Sorry I couldn't get here with them yesterday as I intended."

Margery had the grace to look a little ashamed as she took the package. She paused a moment over the name on the box, one that represented elegant New York. And then opened it to touch the soft silk wonderingly.

Star watched her, pleased at the wonderment on the girl's face. For, actually, she was sympathetic with vain Margery. Margery, who had wanted little more of marriage than a husband's pay envelope, and when she took her vows had not looked beyond that.

"Silk sheets," Star said, knowing Margery had not solved the riddle of what she was touching.

"Silk sheets!" There was pleased awe in the girl's voice. "Rose silk sheets! Oh, Star! I'll have to write mom and the girls about this! I didn't know they made them of silk!"—in a moment of sincerity. And then, swiftly recovering the pitiful mask of bored sophistication that she habitually wore, added, "They're certainly lovely, Star. Sweet of you to bring them to us."

"I meant your father should have to pay that," her mother said in hurt and shocked explanation when Star spoke of

the four-hundred-dollar bill at the department store.

"But you know he's not even in this State, and I work right there in the city where they can get at me."

"But they shouldn't have bothered you with it!"—with a funny little air of righteousness.

"But they are business people, Ma'msie, and they are going to get their money no matter how. That is the theory of business."

"Well, it isn't a very nice way."

Star smiled, as she went back to New York, over her mother's strange reasoning. And she tried to tell herself she was actually glad Jere hadn't called, for now the affair with him was definitely finished, and that was what she wanted. She couldn't fool around with him any longer. It could be fatal to her career and her ambition.

She got to her apartment a few minutes before five. Glancing at the small electric clock on the mantel, she wondered if G. D. was still at the office, and lifted the telephone. Probably he wasn't, but she'd try anyhow. He might want to know that she was back in the city. Might have something for her to do. Katty, his secretary, answered the telephone. G. D. was there, and she put Star through to his private line immediately, as if she knew the great publisher would not want to keep his star feature writer waiting.

"But I thought you were going to take the week end in the country," he said, and then: "I hope this means what I hope it does!" He laughed a little at his own expression. "Have dinner with me tonight?"

"I'd love to."

G. D. was tender and gay and a little bit sad. Star supposed it was because he was lonely. It must be depressing to be part of an indifferent family. Her own quarreled and bickered, but there was a fierce, possessive underlying love that



"It's only real companionship can be like this." Geddes spoke softly, as if loath to break the silence. "Words can be shared with anyone. But not silence."

gave her a continuous sense of being part of it. That was something. It was that night that Geddes told her he loved her.

At the office, Star noticed that Katty was beginning to fix herself up a little more. She paused on that, wondering what change was taking place in the girl's life that she'd suddenly become rouge-conscious. She began using deep-red

polish on the nails of her thin, well-kept hands. G. D. hated it. He called her down for it and for the first time in her life Katty showed spirit in insisting her nails were her own to wear as she wished.

VI.

Star found that each day brought a new, important gift to her apartment. One bitter, snowy December day it was a case of Scotch that waited her arrival home. Another a new fur coat. Always there were flowers. And in return G. D. had asked nothing but the pleasure of her companionship, the right to kiss her hands, and only occasionally seek her lips with passion that was held in obvious check. They dined together and danced. Sometimes in glamorous places, but more and more in quiet nooks where pleasant privacy was made to seem like a jewel in a lovely velvet case presented to them by an anxious-to-please management. Geddes seemed to delight in those quiet evenings. He often commented on what a home Star could create.

Star had few evenings alone. Geddes claimed most of her time, pleading his loneliness. Her work suffered a little. She wasn't doing all the features she intended nor had she started the novel she intended doing. But she was gathering experience, she told herself, and making notes, mental notes. Jere called several times, but Star, hurt at what seemed his too long silence, his failure to get in touch with her Thanksgiving, refused to talk to him.

Yet for all her refusal to see him, for all the luxury and activity and success of her life, she missed him sorely.

It was on one of the rare evenings when she was alone that her phone ringing started her heart anxiously. Probably Jere! She'd kill that impulse to hurt him this time and let him come up, instead of refusing him and then wishing afterward with all her heart that she had seen him.

But it wasn't Jere who was announced. "Mr. Curry Hanson to see you," the telephone girl announced.

Star thought a minute. One of the young men she'd met that first night at the club and had seen several times since. What in the world could he want? She'd understood he was Juliette Geddes' particular rave. Or rather she was his.

"Send him up," she said tersely.

Hanson came in with a flutter of small talk and Star had a sense of waiting, trying to hurry that through, to get to the real meaning of his call. He must have a definite reason for coming, surely. She served a drink.

Hanson was a tall, sleek youth without much force but with a great deal of polish, a thing that had gathered with the generations of Hansons until Curry was so deep in it that it was hard to tell what the youth was actually like. Star reflected. He sniffed the brandy appreciatively. It was some G. D. had sent.

"Say," he said, "your living here seems to be as rich as a birthday cake."

Something about the way he said it startled Star. She had no reply for him. He rose, walked across and dropped down on the divan beside her.

He looked at her intently as he spoke again.

"As rich as a birthday cake—orchids on the mantel. Superfine brandy in superfine glasses. And"—his hand waved inclusively—"all the trimmings."

The things he had named had been gifts from G. D. and Star had the uncomfortable feeling that he knew and was taunting her with it. She wished he'd go and felt like asking him why he'd come. He moved closer to her, his arm along the back of the divan. Then, without further warning, his arm was around her and his other hand assisting in drawing her close with a strength that his easy manners had not even suggested.

Star resisted.

"Please! You must be mad. Curry! I've given you no reason to think—"

But the words were taken from her by the fierceness of his attempted caress. Star realized in a moment of pure panic no ordinary methods were going to serve her. Curry was like something gone wild. She struck out blindly with her clenched hand. There was a ring on it, a large fashionable thing G. D. had given her.

Star heard Curry cursing, felt his grip on her loosen.

"You've hit me," he said, apparently aggrieved and startled.

"What did you expect?" Star was breathless. "Did you think I was going to take it? You must be crazy!"

"Well, I didn't think you were a wild cat! You're not human! Women don't fight like that!"

"My kind of woman does!"

"Your kind!"—scathingly, out of his hurt and humiliation. Star saw the red of the bruises she had made on his face turning slowly to a faint green.

Something about his tone and manner bit into her pride. She felt herself draw up a little and freeze.

"Well"—when he said nothing more—"were you going to say something, Mr. Hanson? And I think it is only fair to warn you to be careful what it is."

Curry stared at her for a sullen moment.

"I'll have to go back now and tell Juliette I couldn't make it," he said finally.

Surprise tensed Star like an electric shock.

"Juliette?"—unbelievingly. "Juliette Geddes? Not Juliette Geddes?"

"Why not? Aren't you her old man's newest rose? G. D.'s sweetie?"

Star never had liked the word, and as Curry said it it seemed especially obnoxious. Almost evil. Certainly common.

"How can you say that, Curry?"—in a low tone, quite controlled.

"All right then! All right! You're

his newest find! Talent and all that. Have it your way. That is, if kidding yourself does you any good."

"Curry, why did Juliette send you to me?"

The youth stared at her a moment, and then with the brutal frankness which is modern youth's cult.

"Julie likes to have something on her dad. Something she can slay him with, lay him low when he gets hard to handle. When she wants a trip or a car or a diamond or something and he's slow in coming across. He'll do anything to save his pride. In other words, he doesn't want Clair, his wife, to know that his sweetie would double-cross him."

"And Juliette would tell her mother?" Star asked in amazement. This was a new sort of family squabbling, something she never had known existed.

"Would she? Are you asking me, lady?"

"And what do you get out of this?" Star asked, still in that low, controlled voice. She wouldn't give way to temper if she exploded inwardly with what was pent up there. Not before Curry Hanson for him to carry back to Juliette Geddes.

Curry didn't answer immediately. He sat looking at the floor for a space. Then, finally: "I like Juliette."

"And you think this sort of thing will help with her?"

"I don't know what I do think," he burst out. "Don't ask me what I think! You don't think when you are in love with a woman. You just want. You should know that!" He flung the words at her. Something about it infuriated Star anew, threatened to touch off the emotion that churned explosively within her.

"Curry," she said, struggling for self-possession, "get out of here. Get out and make it snappy. Get out before something else happens."

Curry left. But Star found it impossible to compose herself to anything for

the remainder of the evening. She tried to work on the plot for her novel. She tried to read. And finally gave up in favor of mending. She had discovered when her mind was troubled doing something with her hands helped to compose her. But Curry's implications rankled. Star was startled at finding herself the target for such unflattering beliefs. She had been so proud of her work and the attention it was bringing her. It was shocking to find that other people regarded the work as very minor in the situation and personal interest paramount.

She had been given a glimpse of an entirely new side of G. D.'s family. They were, she tried to tell herself, even a little worse than he had painted them. And before the evening was over Star found herself pitying Geddes even more than before because he had a family so lacking in sympathy and appreciation. They were cruel to him. Positively cruel. He gave so much to others and was given so little himself. No one, apparently, thought of him at all.

Star was still in that mood at the office the next day. G. D., sitting on the edge of her desk talking business with her, sensed it. Nothing ever escaped the man.

"You're sweet today." He bent toward her suddenly. The door was swung partially shut, giving them privacy of a sort. "Stay this way always, will you?"

Star put out her hand and touched his, the first caress she had ever offered him. G. D. took it quickly and brushed it with his lips.

"Darling," he murmured, "why are you the only person with whom I lose that sense of loneliness that's grown so heavy and deep around me through recent years, Star?"

"Could it be because I am fond of you?" Her voice was very gentle, tender.

"That means you really are? Star! Oh, Star, my darling! You're changing

my whole life. You're giving me a reason for wanting to go on. It had all grown so stale, my dear." He had drawn her up beside him, his arm around her. "And now you've given everything a new meaning. Is it any wonder I adore you? That my heart, my very life is at your feet. This little hand of yours"—he kissed its palm as he held it—"holds the whole of me. One gesture can send me to the heights of heaven or to tormenting purgatory. Star, my sweet."

Somehow, there seemed to be something sealed between them then. Star felt closer to him. More a part of his important life. He conferred with her constantly about business matters. And spent much time planning her future work.

It was one day she had gone home from the office a little early to prepare for a dinner date with G. D. that Jere called and insisted upon seeing Star.

"I must see you," he said over the phone. "You can't refuse me again, Star. You can't."

Star was adamant. She was busy, was preparing for a date, had no time for anyone then. Perhaps if he wanted to make an engagement for some future time—and just there she heard the telephone bang and knew Jere was no longer on the line. She wasn't exactly glad. Oddly enough she would have liked to see Jere. Her heart got a queer feeling at the sound of his voice. But she felt for some strange reason that she couldn't face him. Then she heard his voice at the door demanding admittance.

Star remembered occasions when Jere's determination had been tested and knew it was no frail thing. She opened the door.

"Why must you do such things?" she asked wearily.

"I have to, Star, for you!"

"To annoy me."

"To save you." And then he added quickly, "From doing something foolish."

"I don't like what you're trying to in-



"All right then!" Curry retorted. "You're Geddes' newest find! Talent and all that. Have it your way. That is, if kidding yourself does you any good."

sinuate, Jere, and if that's all you've come to say, get on your way!"

"Star, you're misunderstanding." His voice was suddenly kinder and more controlled. "I'm not saying anything about you, but only about the intentions of the people you're making your closest friends. I know what happens in—" But Star could think of nothing but the unpleasant implication of his previous words. She interrupted madly.

"I hate you! Get out of here! I never want to see you again! You're thinking things no decent person would. Get out or I'll have you put out."

"Star, please try to understand what I'm doing. I have only your good—"

"Don't talk to me! I won't listen. Will you go or must I ask help in getting you out of here?" Her hand was on the telephone. Jere watched her as if fascinated. He was meeting a new Star, one he'd never realized existed before. Yet he understood her anger and there was none in his own face as he looked at her. He knew her problems, the pressure on her life. And he knew, too, how ambition can goad. She hadn't had the wise, happily married parents he had; her home life hadn't been one in which peace and happiness and pleasant companionship were the prizes sought and cherished.

He moved toward her, talking gently.

"Star, my sweet, please listen to me." His arms moved out, but just as they would have closed around her, Star struck him madly. Jere stood for a startled instant, staring at the girl. And then as impulsively as she herself had moved, struck her.

Star backed away from him with a low cry, stifled, blindly angry.

Jere stood staring at the girl as if shocked himself at what he had done.

"You hit me!" Star finally found words to say. "You hit me!"—her shock seeming to grow with repetition of the thought.

"I'm sorry," Jere started to say and then shocked Star still further. "No, I'm not sorry. I'm not. You asked for it. You're acting like a bad child that ought to be spanked. Provoke me a little more and I'll do that, too!"

"That's what you think! Stand there one minute more and I'll throw this and I don't care where it lands. I'm giving you fair warning." She had picked up a heavy book end and stood with it, poised, ready to throw.

"All right," Jere said through his rage. "I'll go! But not because I'm afraid of your book ends. I'm going because I don't want to see the person who's coming here for you. I don't want to have to lay eyes on him because I feel I wouldn't be able to control my impulse to fight tonight. I might do something to your lover that we might all be sorry for."

"Thanks heavens you still have a little intelligence left," Star said with fine sarcasm. "Brawling with a man who wouldn't know what it was all about."

"I won't fight," Jere said quietly. "I'll not fight for you, Star. But I'll wait until you come back to me of your own accord."

"That will be when a certain well-known spot freezes over." Star's voice was cold. She stood at the door holding it open a minute as Jere vanished toward the elevator. Her eyes were chill, but no more had she turned and closed herself in than tears came quickly to their violet depths.

Star had not completely recovered when Geddes arrived. He scanned her face with eyes that missed nothing.

"What is it, sweet?" he asked gently. "Something has happened to disturb you. Tell me?"

"Oh, it's nothing," said Star, his sympathy bringing her once more near tears. "Just foolishness. I'm soft and let things disturb me."

"I know." He took her hand. "If

you weren't that way, soft as you say, you wouldn't be capable of the things you are. You wouldn't have the talent you have. I'd call it sensitive. It's the thing that allows life and thoughtless people to torture you. But it is also the thing that makes you the talented person you are, that will make you great, my dear."

Star was smiling as he finished. G. D. always knew how to turn the thing so she felt better about it. He was so kind and so sweet. If he could be as big and splendid as he was, surely she could laugh off such things as Curry Hanson's insinuations and Jere's flare-up. Jere was simply jealous, anyhow.

"I think what you need tonight is to be gay," G. D. said. "Very gay. Let's go to one of those mad little spots on the East Side."

Star welcomed the suggestion. She hadn't known until he made it that she had wanted to get out. The walls of her smart, modernistic apartment had seemed to be pressing in on her. They taxied over the snowy streets. It had not snowed so much in December since Star could remember. Drifts were piled high on either side of the two traffic lanes. Star reflected that what was merely a soiled inconvenience in the city had definite beauty in the country.

Against her will, she found herself envisioning the beauty of the rolling hills of Jere's place, snow-covered, looking down from their white, quiet loveliness to the Hudson River, moving majestically between its banks. Jere was probably at that very moment sitting in front of his cheerful fireplace, in the soft light made only by the blaze on the hearth. He'd just about had time to get home and sink into his favorite chair. Star knew how he loved the companionable quiet of that sort of thing. Blaze would be stretched at his feet, his silky gray-blue coat gleaming with the care Jere gave it.

Star's heart tightened a moment as she thought of Blue Star, the puppy Jere had

named for her. It would be on this cold night cuddled close to the warm silky coat of its mother, Streak. Star knew that Jere would have hurried from her place directly to the station and home. All the things he loved were there. All the things that called definitely to his heart. And those things were, somehow, in this moment, that she sat beside G. D., going on a glamorous errand, calling to her heart.

The tiny night spot their taxi finally stopped in front of was alive with life when they reached its smoky inclosure. A girl was singing, not the slim, slinky type of girl the uptown clubs featured, but one rounded and well-fed-looking. She gave G. D. an arch look as he passed. It was evident she recognized him as one of the spending patrons of the place. Later, after they'd ordered, she came to their table.

"Look, big boy"—with easy familiarity as she pulled up the long skirt of her evening gown to reveal a leg well above the knee—"I'm taking it off. I've lost twenty pounds. I've lived on nothing but vinegar for the past weeks!"

Star scanned her quite pretty face interestedly.

It was an intelligent face. Pretty, too, in a broad, heavy way. A girl had to have something to make a living singing in a night spot, Star reflected. Managers changed artists so often and then there was so much competition from society girls who did it more for fun than anything else. They took the money, of course, but it wasn't fair competition because they didn't actually need the money to live on, so could work for less. And then, too, the glamour of their names and positions made it easy for them to step in and take jobs from girls who hadn't that prestige back of them. Geddes was talking to the girl.

"Don't be silly, Dotty," he said good-naturedly. "You need weight. The boys you're singing to here like a little upholstery."

"Yeah, but not over-stuffing!" She glared at Star as she replied. And then moved swiftly on to a table where two men sat.

"Dotty's had a tough time," G. D. said, watching her begin an animated conversation with the men, and Star, realizing that it must get to be awfully old stuff to the girl, wondered if she could be as interested in them as she appeared to be. "All these girls have had lately. Too much competition from the debs and ex-debs. My kid, Juliette, wanted to get into it. Wanted me to help her."

"And you wouldn't?" Star asked.

"Not on your life. I'd do anything else in the world for the girl, but not that."

"Strange that she should want to," Star said.

"Not so strange, after all, when you think of it," was G. D.'s reply. "All those kids nowadays are sensation-seekers. Julie just doesn't know what to do with herself. She's had everything, been everywhere and done everything. Getting into public life is about all that's left for her. She's pretty and cute and

smart, but, after all, even if she is mine, I must admit the truth. She hasn't any voice, and she'd just hold a job because she is who she is. I don't believe in that sort of thing. Not when there are thousands of girls who have the stuff and need the money."

Which revealed another phase of the man to like and respect. Almost all G. D.'s theories of life were fine, honest, a little above the average. It seemed to Star that she was constantly discovering things about him which increased her respect for him. And then, suddenly, Star was jolted out of her reverie by a voice and a presence at their table.

"If it isn't the great G. D. himself! Having yourself a little slumming party, eh?"

"Well, Julie!" G. D. exclaimed. "Have you met my new feature writer? Star, this is my darling daughter!"

"I've heard of you." Juliette turned eyes startlingly like G. D.'s to Star, and there was something peculiar in her intonation. Star wondered if she understood it when she looked past Juliette and saw Curry.

Star is finding that the world is putting an entirely different interpretation upon her friendship with her boss. Will she be able to get to the top without him or is it his influence that is pushing her on? Don't miss next week's installment.

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A white girl, reared in the tropics, she knew no family other than the old black woman who had raised her and was now ready to sell her to the highest bidder. You won't want to miss this latest story by Marianne Barrett—"Never, Never Change"—in this magazine next week.

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**It is usually a woman's love
that creates a man's glory.**

by Jeanne Kirk

YOUTH's pandemonium shrilled against a background of jingling cash registers in Knoxville Dairy Lunch No. 1. Late patrons from the Regent Theater clattered in for "Ed Coggins Specials" with whipped cream.

Ed Coggins' film success was their sole topic. What was there about Ed Coggins that made everyone feel he was a personal friend of theirs? "I wouldn't know myself," thought Martha Burnett as she saw

the magic of his name sell order after order of the gooey concoction of ice cream and nuts.

Not so many months ago she would have laughed at Ed Coggins himself if he had dared to hint that he was anything more than a bright boy, popular in his small-town circle. But even then she knew in her heart he had an intangible masculine charm that made girls' eyes follow him.

Hollywood had found he had it. Now the whole picture-going world would know it. Martha wondered why it was that one never seemed to see a friend in his true perspective until the rest of the world placed him there beyond one.

As the money piled up in her father's tills, Martha's heart sank lower. Ed Coggins' vision and driving energy had made those dairy stores successful. Ed and she had created them. Now she was losing Ed.

Those movie-mad kids were driving her simply frantic. She wanted to read Ed's last letter again, but did not dare to try it here. Just what were those lines he had written? "It won't be long now. I have found where I belong. I will be seeing you soon."

Just what had he meant? He had won his first job on a studio lot so, of course, he had found where he belonged. She recalled how he had wasted most of that precious letter joking about his night job in a Hollywood diner and how he had learned stunts that would boost business in the Knoxville dairy lunch stores. The big clock on the wall showed closing time only fifteen minutes away. She would read the letter again at home tonight.

The clamor settled to the steady beat of fifty human dynamos, driving her harried thoughts in rhythm with their buzzing chatter while she felt Ed Coggins passing out of her life.

Sitting where they could, standing when they must, the fifty young folks each insisted, between mouthfuls, on his or her individual right to recognition as the first fan of Hollywood's latest film find.

Upon just one statement all agreed. Someone had blundered in not showing him in the preview.

Next door, Ray Boland, projectionist, stopped on his way out of the theater to condole with Manager Marlowe at the ticket booth because of a poor attendance.

"We'll pack them in Friday and Saturday," said Marlowe, looking at the

posters proclaiming the coming showing.

Pasted across the bottom of each, supplementary strips announced:

With Ed Coggins, Knoxville Boy, in His First Film.

"Nice extra publicity in the dairy store, Ray," Marlowe said.

"Naming those sundaes 'Coggins Specials' was not my idea," confessed Ray. "Ed's girl, Martha, sprang that one when I told her we would get the film. Since Ed left, she has to be around the stores all the time to help her dad."

They separated and started homeward. The town was settling down for the night. A few persons lingered in the dairy store where lights in the rear were already blinking out.

Down the street a figure detached itself from a shop entrance as Ray approached.

"Howya, Ray," it said.

"Well, Ed Coggins! You old so-and-so! You got back just in time to see yourself on the screen in your own home town. Marlowe booked that picture you wrote us you were in and we are showing it Friday and Saturday, even if they didn't give you screen credit. Why, what's the matter?"

"Ray, I was fired just a couple of days after I wrote you. I gummed things up when they gave me a bit. It looked so bad in rushes they cut it and let me go. I was ashamed to write again after having written you I had a bit part."

"Cheer up, old boy. You can try again," consoled Ray.

"No. You can't kid me along that way any more since I've had a chance to learn I can't kid myself into thinking that I might really become an actor," Ed told him decisively.

"Oh, forget that gloom stuff. Try again. No one here knows you flopped. Half this burg will be at the Regent Friday to see you walk across the screen once or twice. Just frame up any old story about why you are back home. Let us

drop in and tell Mr. Marlowe we will have you in a personal—”

“Wake up, you dope,” said Ed. “When I say my part was cut out, I mean all of that. I roomed near a fellow who works in the cutting room. He put it in the waste-cuttings can himself.”

“In that case, we’re all sunk,” moaned the projectionist. “Oh, why did we splurge with those home-printed strips across the regular banners?”

“Is Mr. Marlowe absolutely stuck with this picture and with the idea I am supposed to be shown in it?” demanded Coggins.

“Stuck!” echoed the projectionist. “We thought we were lucky to get it and we advertised you were in it. Everyone in town is waiting for it. Why, your old-time girl, Martha, even had the boys in the dairy lunchrooms put on ‘Ed Coggins Specials’ today.”

“What a mess.” groaned Knoxburg’s film failure. “Not only do I flop in pictures, but I get my best friends into a jam. What will Martha think?”

“Oh, is that what’s troubling you? Worrying about that small-town girl?” said Ray. “How about the theater?”

“Nuts to all theaters. I’m cured. From now on I can take ‘em or leave ‘em. I came back here to work at something I really can do.”

From across the street came a girlish hail.

“Hello, Ray Boland! Remember, you promised to let me see you running over that picture with Ed in it when you get it in tomorrow. Who is that with you?”

“Great grief! Can you tie that, meeting her now, of all times? Well, Romeo Coggins, that is your own particular trouble. Think fast,” whispered Ray. Then, louder, “Hello, Martha. Here is an old friend to see you for a minute.”

Muttering a warning, “Don’t you forget to be at Mr. Marlowe’s home in fifteen minutes—we’ll be waiting for you,”

the projectionist side-stepped the reunion.

Ed crossed the street to where the girl stood hesitant.

“Well, Martha. I hadn’t expected us to meet again this way, but with things as they are now, I am just as glad I came to say ‘good-by.’”

“I am glad you remembered me enough to come back to say ‘good-by,’” she managed. Then, loyally, “You worked for and deserved all you got.”

“Deserved it?” he echoed. “Oh, sure. I had it coming to me. I was just a small-town amateur allowing my friends to fool me into thinking I was good enough for films. Why, what’s the matter, dear?”

“What do you mean? Just why did you come back?”

“To see you, of course. Oh! So you fell for that false alarm about me getting a start in Hollywood? Why, I wrote you I was coming back. Is this town nuts or am I?”

“Didn’t you write that you would get back some time to see me and that you would make good?”

“Certainly I did. I meant I would make good here. How could I tell you in my letter when I would be back? I was hitch-hiking.”

Not even a cricket annoyed their silent thoughts. Martha broke the spell by laughing.

“Honestly, Ed, I never did think you were so hot as an actor,” she said. “You never were any star in an amateur show but you didn’t do so bad on a shady porch.”

He walked home with her. Glamour Boy Coggins of the films might have kept Martha wondering how she had ever happened to be on equal terms with him, but plain Ed Coggins couldn’t. In spite of all that, she could not help loving him even if he did have to be set in his place once in a while. She told him she would now substitute lemon as a flavor base for Coggins Specials.



*"Married?" echoed Ed.
"I'm not married and I
suppose now I'm never
going to be. Haven't
I troubles enough as
things are?"*

"Woman, you'll ruin those lunchrooms with monkey business like that," he expostulated. "After all the hard work I put into building up that business for your father!"

"Nonsense. You can dig right in then and build them up again. He says he can't run them without you."

"Maybe an operation on your head would help you to see just how serious this thing is," he said darkly. "This puts a crimp in the theater, the lunchrooms and everything connected with me or my name. And remember, your father backed Marlowe in the theater."

"I had forgotten that. Poor old dad. He always is the one to get hurt when I do something dumb. This really is serious. Things are so badly tangled now we just can't let folks know you came home a failure."

"I would have to have some kind of story to explain why I am back home," said Ed. "I had better get out of town before anyone sees me. and—"

"You will do nothing of the kind. You'll stay right here and take charge of these lunchrooms. They're driving dad and me half crazy."

"But how will I explain when people ask—"



"Just hint that you came home to settle down and get started in real business or get married or something."

"Martha, would you do that, after all the trouble I—"

"Don't go soft. I might try even that if it would get us out of this jam. Keep mum now and admit nothing," she warned him as they mounted the porch steps. Through the long windows they could see her father corrugating his forehead over figures.

"Well, Ed Coggins! I certainly am glad to see you, my boy," he greeted him. "I hear you made a success in Hollywood. Never did think much of this actor business myself, but I am glad you won out. You certainly got me into something, though, when you induced me to open those dairy lunchrooms. I can't

handle my dairy farms and those, too. I simply must get a manager for them."

"My Hollywood trip was not the success you think," began Ed.

"Now, Ed. Not another word from you about that Hollywood business. I misunderstood your last letter," said Martha, pushing him into a chair. "The amateur theatricals, Hollywood and all that were fun while they lasted, but it's all over. You sit down and go over those figures with dad. I am going out on the porch for a few minutes."

"She is a mite bossy, Ed, just as her mother was, but she means all right," said Mr. Burnett. "I don't know just what is going on here about this Hollywood business, but if it is all right with you two, it is all right with me."

"I suppose Martha is right, at times," said Coggins. So the two men settled down to analyze store accounts.

Across the street Martha could see two figures outlined before the bridge lamp in the Marlowe living room. They represented just one more problem she had to solve in her busy day.

She went over and tapped at the screen door. "May I come in for a moment?" she called as Marlowe rose.

"I knew we could depend on you to fix things up, Mr. Marlowe," she said as she smiled at him and his projectionist.

"To fix things up?" echoed Mr. Marlowe. "Martha, your father and I are business partners. I would do anything in the world to help, not only him, but you and Ed. The appearance of Coggins here as a failure breaks up all my advertising plans and makes us all look foolish. It will ruin my theater. A business can stand being criticized, but it will die if it is laughed at."

"How about us?" asked Martha. "Ed has to live in this town and I am not going to have my husband made a laughingstock because some director in Hollywood learned too late that he really isn't an actor."

"Your husband? Do you mean to say that you two are married already?"

"Not yet, but we will be just as soon as you get this tangle about the film straightened out. You got us into this trouble by advertising his success in Hollywood."

"Yes, I suppose it must have been all my fault," said Mr. Marlowe. "Sit down, Martha, and cool off while we talk this situation over and see what can be done."

"Instead of letting anyone know he had failed, you could just let them think he gave it all up to come home," suggested Martha.

"It would be a good story, Martha, and it would sound fairly reasonable if he came home to be married, except for just one thing," said Mr. Marlowe. "All Ed's friends here heard that he has a small part in the picture and they are expecting to see him in it. Ed told Ray that a friend of his in the cutting room said he had cut out that bit himself."

"Ed told me that, too," she admitted, "but he told me once that all clippings are saved for some time, even scraps not to be used in the released picture. You could patch that scrap into the film, Ray, couldn't you?"

"I could cut it in if I could get it, and not a person here would be the wiser," said Ray. "Then I could cut it out before returning the film to the exchange." Flaming with a new thought, he added:

"What a promotion idea! We would need rubber walls to hold the crowds. We would have personal appearances the first day and a wedding on the stage after the last showing. I would circulate announcements—"

"It's my marriage, not a promotion stunt, that you are talking about," snapped Martha. "I'll arrange my marriage myself. You just get that film scrap shipped in here in time."

The two looked at the manager hopefully. Mr. Marlowe considered, murmuring to himself:

"It could be done, of course, but I never heard of it happening before. Still, anything is possible in Hollywood. Martha, get hold of Ed and don't let him get away or talk to anyone. I'll try long distance. It's only a little after nine o'clock in Hollywood now."

"I'll hold him," promised Martha, "and I'll be right back."

While Mr. Marlowe was making his telephone call, Martha was busy back home telling her father it would be so nice if they could put up Ed for the night and keep his homecoming secret while he worked out plans to help them handle the dairy lunchrooms.

"That is mighty fine of you, Ed," sighed Mr. Burnett. "You two got me into that store business. Now you can worry it out yourselves. You are young and can stand it. I'm tired and I'm going to bed. Good night."

Across the street Marlowe was losing what he had left of his normal smooth temper.

"I am not trying to appeal to your heart, Sam," he said over the telephone. "The one you used to have was petrified clear back in vaudeville days. Don't bother sympathizing. Get busy protecting my pocketbook and your own. I'm running the only outlet your distributor ever had here. As a producer, since you are not a friend, stretch a point and keep this theater from being laughed into darkness.

"Forget whose fault it was! That is water over the dam. Just the loan of a scrap film for two days and then it goes right back to you with no one the wiser. A scrap of film for just two days and two young lives are saved from ruin. And my theater and your only outlet here are saved, too. What are you going to do?"

Relief spread over his face as he listened. He answered slowly, measuring each word carefully:

"You can bet a million to a dime no one will ever know. I will tell her my

good friend, the producer, will ship the scrap special, first thing in the morning, as a secret wedding present on the sole condition that she marry him and keep him strictly under cover until the film is repatched and sent back to the exchange.

"Absolutely, no! We will not let him show up in town until the last run Saturday night and, even then, only as her husband, through with Hollywood and home to stay. Sam, you're a real friend."

Mr. Marlowe laid down the receiver with a sigh of relief as Martha came through the door with Ed dubiously following and wondering what was to come next.

"Now, listen carefully," said Mr. Marlowe. "I have arranged to get that film scrap. But that is only the first round won. There may be worse to come. Each one of you must act his part through without a hitch. Here is the plan—"

Carefully, he checked the mail-plane arrival at the nearby big-town airport. Out in the hall the grandfather clock struck one. It was Thursday morning already. Shortly after two o'clock Friday afternoon the face of Ed Coggins was to appear on the screen of the Regent Theater for Knoxburg's first view of its home-town boy making good in Hollywood.

Two shows on Friday night and three on Saturday would end the Coggins film life, explained Mr. Marlowe.

"When I say that ends you in films, Ed, remember that really ends you," said Mr. Marlowe. "Ray can drive my coupé to get the film patch when it comes in Friday morning and can get back here in time to patch it in before the afternoon show. Ed, how are you going to handle this matter of keeping hidden until after Saturday night's last run and then show up, married and back from Hollywood to settle down here for life?"

"Married?" echoed Ed. "I'm not married and I suppose now I'm never going

to be. Haven't I troubles enough of my own as things are? What are you trying to do?"

"Well, you are going to be married or else! Martha, what did you tell me when you told me to call Hollywood?" demanded Mr. Marlowe.

"I didn't ask you to call Hollywood. I only told you to get that scrap film," flared Martha.

"You ought to have heard Mr. Marlowe tell his friend in Hollywood that that scrap of film was the only thing that would save two young lives," said Ray. "Why, he had me almost crying for you myself. It was wonderful how he got that scrap as your secret wedding present, but you've got to get married and Ed is not to try Hollywood again. And he can't show up here until—"

Seeing delighted comprehension beginning to dawn on Ed's face, Martha broke in with an admiring tribute to Mr. Marlowe:

"You handle things so fast, you kind of took Ed and me off our feet. Ed and I'll talk it over out on the porch and we'll be right back."

Only Ed heard Ray's comment as the two passed out:

"I've heard of tomcats thrown from skyscrapers landing on their feet."

It was an eagerly pliant Coggins who came back ready to do whatever the emergency required. The theater manager had his schedule almost worked out.

"Where can we hide Ed, Martha, until Saturday night or Sunday morning? It must be out of town."

"Jurgens Dairy Farm No. 3 is the farthest away," said Martha. "No one there knows Ed and, anyway, he hasn't had a shave for two days. He can pass as a new farmhand."

The hide-out could be worse, thought Ed. It wouldn't be needed long.

"We will get you two married just as quickly as possible," said Mr. Marlowe briskly. "Then we—"

"They can't be married before Saturday morning," reminded Ray. "Remember the waiting here for a license."

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Marlowe. "You and I will fix all that, Martha. This morning I will meet you in the lunchroom next to the theater and you and I will go to the courthouse together for a license. I will represent Ed and fix the clerk to keep quiet. We will marry you out on the farm Saturday sometime around noon. Meantime, Ed must lay low out there. How about your father, Martha?"

"Maybe he won't admit it, but he'll be awfully pleased," said Martha. "I'll slip a note under his bedroom door now and tell him in it to waken Ed at half past six this morning, when he starts out to make his rounds of the dairy farms. He'll take Ed with him out to Farm No. 3. Good night."

"June nights back East have a charm all their own, Martha," said Ed as they tiptoed up the Burnett porch. "But six thirty in the morning! The fogs have not begun to break up at that time."

"Those were Hollywood fogs of the morning after," said Martha. "We don't have morning fogs in Knoxville."

He kissed her in the hall and she reminded him:

"I won't be up when you two get away, darling. Remember your story to dad. He won't bother you with many questions. He is curious only when a cow does something he doesn't understand. Good night now, until Saturday."

It was perfectly normal for Mr. Marlowe to drop into Knoxville Dairy Lunch No. 1 before eleven o'clock for a cup of coffee and a roll.

Martha had been on the job since a little after nine and was ready to leave and look things over at Lunch No. 2 in Courthouse Square. Mr. Marlowe was going that way. They strolled casually up the street together.

"Is everything all right so far?" Mr. Marlowe asked her as he nodded to passing acquaintances.

"Yes, but I felt mean seeing Ed start out at six thirty in the morning," giggled Martha.

"You got up to see them off?"

"Certainly not. But I couldn't help sneaking to my bedroom window. Six thirty! Poor Ed! Of course, dad is used to it."

It didn't take them long to settle their business at the courthouse. The clerk was used to premarital confidences. Furthermore, he was glad to learn that Ed Coggins had not misled the confidence he had had in that youth.

"I will not enter it until Monday morning," he promised. "The young man is exactly right in giving up pictures to come back home. Bright lights are lots of fun for a week end in town, but I have lived here close to sixty years and always found what I wanted right here at home."

His jaw dropped as he folded the marriage license and handed it to Martha.

"Sh-h-h Mrs. Whalmsley is in my inside office now," he whispered. "She's my next-door neighbor. Slip out quietly. She may not have heard you."

No such luck. Mrs. Whalmsley emerged from the other door and met them in the hall as Martha tucked the license into her purse. To live in Knoxville and not to know of Mrs. Whalmsley was an impossibility. Her gossiping tongue was a tradition.

"Why, good morning, Martha. You're looking as happy as a June bride," she said. "Seeing you here now reminds me that I saw your father driving out of town with a strange young man this morning. He reminded me so much of someone and I just can't think now who he looked like."

"The man was probably a dangerous foreign spy," offered Mr. Marlowe in disgust.

Martha sympathized with his irritation

and felt it was up to her to carry on. She, too, knew and respected highly the prowess of Mrs. Whalmsley. Here was an antagonist worthy of her best efforts, but a dated antagonist. The woman just had to have a weak spot somewhere.

"Mr. Marlowe sees too many pictures, doesn't he, Mrs. Whalmsley?" she said. "Won't you come into the lunchroom with me and have a cup of coffee? I was just on my way there to check up things for father."

"Delighted, Martha, I'm sure. Good-by, Mr. Marlowe. It was so pleasant seeing you."

Mrs. Whalmsley was just as glad to be rid of Mr. Marlowe, but seeing him had reminded her of another news item she had meant to run down.

"Do you know, Martha," she confided, "just seeing Mr. Marlowe made me think of motion pictures and now, as I remember it, that young man I saw with your father was the spittin' image of that Ed Coggins who went to Hollywood? Seems to me you knew that Coggins boy pretty well, too."

Martha countered with a casual explanation to dismiss a trivial subject:

"A man with father? I do remember dad saying something about a new hand out at one of the dairy farms."

What she wanted to know most was just how much Mrs. Whalmsley had heard at the courthouse.

Mrs. Whalmsley's tongue ran on:

"I have wanted so much to hear from someone who really knew just how well that talented young Mr. Coggins made out in Hollywood," she told Martha as she settled down for her coffee. "It seems only yesterday that we enjoyed him and his young associates here as amateurs. He still writes to you, surely?"

Like a flash came the solution of her latest problem to Martha. Instead of fighting Mrs. Whalmsley she would use her. Bless the vagueness of Ed Coggins

in his writing moments! That last letter of his might mean almost anything to someone who didn't know the real circumstances. She would entangle this gossip in her own version of the Coggins return from Hollywood and use her to broadcast it and verify it.

"Well, yes. Ed does still write to me, Mrs. Whalmsley," she admitted. Martha seemed reluctant to pursue the subject.

"You must tell me what he says in his letters about how he likes Hollywood," said Mrs. Whalmsley. "I am going to see the last performance of the picture Saturday night with two more of his old-time neighbors, Mrs. Lemley and Mrs. Martin. I know they are just dying to hear about him."

"Before I leave for Niagara Falls Friday night for a couple of days on a vacation, I'll leave a couple of pages from his last letter to me," promised Martha. "But please, please, don't say a word about it until Saturday night."

"You know you can trust me, Martha," Mrs. Whalmsley solemnly assured her.

"You're doggone right you can trust her, sweet," said Ed Coggins that night in his hiding place at Farm No. 3. "You can trust her to trumpet everything she knows and a whole lot she doesn't know all over this town."

"That is exactly why I am using her to tell our story the way we want it told," explained Martha. "You would be sure to spoil the story with some embarrassing facts. She won't. She's a genius. I'll pencil a note with the pages of your letter I leave for her, saying you retired from Hollywood to come home and marry me. Then all you have to do when we get home from Niagara Falls is to live up to the story she tells."

And so Ed Coggins won a lifetime job as an actor.



1 MANAGING EDITOR'S OFFICE

NASON: I GOT BACK FROM MEXICO IN TIME TO HEAR ABOUT THE MUNITIONS BLOW-UP THAT DIDN'T COME OFF, THANKS TO YOU, SO YOU YANKED A GUY OUT OF A PHONE BOOTH TO MAKE YOUR CALL?

ANN: DO YOU BLAME ME? HE KEPT TALKING AND THE BOMB WAS CLOCKED TO EXPLODE IN 10 MINUTES. BUT WHILE HE WAS THREATENING TO CALL A COP ANOTHER GUY STEPPED OUT OF ANOTHER BOOTH...

NASON: AND GAVE YOU A CHANCE TO SPEED THROUGH THE WARNING THAT SAVED 1800 LIVES AND OVER 2 MILLION DOLLARS IN PROPERTY! I'M PROUD OF YOU, KID.



2 **CITY ROOM**

WHILE YOU WERE ENJOYING THE WINTER SPORTS, I TALKED TO EXPERTS ABOUT THE FLYING BUSINESS. THEN I ORDERED THE ANN DREWS' PLANE I JUST PHONED ABOUT. IT'LL BE AT CURTISS FIELD THIS AFTERNOON. AND THAT, MY DEAR, IS YOUR REWARD FOR BEING A GOOD GIRL.

HOT ZIGGETY-DIG! TOMORROW'S SUNDAY AND I'VE GOT A FLYING DATE WITH MYSELF RIGHT AFTER BREAKFAST.

3 **THE AIRPORT**

BROUGHT YOU OUT TO WISH ME LUCK, CATH, AND HERE I GO FOR MY FIRST SPIN! IT BETTER NOT BE A TAIL SPIN EITHER. KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED.

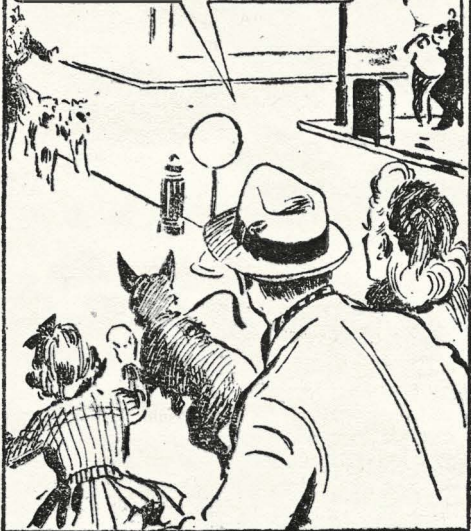
4

OH, BOY, THIS SURE IS PLANE SAILING. I COULD STAY IN THE CLOUDS ALL DAY, TOO. ONLY IT'S GARDENIA'S AFTERNOON OFF AND I MUST TAKE TOTO TO THE PARK.



9 I'M SORRY YOUR MARRIAGE CRACKED UP, FERDY, BUT OH, SEE THAT HORRIBLE WOMAN SNEAKING AROUND THE CORNER! IT'S SONIA KROPOFSKY WITH HER WOLF HOUNDS. SHE'S SICKED 'EM ON TOTO AND HE'S BROKEN HIS LEASH AND IS GOING TO FIGHT 'EM.

NO YELLOW IN HIM, BUT TWO AGAINST ONE. HE WON'T HAVE A CHANCE! HERE - I'LL GET HIM.

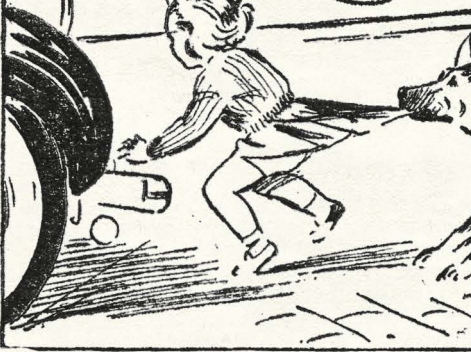


10 GET SARA, FERDY! SHE'S CHASED HER BALL IN FRONT OF THAT SPEEDING CAR. IT'S RIGHT ON HER. OH, THERE'S ANOTHER CAR IN FRONT OF US!



11 *TOTO TO THE RESCUE*

FERDY: THAT'S RIGHT TOTO, GRAB HER!
ANN: HARDER, TOTO! HARDER! SAVE THAT BABY!



BUT BRAVE AS HE IS, IS TOTO ABLE TO SAVE LITTLE SARA? WATCH FOR NEXT WEEK'S INSTALLMENT IN THIS MAGAZINE.



by Frances E. Stierhem

Each man responds in a different way to a woman's technique.

WHEN Trudy Farrell heard her boss coming she thrust the article she'd been reading under a pile of letters. Not that she was afraid of Len Warren— No, his good-looking face wouldn't have frightened any pretty young secretary. Especially Trudy, whose blue eyes frankly adored him.

However, she didn't want to be caught reading that article on how "To Rate Your Mate." Remembering the first paragraph about being casual, her Irish eyes didn't sparkle their usual welcome. And she was careful not to even turn her dark curly head when he came in.

"Morning, Trudy," Len said to her

trim back. "Has the cold weather frozen you up or something?"

Trudy's round chin lifted as pertly as if they hadn't gone dancing and romancing the night before. "Is it cold out? I hadn't noticed." But even while she said it she could feel her heart racing beneath her rose wool dress, and the gold coins that buttoned the dress up to its demure neckline rose and fell unevenly.

For just looking at Len made her dizzy with the memory of his good-night kiss. It was the first time he'd taken her in his arms and his hazel eyes hadn't been just friendly then, the way they were now. They'd been aglow with something almost like love. In that one swift minute before his lips had touched hers, she'd thrilled to the proud, arrogant curve of his mouth. One of her hands had crept up to caress his hair that always looked so crisply brown. She'd clung to him in that fleet minute and then, suddenly, he had let her go. So suddenly that it must have been a mistake to show she cared, and maybe the article was right. Right about trying the casual line.

She managed not to follow Len with her eyes as he hung up his overcoat. But she didn't have to look at his tall figure to know how broad his shoulders were, and her heart would have known his voice out of a thousand voices. Only, he sounded suddenly different when he said:

"Let's do some letters now."

"Why, certainly." She swung around, pencil poised above her dictation pad and eyes raised expectantly. If he wasn't going to mention last night first, she certainly wasn't going to. He'd been leafing through his personal mail rather absently, the way he usually did. But now he stopped abruptly.

"Well, it's come," he announced. "What the movies dub the 'call to the colors.' Look at this."

He handed her the letter and she tried not to let the paper shake in her hands. She'd been expecting it, but now that she knew he was actually going, Trudy's heart

caught sharply. Of course, he'd asked to be put on active duty in the army. And as he was a reserve officer, she'd very proudly, very approvingly, waited for his call to come.

But the paper in her hands made her realize that in two short weeks he'd be gone. "Len Warren, Electrical Engineering," would be erased from his office door. That chair of his wouldn't swing back beneath his hundred and seventy pounds of hard-muscled strength. And she wouldn't be able to sit here across from her reason for living, her reason for loving. For that's what he'd come to mean in the six months she'd worked for him. And last night when he'd kissed her for the first time she'd known that he was her world.

Misreading the conflict in her face, Len reached out and patted her hand comfortingly. "If you're worried about your job, I can place you with a pal of mine. He's a swell guy, married to a nice little woman, and has two handsome, impish kids. He's been in here—his name is George Wallace."

"I remember Mr. Wallace perfectly," she said. "And Mrs. Wallace also."

Trudy did not add that the memory of Mrs. Wallace's younger sister made her burn with jealousy. She'd come in with the Wallaces to collect Len for a week end in the country, and she'd been little and blond and cuddly, and her name was Gloria. In the five minutes that she'd been in the office she had been possessive with Len, and practically ignored Trudy's existence. Her uncle was a colonel in the army and she and Len had mutual friends whom she started chattering about at once.

"I wouldn't care to work for Mr. Wallace," Trudy said, and then because that sounded ungracious, "I . . . I'll find a job on my own, but thank you, anyway."

There was much to do that day, and Trudy's flying hands sped over the typewriter. Her thoughts went winging off,

too, dreaming of how handsome Len would look in his uniform. She saw herself dressed in bridal white, leaning on his arm, while friends swarmed up to congratulate Lieutenant Warren on his young and radiant bride.

"If only I could make him care! Somehow, I've got to, because he's either going to love me or leave me!"

No one knew where he'd be sent, or for how long, after he went into uniform. But at least if they had love, if they had each other, she would ask no more of life.

Her eyes wouldn't stay on her typing. They followed Len as if trying to store up every detail of the way he looked and moved. She watched him now, leaning across his desk, swinging the receiver up to his ear in answer to the telephone's ring.

He was always so quick in his movements. So quick, she hadn't even had time to answer the phone for him, and now, suddenly, she was glad she hadn't. For the voice on the other end of the phone trilled unmistakably through the office, and Len was saying, "But, Gloria, I had other plans for tonight. I can't very well make it."

Trudy could hear the volume of protest pouring from the phone.

Len was only able to end the conversation by promising to call her back.

But while he'd been talking, Trudy had taken a peek at her article. Maybe there was something about jealousy. There was. She read:

Jealousy is to be avoided. A girl should welcome competition or, at least, seem to welcome it. By studying your rival, you can learn the traits which make her desirable, and you can model yourself accordingly.

There was more, but Trudy didn't get a chance to read it. For now Len had finished phoning and was staring at her with a troubled frown. "I don't know what to do about Gloria. She's throwing a party tonight. She'd told her uncle

and all her friends I'll be there. I hate to let her down, but I don't want to go tonight."

Trudy longed to fling her arms around his neck and beg him not to go. There were so few nights left before he went away! If he didn't bother with this Gloria affair, he might—he just might get serious.

However, her own technique hadn't worked so far. She hadn't been casual the way that article said you ought to be when he'd kissed her, and he hadn't followed the kiss with anything but a gay "good night."

And now, with so little time left, she had to hurry, hurry!

"Why not go to Gloria's party? I think it sounds like fun." In trying to "welcome competition," her voice sounded strained, almost hard.

But, at least, it made Len look at her more intently than he had all day. "So you think I ought to go. O. K.! You probably have the right slant on the situation." Very deliberately, he pulled a tiny envelope out of his pocket. "Maybe you can use these two theater tickets. I bought them on the way to work."

There, that was getting results! He was giving her two theater tickets and he was really noticing her.

"Maybe you'd like to take one of your beaux," he suggested brightly.

"Maybe," she replied, careful to be casual. "And thanks."

She didn't go to the theater, though. Instead, she gave the tickets to her landlady and her daughter, and up in her third-floor room she sat by her window watching night come to Manhattan. Lights bloomed in the office windows and grew into great clusters that mounted up and up. High in the sky the crescent moon crept out from behind a tall spire and became part of the beauty that is night in New York.

It was either the gayest or the loneliest place in the world, according to how you

felt. And tonight, Trudy felt low. She thought of Len, dancing with Gloria, somewhere off across the city. Jealousy stabbed through Trudy—jealousy that left her sleepless all night.

Next morning she was in the office early. She was wearing her newest outfit, a blue velveteen jacket dress that matched her eyes and accented her slimness. Above the high round collar her face looked wistful. She got out the new lipstick she'd bought which was as vivid as the one Gloria used, and outlined the full curve of her generous mouth. Standing before the mirror above her desk, she saw the office door open, and then Len was there, looking at her.

But he wasn't gay, the way he'd been the previous morning. He merely greeted her then dived into the pile of work on his desk. A thousand questions rose to Trudy's lips and were fiercely crushed back. Had he enjoyed himself with Gloria? Had he danced with her often? And had he—oh, had he kissed her good night?

A girl like Gloria, whose uncle was a colonel, could do a lot for Len. So it was crazy to hope he'd care for the little stenographer in his office, only Trudy couldn't stop hoping, and praying, too.

She kept right on hoping in the week that followed, even though Gloria called every day. And then came the hope-shattering afternoon when Len was going to his tailor to be measured for his uniform, and Gloria invited herself along.

"Gloria is going over to my tailor with me," Len told Trudy. She searched his face when he mentioned Gloria's name. She was hunting for, and dreading, the love she might see glowing in his eyes. But his face told her nothing and he said only:

"She's over at Grand Central and she'll be here in a few minutes, so I'd better look at that report from the Kemko outfit. I must get a letter off to them today."

If Gloria were going out with him to

order his uniform, they must be almost engaged. She was taking a proudfly interest in his affairs, the way girls did at a time like that. The thought brought hot tears to Trudy's eyes, blurring them as she walked over to the tall filing case. Her hands were cold and shaking, and the file drawer stuck. She gave a jerk. The metal file case that reached just above her dark head fell forward.

It was Len who saved her from accident. One arm went around her and jerked her out of the path of the toppling file case, while his shoulder shoved the file case back in place. The sudden warmth of his arms made Trudy forget to pull away. His face was very near her own, and he was looking at her hungrily, yet almost angrily. In that swift instant she wondered if he were trying to be true to Gloria, and yet, attracted to her. And then, the next instant, he was saying fiercely:

"I don't want to care about you, but you're so darn appealing with those tears in your blue eyes, and there's something about you, Trudy—something that gets me." He kissed her then, and his lips were aflame against her own. Temporarily, he kissed her mouth, her cheek, and the hollow of her throat above the velveteen collar.

Lost in the thrill of his nearness, Trudy didn't hear Gloria come in. But both she and Len heard Gloria's angry gasp.

"No wonder you're so busy you couldn't even get over to Grand Central to meet me!" Gloria flashed out.

"I'm sorry," Len said unevenly, and Trudy didn't know whether it was to her he'd addressed his apology, or to Gloria.

But Gloria answered as if she were the only one Len could be apologizing to. "Men will be men, I suppose." Her shoulders, under her silver fox cape, shrugged with the tolerance of a woman who knows a man is hers, even if he strays occasionally. She said briskly:

"And now let's be on our way, Len!

You know we have to choose the furniture today—the time is so short now.”

Stricken, Trudy stared at Gloria. If they were choosing furniture together, then all was lost. Lost, and to a girl like Gloria who would never make Len happy. Her selfish scarlet mouth, her green eyes and pale-blond hair might lure him, but never, never could they make up for the hardness beneath.

She watched Len swing his overcoat over his arm. He was wearing that deep-brown suit of his that always made his hair and hazel eyes look darker. And standing there, he embodied everything that mattered. He paused, with his hand on the door, and gazed at her questioningly.

“Won’t you come along, Trudy?”

He was just asking her to be polite, of course. Planning a honeymoon was a job for two, and she flinched away from becoming the third member on such an excursion.

“I’d planned to get these letters done,” she managed, swallowing back the lump in her throat.

Gloria, standing beside Len, cuddled her arm through his. “Well, this is a rather special errand we’re going on. So Len will excuse you, won’t you, Len?”

“I guess it wouldn’t be much fun for Trudy,” Len said.

“Not any fun at all,” Trudy choked out, and began to type fiercely and loudly, to drown out the sob in her voice.

After they’d gone, she put her head on her arms and cried out her heart. She couldn’t let him marry that girl. There must be something she could do to make him care. Care the way she did, when she’d been in his arms just now.

He’d kissed her, so he wasn’t indifferent to her. But men were often attracted by girls they didn’t marry. Everybody knew that but nobody seemed to know why.

Maybe in that article on how “To Rate Your Mate,” there was a suggestion that

might help. She dried her eyes and began to read:

Sometimes a girl can awaken a man’s interest by suddenly walking out of his life. In missing her, he appreciates what she means to him. But this is a last-resort measure, and the results vary in different cases.

Well, this was time for a last-resort measure, for the wild idea that suddenly popped into Trudy’s dark curly head.

“I’ll tell him I’m quitting to get married. If he cares at all that ought to wake him up.”

It did wake him up all right, when she tried out her idea. He had returned unexpectedly, after only a two-hour shopping trip with Gloria.

“We didn’t finish buying the stuff. I had ideas on a more masculine type of furnishing, and we couldn’t agree on the bedroom furniture.”

If he hadn’t said that last Trudy might have remained silent.

But, suddenly, she heard herself talking—talking fast. “I’m glad you came back just now. There’s something I want to tell you. I’m leaving tomorrow.”

“Leaving?” His face looked startled, incredulous. His gaze went from her white, tense face to the office beyond her, as if trying to imagine this office without Trudy.

“Why, this is a blow to me, Trudy! Only yesterday we were planning on work to be done up until the day I leave.”

“Well, that was yesterday. Today something happened.”

“Anything I did, Trudy? Or anything I failed to do?”

From the urgent anxiety in his face she turned her gaze. She couldn’t look into his honest hazel eyes and lie.

“I’m going to get married. I just decided.”

“You, married? But, Trudy, you never mentioned anyone else—anyone special!”

Because her heart was crying out



Trudy turned her gaze from the urgent anxiety in Len's face. She couldn't look into his honest eyes and lie.

against what she was making herself say, Trudy's voice went hard and cold. "Well, a girl doesn't tell her boss everything, and we just seem to be employer and employee—"

"If that's the way it seems to you, that's the way it is." His voice was harder, suddenly, than hers. Instead of being jealous, he seemed only angry. "You're in such a hurry to leave, maybe you'd like to go tonight."

"Tonight?" Just go out of life tonight and never see him again? With shaking hands Trudy groped for the support of her desk and leaned limply against it. Her heart had climbed into her throat and the collar of her blue velveteen dress seemed suddenly too tight.

"You'd better get your things together," Len said, not even looking at her. "As long as this is your last night here, there'll be a lot for you to gather up."

She tried to speak his name, to tell him she'd been bluffing. But while she waited for the right words to come, the phone rang and it was Gloria again, calling from the furniture department, to consult him about his future home, from the way the conversation went.

Trudy's heart dropped from her throat, down and down. She felt more tired than she'd ever felt in her life, and utterly hopeless. After all, maybe it was better to leave now, better than watching Gloria get everything that made life worth while. Why be tortured by watching another girl gathering the harvest of love that she was starving for?

Resolutely, Trudy started to gather up her possessions. The little mirror over her desk that she'd always looked into when she heard Len's morning footsteps went first, and then she packed up her make-up kit and, for no special reason, she put in the dust rag that she always used for Len's desk. But she left the glass vase she'd brought in and put on his desk. The vase was a sort of present, the way the flowers had been that she

often bought to put into the vase, because Len had originally been a Southerner and he missed the flowers that used to grow in his mother's garden.

Mute little token of her days with Len, they wrung Trudy's heart when she placed them all in a pile.

Afterward, she never quite remembered what she said when she left, or what Len said to her.

Her mind was too busy with the words she wanted him to say and that he wasn't saying. When you're praying that a man will suddenly break down and beg you to stay, you can't quite hear him say "good-by."

The next day Trudy was going job hunting, but she didn't go. She was sick. She must have caught cold after she left Len's office, walking around in the snow for hours. Her face that had been wet with tears hadn't felt the snow. She'd just walked on and on through streets that were crowded with people, with men who looked like husbands homeward-bound. And she'd thought miserably that Len would soon be returning to Gloria that way, and inside her Trudy had felt a silent, desperate weeping.

But the next night her cold began to get better. To bolster her drooping spirits she slipped into her new blue housecoat, trying not to remember that she'd bought it last month, and never before worn it, hoping it might be part of her trousseau some day. It was of softest blue wool, with gold braid jauntily marching up from her slim waist to the low round neck. The skirt was full and feminine above her tiny blue mules, but when it came to making up it was all Trudy could do to bother with her hair, to put on lipstick, with that end-of-the-world feeling cramping her heart. Yet she couldn't bear to see herself looking so lost and forlorn.

Her landlady had promised to send up some tea and toast, so when Trudy heard a knock she went to the door listlessly.

"There's a gentleman downstairs—name of Warren. He insists he's got to come right up."

"Mr. Warren—Len Warren?"

Before the landlady could answer, Len's broad shoulders and determined face appeared above the stair rail.

"Well, talk about being in a hurry!" Trudy's landlady complained as Len shot into the tiny room.

At sight of him, Trudy's heart gave a wild lurch.

"Trudy, why did you tell me you were going to be married?"

His face was stern. His hazel eyes probed into hers and his jaw was hard-set. "Why did you lie to me, Trudy, and leave me the way you did?"

She backed up against the wall and leaned there for support. Maybe her cold had left her weak, but the tiny room with its maple bed and chintz curtains was swimming before her eyes. She closed them and said unsteadily:

"Why did you come here? What difference does it make, whether I told the truth or didn't?" And she wanted to add, "Since you're going to marry Gloria, what difference does anything make?"

"Trudy, I've got to know. Did you mark this thing for me?"

She heard the crackle of paper and opened her eyes. He was holding out the article on how "To Rate Your Mate." She must have left it when she gathered up her things in that frantic, grief-stricken rush. Her breath was painfully tight in her throat, but she managed to choke out:

"Give it to me—I'll tear the thing up!" Shame sent the hot color to her cheeks, but as she reached for the article Len's hand closed over hers, hard and hungrily. And the next moment he was drawing her close.

"All those crazy things you did to me must have been because you read this article."

His lips were very near, but she managed to push him away a little. "I didn't do crazy things!"

"Yes, you did, like telling me to see

LS—7F

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Gloria the night I bought theater tickets to take you out."

"To take me?"

"Sure, what did you think they were for? I wanted to work up to the point where I could tell you the way I felt about you. After I kissed you I went home and thought it out, and I knew I loved you. But you would hardly speak to me when I came in next morning. You insisted on my going to Gloria's dance, and I thought that was your way of showing me you didn't want to be kissed again."

"Oh, Len . . . Len! And I was so mad about you, so afraid you'd go away before I could make you care!"

They were kissing each other now, so there wasn't any time for explanations, wasn't any need for words.

And, at last, he whispered against her lips. "I loved everything about you just the way you were. Then you changed and I didn't want to care any more than I would care about a stranger."

"I guess my mistake was trying to rate a mate, when I'd already found him and already rated him without knowing it.

But you seemed different, too. And I still don't understand why you went out to buy furniture for Gloria—"

"Not for Gloria, you dear, crazy kid! The furniture was for her uncle. She took up interior decorating in college and so her uncle gave her a chance to fix up the place he's going to occupy when he is transferred to his new post. She thought I'd know more about what an army man liked, and asked me to help her select the stuff."

"And I thought it was your furniture—yours and Gloria's! Oh, darling, darling, I wanted to die!"

"So that's why you quit, why you told me you were getting married! I believed you, too. Then I stumbled across that article and everything was clear. I knew that you wouldn't have tried to change yourself for me unless you really cared. So it actually was the article that brought me back to you! But, oh, my sweet, I came so close to letting you go, to losing you!"

"You can't ever lose me," she said, and lifted her lips to his in a kiss that was a promise and a prayer.

THE END.

SALLY

Oh, Sally's eyes are a liquid brown,
The finest eyes in all the town.

Her hair is curly, shining black
And hangs way down her slender back.

Her feet and ankles are so small,
You wonder she could be so tall.

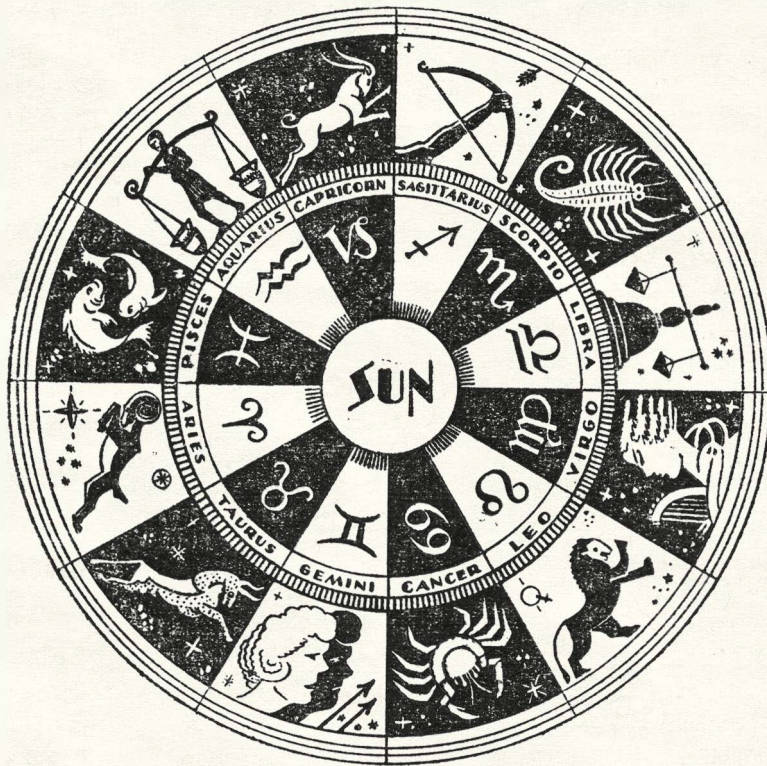
She is so trim, beyond compare,
All the townfolk turn and stare.

Oh, Sally is the sweetest yet—
Oh—Sally? She's my dog, my pet.

PHILIP EARLE.

YOUR STARS AND YOU

by KAI



YOUR WEEK

IN employment matters during the week, executives still may have vexatious problems to solve, but are likely to see their way out of dilemmas heretofore confronting them. Labor disputes, if not settled to mutual satisfaction, may result in temporary working agreements for the common good. Greatly increased industrial activity may give employment to large numbers of persons who, for a long time past, may have been working part time or not at all. Products designed for war purposes will be turned


out in vast quantities, with but little interference, though some subversive activities may have to be guarded against. Commercial transactions connected with peace-time products may be somewhat curtailed, due in some instances to retailers' being unable to get ordered goods on the dates desired. It will be a poor week for women to shop for other than routine necessities as they may have difficulty finding just the things they are looking for. Social interests may be advanced in some respects, but don't talk

shop or discuss public or private financial matters if you would avoid a wolf note in the social melody. New acquaintances may strongly attract you, but the attraction may be temporary only, so do not cogitate on its possibilities unless it persists for a number of months. Pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Avoid extravagance.


DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time. If not using that time, make correction to the time you are using.

Saturday March 22nd


 During the morning hours, business and financial benefits may be received. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced, but subtle opposition may be encountered. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Some annoyance, however, may be experienced in connection with legal matters. Between noon and 3:00 p. m., environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with correspondence or other message. Friends will do you favors. Between 3:00 p. m. and 10:00 p. m., social interests may be advanced. Between 10:00 p. m. and midnight, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure.

Sunday March 23rd


 During the morning hours, mark time in business, financial and employment matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with friends and elderly people. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Between 1:30 p. m. and 3:00 p. m., pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Love

interests may be advanced in an unusual manner. Avoid extravagance in social matters. Between 4:30 p. m. and 6:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Do not permit social visiting to interfere with the proper discharge of your employment duties. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Between 6:30 p. m. and 11:00 p. m., curtail social activities. Between 11:00 p. m. and past midnight, mark time in employment matters. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Curtail social activities.

Monday March 24th

 During the early-morning hours avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with correspondence or other message. The later-morning hours and the afternoon hours may be quiet. Between 6:00 p. m. and 7:00 p. m., avoid jealousy. Between 7:00 p. m. and 8:30 p. m., mark time in business and financial matters. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Curtail social activities. Between 10:00 p. m. and midnight, social interests may be advanced.

Tuesday March 25th

 During the early-morning hours, keep your temper under control. Avoid hasty actions. You may benefit in connection with a writing. The later-morning hours may be quiet. Between 1:30 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., business, financial and environmental benefits may be received. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Elderly people will do you favors. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Between 5:30 p. m. and 7:00 p. m., social interests may be advanced. Between 7:00 p. m. and 11:30 p. m., business, financial and environ-

mental benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Between 11:30 p. m. and past midnight, curtail social activities. Avoid jealousy.

Wednesday March 26th



During the morning hours, mark time in employment matters. Keep cool if annoyed. Love and marriage interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Between noon and 1:30 p. m., pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Love interests may be advanced in an unusual manner. Between 3:00 p. m. and 4:00 p. m., social interests may be advanced. Financial and environmental benefits may be received. Between 4:00 p. m. and 5:00 p. m., love interests may be advanced by able planning. You may benefit in connection with correspondence or other message. Between 5:00 p. m. and 6:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Between 7:30 p. m. and midnight, be conservative in business and financial matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people.

Thursday March 27th



During the morning hours, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Be conservative in business and financial matters. Between noon and 2:30 p. m., employment benefits may be received. Love interests may be advanced. Between 2:30 p. m. and 4:00 p. m., love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Between 4:00 p. m. and 5:30 p. m., love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Between 5:30 p. m. and 7:30 p. m., mark time in employment matters. Avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Love and marriage interests may be advanced to some extent but be careful in courtship. Do not be-

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come romantic. Between 7:30 p. m. and 10:00 p. m., mark time in love, marriage and employment matters. Do not become romantic. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Between 10:00 p. m. and past midnight, be conservative in business and financial matters. Avoid extravagance in social affairs.

Friday March 28th



During the early-morning hours, business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Between 10:30 a. m. and 11:30 a. m., you may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing. Business and financial benefits may be received. Between 11:30 a. m. and 1:00 p. m., love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Financial benefits may be received. Between 1:00 p. m. and midnight, social interests may be advanced.

The influences affecting the particular zodiacal group to which you belong are given in the "Born Between—" section of this article, which you should also consult.

IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th

Aries



—Aries people born between March 21st and 26th will find this an excellent week in which to advance love, marriage and social interests. Business, financial and environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between March 27th and 31st, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection

with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between April 1st and 5th, business and financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday and Friday. If born between April 6th and 10th, business and financial benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between April 11th and 15th, unexpected financial benefits may be received. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday and Friday. If born between April 16th and 20th, mark time in employment matters. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Environmental and financial benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday.

April 20th and May 21st

Taurus



—Taurus born between April 20th and 26th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between April 27th and May 1st, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between May 2nd and 6th, mark time in love, marriage, business and financial matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between May 7th and 11th, business and financial benefits may be received. Love, marriage and social

interests may be advanced. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between May 12th and 16th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced to some extent, but be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday and Monday. If born between March 17th and 21st, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love, marriage and social interests. Financial, employment and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Wednesday. Mark time on Monday.

May 21st and June 21st

Gemini



—Geminians born between May 21st and 26th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Financial benefits may be received. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday. If born between May 27th and 31st, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between June 1st and 6th, business and financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between June 7th and 11th, business and financial benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between June 12th and 16th, unexpected

financial benefits may be received. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Curtail social activities. Be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between June 17th and 21st, mark time in employment matters. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday and Wednesday.

June 21st and July 23rd

Cancer



—Cancerians born between June 21st and 27th should avoid extravagance in social matters this week. Avoid unnecessary lawsuits. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between June 28th and July 2nd, avoid unnecessary lawsuits. Curtail social activities. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between July 3rd and 7th, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between July 8th and 12th, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Business and financial benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between July 13th and 18th, pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between July 19th and 23rd, employment and environmental benefits may be received.

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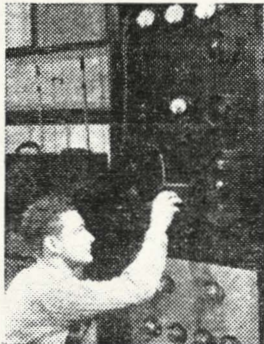
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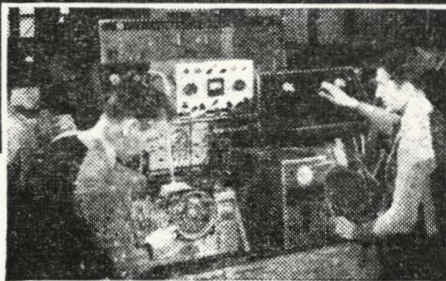
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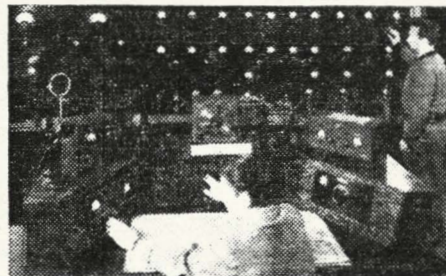
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Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Saturday.

July 23rd and August 23rd

Leo

 —Leo natives born between July 23rd and 28th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Business and financial benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best day for you this week, Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between July 29th and August 2nd, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best day for you this week, Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between August 3rd and 7th, mark time in love, marriage, business and financial matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best days for you this week, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between August 8th and 13th, be conservative in business and financial matters. Avoid unnecessary lawsuits. Best day for you this week, Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between August 14th and 18th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions. Be careful in courtship. Environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday and Monday. If born between August 19th and 23rd, employment, financial and environmental benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Be careful in courtship. Mark time on Monday.

August 23rd and September 23rd

Virgo



—Virgo natives born between August 23rd and 28th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Financial benefits may be received. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Mark time on Monday. If born between August 29th and September 2nd, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between September 3rd and 7th, business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between September 8th and 13th, business and financial benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between September 14th and 18th, pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Love and marriage interests may be advanced to some extent, but be careful in courtship. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between September 19th and 23rd, mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Love and marriage interests may be advanced to some extent, but be careful in courtship. Do not become romantic. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Wednesday.

September 23rd and October 23rd

Libra




—Librans born between September 23rd and 28th should avoid extravagance in social matters this week. Avoid unnecessary lawsuits. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between September 29th and October 3rd, curtail social activities. Envi-

ronmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best day for you this week, Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between October 4th and 8th, be conservative in business and financial matters. Best day for you this week, Sunday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between October 9th and 13th, business and financial benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Best day for you this week, Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between October 14th and 18th, avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Monday. Mark time on Friday. If born between October 19th and 23rd, keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Be careful in courtship. Employment, financial and environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday.

October 23rd and November 22nd


Scorpio

 —Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 28th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Business, financial and environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Avoid jealousy. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between October 29th and November 2nd, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between November 3rd and 7th, mark time in love, marriage, business and financial

matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between November 8th and 12th, be conservative in business and financial matters. Curtail social activities. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between November 13th and 17th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions and sudden changes. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced to some extent, but unlooked-for happenings may cause you annoyance. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday and Monday. If born between November 18th and 22nd, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love, marriage and social interests. Business, financial, employment and environmental benefits may be received. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Wednesday. Mark time on Monday.

November 22nd and December 22nd


Sagittarius

 Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 27th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Business and financial benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday. If born between November 28th and December 2nd, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or through legal procedure. Be careful what you say, write and sign. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between December 3rd and 7th, be conservative in business and

financial matters. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday. If born between December 8th and 12th, business and financial benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a journey. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between December 13th and 17th, avoid impulsive actions that may cost you money. Be careful in courtship. Best days for you this week, Sunday, Monday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between December 18th and 22nd, mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Avoid unnecessary environmental changes. Love interests may be advanced to some extent, but be careful in courtship. Do not become romantic. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Wednesday.

December 22nd and January 20th


Capricorn

 —Capricornians born between December 22nd and 26th may receive environmental benefits this week. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Avoid extravagance in social matters. Best day for you this week, Monday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between December 27th and 31st, environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Avoid extravagance in social matters. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between January 1st and 5th, business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday. If born between January 6th and 10th, business and financial benefits may be received. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. Best days for you this week,

Tuesday and Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between January 11th and 15th, pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Be careful in courtship. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between January 16th and 20th, employment and environmental benefits may be received. Keep your temper under control. Avoid cuts and burns. Be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. Mark time on Saturday.

January 20th and February 19th

Aquarius

 —Aquarians born between January 20th and 25th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Business, financial and environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between January 26th and 30th, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Thursday. If born between January 31st and February 4th, mark time in business and financial matters. Postpone important decisions. Avoid misunderstandings with elderly people. Environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a writing. Best days for you this week, Thursday and Friday. Be careful on Sunday. If born between February 5th and 9th, be conservative in business and financial matters. Best days for you this week, Sunday and Friday. If born between February 10th and 14th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Avoid impulsive actions. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced to some extent, but be careful in

courtship. Best day for you this week, Friday. Be careful on Sunday and Monday. If born between February 15th and 19th, mark time in employment matters. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced, but do not become romantic. Environmental and financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Monday. Be careful on Wednesday.

February 19th and March 21st

Pisces



—Pisceans born between February 19th and 24th may advance love, marriage and social interests this week. Business, financial and environmental benefits may be received. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Best day for you this week, Monday. If born between February 25th and March 1st, love, marriage and social interests may be advanced. You may benefit in connection with a legal document or other writing or through legal procedure. Environmental benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. If born between March 2nd and 6th, business and financial benefits may be received. Elderly people will do you favors. Best day for you this week, Tuesday. If born between March 7th and 11th, business and financial benefits may be received. Social interests may be advanced. Best days for you this week, Tuesday and Wednesday. If born between March 12th and 16th, you will find it an excellent week in which to advance love, marriage and social interests. Pleasant surprises and unexpected financial benefits may be received. Best day for you this week, Wednesday. If born between March 17th and 21st, mark time in employment matters. Do not take offense at trifles. Love, marriage and social interests may be advanced, but do not become romantic. Best days for you this week, Saturday and Wednesday.

Note for "Born Between—" readers: The week referred to begins with Satur-

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day, March 22nd, and ends with Friday, March 28th. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.

More About Aries People

While Aries natives have much in common, certain of their traits are more or less emphasized in some than in others, according to the position occupied by the sun at the time of their respective births.

If you were born between March 21st and 26th, you have faith in your ability and usually accomplish the things you set out to do. You cross bridges when you get to them and obstacles that might loom large in contemplation seldom have terror for you since you are engaged in their mastery before you take time to consider how to overcome them. This procedure has its drawbacks, of course, but for you it seems to work to advantage, as it enables you to give your undivided attention to the matters in hand, without anticipating trouble. Being a quick thinker and resourceful, you meet exigencies according to your appraisal at the moment when facts must be dealt with. Contemplating contingencies seems a waste of time to you, since they might not happen. You are restless, particularly so if subjected to monotony. If you have interesting work that enables you to move about, you may stick with it, but uninteresting employment spurs you to make changes. Localities also at times get on your nerves and you feel that you must have a change of scenery. The desire for change may take you to strange lands, if the opportunity presents itself. You may become a colonist in the wilderness, fighting predatory beasts and disrespectful savages, if need be. Nature in the raw is capable of holding your interest. You would get a thrill out of hunting big game. You may become a trapper. If these activities are beyond your realization, you may compromise by becoming a forest ranger or gaining employment in some outpost. A dude ranch might suffice. But numerous factors may

necessitate your remaining in the populous centers of so-called civilization, in which case you are likely to indulge in occupational and pleasurable pursuits where the competition is keenest. You aim to rise to the top in whatever you undertake. You may become a leader in civic movements or in politics. You may become prominent in athletic circles. You may hold responsible positions in the business world. You may hold public office or work under somebody who does. Should you elect to follow a military career, you should qualify as an engineer or for medical and surgical work. You may become a doctor in private life. What you do, of course, will largely depend on your sex.

If you were born between March 27th and 31st, you are restless and find it hard to do uninteresting work. You can do so, however, if necessity demands it; but you do not resign yourself to doing indefinitely a thing that you do not like. When agreeably occupied, you work with enthusiasm and accomplish a great deal. You prepare yourself beforehand to take advantage of favorable opportunities, which eventually come your way. Once you get into the kind of work you desire, success comes without undue delay. Until such time there is apt to be more or less uncertainty connected with your financial affairs. You prefer to work at something that enables you to look after your own affairs rather than those of somebody else, but you do a good job of handling the business of somebody else, if put in charge of it. Your work may place you in a supervisory position over others. You are fluent and animated in discussing interesting subjects. You are proud, impulsive, truthful, honorable and just. You scorn to take an unfair advantage of anybody in your dealings with them. You like to assist others to better help themselves and may become a teacher. You may try to enlighten people generally on how to improve their lot and may initiate reforms that will

beneficially affect the welfare of many persons. If possible, you occasionally get away from gregarious life to relax in solitude in primitive surroundings. You should not permit jealousy to warp your judgment and possibly destroy your happiness.

If you were born between April 1st and 5th, you are forceful and inclined to hew your way to success, let the chips fall where they may. This sometimes arouses antagonisms that make the hewing to the line somewhat strenuous, whereas a little co-operative effort might find an easy detour around the rough spots. Many of the obstacles you meet, especially in early life before experience has had time to make a deep impression, are directly due to your disposition to ride over all opposition if it interferes with your plans. You will go much farther on the road to success if you will not consider it so essential to always have your way when conflict of interests arises. In such cases there is usually a mutually beneficial compromise point, often of greater ultimate benefit to you through co-operative effort than if you were to go it alone. You have a natural desire to rule and may rise to a ruling position. If others voluntarily put you in that position, it is likely to be more enduring than if you get there by squelching all opposition. If you will select activities that will benefit others while bringing you success, you will find but little occasion to arouse antagonisms to retard your progress. Success built at the expense of others is apt to be evanescent. You should study and discipline yourself to strengthen your self-control. Self-mastery under all circumstances, if you acquire it, will be your greatest achievement, causing all your other conquests to sink into insignificance by comparison. Once the battle over self has been won, your success in other directions will be manifold. You may become a successful politician, with a sinecure as your reward. You may teach

your own or foreign languages. You may become successful in the medical profession, particularly as a surgeon. You may become a successful writer. You may engage in commercial activities connected with jewels and metals. You may choose a military career. Your greatest success will come after the lessons of youth have been taken to heart. You are generous, impulsive, cultured and extravagant.

(Aries article to be continued next week.)

QUESTION BOX

A. O. M., female, born July 4, 1919, 9:00 a. m., California: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the first three weeks of January, 1942.

E. L. R., female, born December 12, 1900, time unknown, Michigan: I do not believe that you will have much inclination to marry again although you may have a number of opportunities to do so during the next few years, an excellent one probably coming to you during 1944. Since you know lots about flowers, why not try to get work in a floral establishment, preferably where they are grown? If you could take over a small grocery store in a desirable neighborhood, you might find it an agreeable way of making a living, although competition in that line is rather keen in these days. I think you have good business judgment in matters that you understand or with which you can familiarize yourself.

Mrs. N. V. R., born February 3, 1901, 10:00 a. m., Michigan: During the next several years you will come under quite a few influences from time to time, some beneficial and some otherwise, a few of which I note below, not having space to mention all of them: Middle of July,

1941, excellent for marriage and environmental matters. Last part of July, first part of August, 1941, adverse; keep your emotions under control. Last half of January, 1942, good for marriage and environmental matters but adverse for sudden changes and journeys. Last part of May, first part of June, 1942, good for environmental, financial and marriage matters. First three weeks of December, 1942, excellent for marriage matters; friends will do you favors. Your question regarding your health should be answered by your physician. A wife's husband and children usually affect her; just how can be more or less told from a comparison of their horoscopes. They usually know how they affect each other from their association with each other.

L. H. R., male, born November 4, 1900, between 7:00 a. m. and 7:15 a. m., Wisconsin: You will come under influences that may bring you business, financial and employment benefits about the following times: Middle of August, 1941; first three weeks of February, first half of November, last part of December, 1942; first part of January, 1943.

S. C., female, born September 11, 1923, about 7:00 a. m., Florida: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Middle of May, 1941, excellent. Last half of September, 1941, excellent in some respects; annoying in others. Last part of October, 1941, may be obstacles. Month of July, 1942, excellent. Middle of September, 1942, adverse. Last part of September, 1942, excellent. Middle of November, 1942, may be obstacles, which relatives, if you have them, may help you to overcome. Last half of March, 1943, excellent.

M. C., female, born June 17, 1890, time unknown, England: I do not believe it would be advisable for you to make unnecessary changes in employment

matters at the present time. During 1942, you will come under excellent influences that may bring you satisfactory employment at satisfactory pay. I am unable to tell you the particular month, not knowing the hour of your birth.

"PEGGY," female, born July 24, 1915, about 3:00 p. m., New York: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last part of July, first half of August, 1941, last half of January, first half of February, 1942, excellent. Last half of May, 1942, may be obstacles. Middle of September, 1942, excellent.

L. J. P., female, born November 25th between 8:00 a. m. and 9:00 a. m., Iowa: You did not tell me the year of your birth.

E. D. M., female, born March 2, 1917, 6:00 a. m., New Jersey: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Middle of April, 1941, may be obstacles: Last half of July, last half of November, 1941, middle of July, 1942, excellent.

M. E. F., female, born May 11, 1911, between 3:00 a. m. and 4:00 a. m., New York: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: First half of April, last half of May, middle of July, 1941.

O. A., female, born January 28, 1915, about 6:00 a. m., Ohio: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of June, 1941, good. Last half of March, first part of April, 1942, excellent. First three weeks of June, 1942, excellent.

A. L. B., female, born November 9, 1914, 11:00 p. m., Massachusetts: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times:

Last part of May, first part of June, 1941, may be obstacles. Last half of June, month of July, 1941, excellent.

D. L. H., female, born November 1, 1913, 1:00 p. m., South Carolina: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the last half of July, 1942.

T. I. L., female, born March 6, 1898, 10:30 a. m., Michigan: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of December, 1942; month of January, first three weeks of February, last half of December, 1943.

FEMALE, born August 19, 1918, about 3:00 p. m., Louisiana: You did not give me name or initials by which to identify you. You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last part of May, first half of June, 1941, middle of May, 1943, may be obstacles. Last half of July, middle of November, 1943, last half of May, first half of June, 1944, middle of November, 1945, excellent.

A. W., female, born April 11, 1895, 1:30 p. m., New Jersey: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Last half of May, first half of June, 1941, may be obstacles. First three weeks of August, 1942, first half of August, 1943, excellent.

A. B. P., female, born June 6, 1920, 9:00 a. m., Texas: You will come under influences affecting marriage matters about the following times: Middle of May, last half of June, 1941, excellent. First three weeks of October, 1942, adverse. Middle of January, 1943, excellent.

E. P., female, born June 9, 1912, 10:00 a. m., Wisconsin: You will come under excellent influences affecting marriage matters about the first half of December, 1942.



The FRIENDLIEST CORNER

by
Mary Morris

PEN PALS, you will surely enjoy corresponding with a friendly girl who sends her plea all the way from Porto Rico. Pictures and snapshots are to be had for the asking, and Angelica promises to tell all sorts of interesting stories about life and people and happenings in her part of the world. And there is nothing she likes better than making friends and writing letters!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I really would love to have lots of Pen Pals from all over. I'm a Porto Rican girl of twenty-three, will exchange snapshots, pictures and letters with anyone, and have lots of interesting stories to tell about life, people and activities in this part of the world. I like to make friends, adore writing long, sociable letters, and am interested in everyone and everything. Pen Pals, please write to me. **ANGELICA.**

Paging all post-card collectors!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm sweet sixteen, and would love to hear from girls of my age, especially those who are keen about collecting post cards, as I'd like to exchange some of the cards I have. I am living in Texas, and have all sorts of interesting things to tell. Pen Pals, give me a chance. **CAS.**

Sociable farmerette.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hello, everybody! I'm a girl of twenty-two, live on a farm in Texas, enjoy sports, reading, drawing, writing stories, and will gladly exchange snapshots with anyone. Girls, whatever your age, don't hesitate to drop me a line. I'm sure we can be friends. **R. W.**

Everyone is welcome here.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a lonesome Michigan woman of thirty-two? I'm married, like sewing, writing, dancing, movies, camping and making friends. I want Pals all over and promise to answer every letter I get. How about it, girls? Single or married, everyone is welcome. **A. M.**

Sociable mother of three.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I have some Pen Pals? I'm a sociable married woman of twenty-two, have three children, and want to correspond with other married Pals. My hobby is collecting photographs, and I'll exchange them with everyone who drops me a line. Pals, send your letters to Kentucky. **MRS. B. R. E.**

Vivacious teen-age Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is New Jersey calling all Pen Pals! I'm a viva-

cious teen-age girl, still in high school, and have lots of interesting things to tell. Come on, girls, try me. I promise to answer letters promptly, and feel sure that we'll get along fine. Drop me a few lines, Pals—you won't regret it. GIGGLES.

Peppy high-school junior.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my letter. I'm a peppy high-school junior, a girl interested in everyone and everything. I live in the State of Minnesota, will answer letters promptly, and gladly exchange snapshots and souvenirs. Pals everywhere, won't you give me a chance?

LOREA.

Wants a Pal in every State.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hi, girls! May I hear from at least one Pal in every State in the Union? I'm a peppy teenage Texas girl, enjoy skating, reading, sports, drawing, painting, and especially making friends. I have lots of spare time to write, so hurry, Pals, let's get together!

ALEXA.

Likes old songs and good music.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome girl living in New York State, and hope to get lots of letters. My hobby is collecting snapshots, post cards, old songs, and I also enjoy good music. Pen Pals everywhere, won't you give me a chance to be your friend? I'll be waiting for your letters. LONESOME DEE.

Air hostess in the making.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Although I'm not exactly without friends, I'd love to hear from Pen Pals all over the country. I'm a lively girl of sixteen, keen about sports, dancing, and my ambition is to become an air hostess. Girls everywhere, won't you drop me a few lines? I am living in North Carolina.

ELZA.

Hello, California!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: How about a few letters for me? I'm a peppy California

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girl, attend high school, like crocheting, sewing, collect match covers, pictures of movie stars, music, songs and records. I promise to answer every letter that comes my way. How about it, Pals?

FELIA.

Mystery stories intrigue her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Does anyone want to correspond with a lonesome Pennsylvania girl? I'm nineteen, considered good-looking, enjoy movies, mystery stories, collect stamps, and have lots of free time to write. Girls everywhere. please drop me a line. I have lots of interesting things to tell you, and will be a real friend.

OLGA.

Who wants a true-blue friend?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman, live in Ohio, and hope to hear from Pals who want a true-blue friend. I have two boys in high school, enjoy making friends, and will gladly exchange snapshots and picture post cards. Pals everywhere, regardless of age, won't you write to me? I'll be waiting.

DORA.

Everyone is welcome here.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please make room for my plea. I'm a teen-age Michigan girl eager to hear from Pen Pals all over the world. I enjoy sports, promise prompt replies, will exchange snapshots, picture post cards and anything else of interest to other Pen Pals. Come on, girls, let me hear from you!

YVONNE.

A teen-age married lady.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll drop me a few lines? I'm a girl in my teens, married, and hope to hear from Pals all over the country. I'll exchange picture post cards, hankies, and will send a gift to all who answer my plea. Girls, send your letters to Wisconsin.

ANELLA.

Who wants to hear all about Hollywood?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope someone will write to me. I'm a peppy teen-age

girl, live in Hollywood, and can tell loads of interesting stories about this famous city. I promise to answer every letter I get, so come on, girls, let's get busy!
Miss HOLLYWOOD.

Brides, get together!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a bride twenty-three years of age, and would love to correspond with other brides, or anyone who wants to exchange letters and snapshots. I live in Pennsylvania, have plenty of spare time, and feel sure that I can make my replies interesting. Who'll try me?
MOLLIE.

Calling all fifteen-year-olds.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Pen Pals everywhere, especially teen-age girls, please write to me. I'm a sociable, friendly girl with blue eyes and black hair. I like movies, sports, and will exchange snapshots with anyone who answers my plea. Girls far and near, let's be friends.

LEANORA.

Who collects salt and pepper shakers?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's hoping some of the Pals will answer my letter, especially those who collect salt and pepper shakers. I also collect match folders, and will exchange them with anyone. I live in the State of Washington, and will try hard to make my replies interesting.

WALLA WALLA.

She likes mystery stories.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a lonesome Connecticut girl? I'm interested in movies, mystery stories, collecting post cards, and guarantee answers to all letters received. I would especially like to hear from girls between fourteen and sixteen. Won't someone take a chance on me?
NAN CEE.

Fill her mailbox to the brim.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Help me find some new friends. I'm a widow of forty-eight, live in Colorado, and get very lonesome. I like the radio, reading, walking, fancywork, and especially writing letters. I want to hear from real Pen Pals, not souvenir hunters who don't answer a second letter. I promise to be a true-blue friend and will answer all letters.
ELLA.

Don't keep her waiting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is Texas calling! I'm a young married woman anxious to correspond with Pen Pals everywhere. My hobby is collecting picture post cards, and I'll exchange them with anyone. I promise to answer letters promptly, so please, girls, don't disappoint me. I'm sure we can be friends.

TEXAS WIFE.

Girls, you'll like Twinkles.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a peppy Pennsylvania teen-age girl, and want to hear from Pals all over. I have hazel eyes, red hair, am fond of dancing, sports, ball games, movies, and collect pictures. But most of all I like making friends and writing letters. Pen Pals, won't you let me correspond with you? I'll answer letters promptly.

TWINKLES.

Make way for Robbie.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: There's nothing I like better than exchanging letters, so who'll be my Pen Pal? Of course, I want more than one. I'm a sociable, lively girl eager to find Pals between fourteen and sixteen. I'll exchange snapshots and pictures of movie stars. So get busy, gals, and let's go!
ROBBIE.

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THE FRIEND IN NEED

(Continued from page 6)

is parking, park benches, or asking a boy to come into the house and leaving the lights turned off. Petting is risky and foolish, because very often girls find out that it takes more than petting to hold a boy. I also think that the kind of popularity a girl wins by giving boys the impression she is free and easy doesn't last. I'm sure boys respect and really like girls who expect them to act like gentlemen, and that it's up to a girl whether there should be any petting or not. Girls should always hold their favors highly.

Does anyone agree with me?

BILLIE.

It is human nature to value highly that which seems out of reach, or is acquired only after great effort. And we are inclined to be somewhat scornful of the things that are too easily gained. So you are quite right in saying that girls should remember to hold their favors highly.

What do you think about Billie's ideas on petting, readers? Let's hear!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My problem is all mixed up. I hope that you will help me straighten it out. I married when I was nineteen, and for about five years my husband and I were very happy. We have a little boy now, and my husband is crazy about him.

Then I met a man who worked with my husband, and this man began paying marked attention to me almost from the first. He was twice my age, but seemed much younger, and I thought he was quite fascinating. Every once in a while I'd date him.

This went on until my husband found a letter this man sent me. Naturally, we quarreled about it, and my husband forbade me to even speak to this man again. He has a very jealous wife and my husband didn't want any trouble.

After several months my husband found another job in another town and we moved. By this time my husband began noticing other women, so I thought that if he did that I could have my friends, too.

About six months ago we met a woman whom my husband had not noticed before. He liked her and I liked her. She drank and smoked, and often came to see us, and we even exchanged confidences. But I found out that my husband was in love with her, and that he was thinking of divorcing me and marrying her.

Then I realized what a fool I'd been all along. I am sure now that I dearly love my husband and don't want to lose him. Our little boy needs us both. I've tried to talk to him, but he seems to think he can't hurt this other woman by dropping her, though he says he is still fond of me.

Mrs. Brown, I've told my husband that I realize how silly I'd been, and mean to be a good wife and mother in the future. Until I found her out, this woman was accepting my husband's attentions and pretending to be my friend, too. I think he ought to be willing to drop her so that we can make a fresh start.

PEARL T.

There seems to be no explanation for these lapses of human behavior. However, very often foolish missteps lead to a clearer realization of one's ideas about love and marriage, especially when there are children.

It doesn't seem to be so much a question of hurting this other woman in whom your husband is still interested as it is of trying again. Have you made every effort to make him see this problem from your side, and that for your boy's sake it might be well worth while for you both to forget the past and try to make each other happy?

It takes character and a big person to overlook and forget the foolish, tragic episodes called "mistakes," and rebuild a

marriage that has nearly been wrecked on the rocks of misunderstanding. In your case the main issue is, after all, to succeed where you two have previously failed. It is a human weakness to let some matters drift. Don't let this situation drift any longer.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: How can a fellow be sure a girl's in love with him? Six months ago I met a girl who appealed to me, and ever since then we have been dating three or four times a week. But although she is nice to me, and seems to like me, I can't find out if she is serious about me. Whenever I hint about marriage she laughs and doesn't seem to be much concerned.

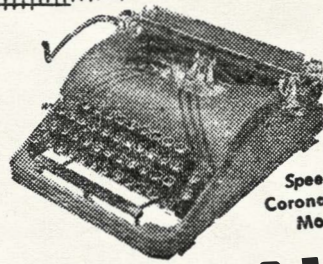
In the past two months I've made it a point to date other girls, too. About three weeks ago the first girl, whom I'll call Ellen, introduced me to her cousin, Clare. This girl seems very sympathetic and understanding, and I know I could like her very much. I asked her to go out with me and she did.

When Ellen saw which way the wind was blowing she became jealous and showed it. Now, I don't know whether Ellen cares for me, or whether she just didn't want me to be friendly with Clare.

If I could only be sure that Ellen cares for me I wouldn't think about other girls. Should I keep on seeing her, or date Clare? I'm really in love with Ellen, and it would be hard for me to let her go and forget her. ED.

Don't you think there is a better way than hinting to find out how Ellen actually feels about you? Why not tell her frankly that you love her and hope she will marry you? A man must always take the risk of being refused when he is courting a girl.

I see no reason why you should not keep on seeing Ellen if you are in love with her. But, of course, so long as you are not engaged, you need not feel guilty about dating other girls. However, if you want to win Ellen's love, I would suggest that you continue to be very attentive and devoted to her.



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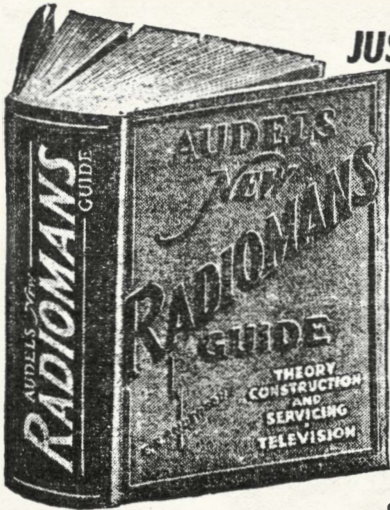
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The fact that she seemed jealous when you showed your interest in Clare shows that she must feel something for you, though it does not prove that she is in love with you. But don't lose your courage. If Ellen loves you, it won't be long before you two reach a definite understanding. Good luck!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: A year and a half ago I met a girl who seemed to be just the type of girl I could take seriously. Six months after we met I bought the rings and several months later they were all paid for. Then I asked this girl to marry me, and she said she would, but she seemed to resent the idea that I bought the rings in advance. She said that I had been too sure of her all along.

However, we seemed very happy and made wonderful plans for our future, and then I lost my job. During the time I was out of work she was as sweet as any girl could be. Then I found another job, and a short time after that she said she wanted to have a serious talk with me.

She said that she was only twenty and thought she was too young to settle down to marriage. She told me to go ahead and date other girls, and that she meant to date other fellows.

We are still seeing each other. She still lets me kiss her and make love to her, and when she is invited to parties she asks me first to go with her before she asks any of the other fellows. She tells me she still loves me, but that she wants to have fun before she marries.

I am making enough to support us comfortably. What should I do? I can't give her up, and on the other hand I can't afford to let her henpeck me. Should I stop seeing her and let her have her fling, or would you suggest that I lay down the law and make her listen to me? Don't you think she is unreasonable?

SERIOUS.

No, I don't think that this girl is unreasonable. Nor do I think that she is henpecking you because she told you she is not ready to settle down to marriage. I think she loves you, but is young and



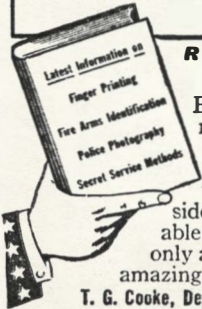
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can afford to wait awhile before getting married. And you will gain nothing if you lay down the law, as you say, and force her to become engaged to you again.

Be patient, and take all this with good grace. Don't nag or insist on having your own way, or drum on the idea that she should see all this your way. Go right on being good friends and let her have her fun. If she really loves you, you will not lose her.

However, why not follow her suggestion and date other girls now and then? A little competition often helps.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: You have helped me before, so here I am with another problem. I'm nineteen. A year and a half ago I met and fell in love with a young man who was going with a friend of mine. When he dropped her we began dating. Then he went to another town, and when several months passed and I didn't hear from him I thought I never would.

Then I met another young man, and after going with him for six months we became engaged. I was still very keen about Jim, the first boy. But I didn't think he'd ever come back, so I went ahead with plans for my wedding.

A few weeks before the wedding, my fiancé, Joe, and I quarreled. We made up, however, and then he went away on business for two months, and we were to be married when he came back.

In the meantime, Jim came back and we met again. He dates other girls, but that doesn't seem to make any difference to me. We see each other whenever we can. Once Jim persuaded me to take a day's trip with him and I did. It was then that we lost our heads.

Now I'm an expectant mother. I've told Jim about it, and would love to marry him, but I know he won't marry me unless he has to. I don't know whether to make him marry me or stick to Joe and tell him the truth and hope that Joe will marry me.

I know that I have been very foolish, but I still love Jim in spite of everything, and he says he loves me. Joe is still away, and I want to clear things up before he comes back. Tell me what to do.

DISCOURAGED.

Considering the situation, there should be no question in your mind as to which man you should marry. And if Jim cares for you, why shouldn't he marry you without being forced to do so? By all means, tell him that you expect him to marry you at once. You have not only yourself to think of, but your child and its future. And if you love Jim, and not the boy you're engaged to, then marry the one you love.

You don't have to wait until Joe returns to tell him the news. You can write him now and tell him as gently as you know how that you don't love him as you thought you did and that it wouldn't be fair to marry him.

Now get busy and set things in order.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Please help another puzzled girl. I'm nineteen, have a good home and fine parents. A few years ago my mother was in poor health and I was left alone a great deal. I took matters into my own hands and did what I thought was all right.

A year ago I thought I was madly in love with a young man. I wanted to act the way he and his friends did. I began to smoke, drink, and I ran around as the other girls did. I even quit school because the other girls didn't go to school. They were all working, so I got a job, too.

Several months ago I began to notice that this boy was losing interest in me, and we finally stopped seeing each other. I thought that if I dated other fellows it would make him jealous, but he didn't seem to care.

I stopped going around with these fellows and girls. My parents didn't want me to have anything to do with them,

anyway, and I realize now that I should never have had anything to do with them. I've done nothing actually wrong, and I'm glad of it.

Now I don't go out at all. I have no friends. All I do is go to work in the morning and come home at night. Twice a week I go to the movies by myself.

I want to dance and have fun with other fellows and girls. I'm not bad-looking, have a nice job, wear clothes well, but no matter how hard I try, I can't seem to make friends. Can you help me?
BROWN EYES.

Aren't there any clubs or church organizations that you can join? I notice that you are living in a fairly large city. Why not look around? I am sure that you can make friends and enjoy the fun you long for.

It was very wise on your part to drop these other so-called friends when you found out they were the wrong type for you. I am sure that you will always be glad you made this change.

Besides joining clubs, how about looking up some of the girls with whom you went to school? Couldn't you revive a few of the old friendships? At any rate I think that you can make new friends if you get busy and look around. To have friends, you must go where there are young people, and give yourself a chance to become acquainted. Nothing is done without some effort, my dear.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Won't you help me with my problem? I'm a girl of almost twenty. Three years ago I met a young man who was visiting in our town. He stayed here for three months and we went everywhere together. When he was leaving he promised to write to me, and said that we were as good as engaged.

In his letters he always says he loves me, and we have set the wedding date once, but he asked me to postpone it. We've seen each other only twice in over two years, but he writes every week.

I don't know what to do. How long does he expect me to wait? Should I go on waiting for him, or break off our engagement? Another thing is that he supports his mother and has told me he would never leave her. And if he marries his wife would have to live with his mother.

I could date lots of other boys, but I don't go out with anyone except my girl friends. I really do want to marry this boy.
WINNIE.

I think it is high time that you called a spade a spade, Winnie. You have waited long enough, and have given this young man plenty of time to decide what he wants to do. I can't tell you what is in his mind. But judging from what you say, he cannot be very keen about marriage if he is satisfied to let matters drift this way.

My advice to you is to write this young man that you think you have waited long enough and cannot go on waiting without knowing where you stand. There should be a more definite arrangement if he really means to marry you. You can't very well spend some of the best years of your life waiting around. You are young and should have many friends and enjoy good times with other young people.

You might suggest that you would also like to meet his mother, so that all three of you can talk this situation over. From his response, you will surely know which way the wind is blowing. If marriage is not on his mind, and he has only been amusing himself by playing the waiting game with you, then it's time to call the whole thing off.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: One part of my problem is that I am entirely without girl friends. But I'd better start my story at the beginning.

When I was a child I lived in the slums, and hated it so that the thought of getting away was an obsession with me. I

didn't associate with boys and girls of my age. The crowd I went with was older and more experienced. I went to high school, and worked nights in order to have decent clothes.

When I graduated a friend helped me get a job. I'll admit I traded somewhat on my good looks. In three years I went from one position to other and better ones, and now I have a really fine job.

It always amuses me when people remark how lucky I am. I'm glad for all I have, but I've had to give, too. Growing up too soon, having dinners with the boss who, by the way, always turned out to be a married man. Late hours, some gossip—all this doesn't make for real happiness.

Like most girls, I want marriage and a home of my own. I've met the man, but it hasn't been a marrying proposition. I'm twenty-one, and he is in his thirties. I don't think the difference in age matters in my case, because I'm much older than other girls of twenty-one. Another thing is that we have been more than friends, and it is hard to drop a man a girl loves, even though he forgets to mention marriage.

I make no demands on his time. He tells me he loves me, and I trust him. He is well off financially, and his business comes first. One trait of his character I don't care about is that he is never quite content unless he is making a mental play of people. Tearing them apart, taking all he can get and then hating them. He is hard and bitter because of an unhappy childhood.

We talk of marriage quite often, but make no definite plans. I've been offered another position in another State, and am wondering if I should accept it. It would mean giving up this man, and I know it will be hard to do that, especially if there is still a chance that he might offer me marriage. I've never asked him outright whether or not he ever means to marry me.

Won't you help me decide what to do?

CARRIE.

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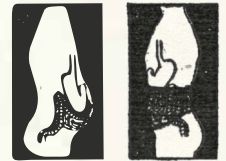
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this. Surely, you must realize that if this man truly loved you he would not hesitate to offer you marriage? It seems to me that under the present circumstances you would not be bold if you asked him frankly how much longer he expects you to wait for marriage. But going on this way, merely living in hopes that he might marry you some day, is neither here nor there.

I would advise you to talk things over with him. If he is not inclined to marriage, then no matter how hard it is for you to let him go, do just that. Accept this other job and make a complete new change in your life. Who knows? You may find out later that he was not the man for you, after all. And even if you married him you might not be as happy as you hoped you'd be. Remember, you can't make a man over after marriage.

Stop going around in circles, Carrie. Make one or two decisions and act on them.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Please help me with my problem. I'm twenty-five, was married at eighteen and have three children. My husband and I are separated and will soon be divorced. He supports the children and has the highest regard for me. He comes to see the youngsters every week and we talk, but we both know that it would be of no use to try again to make a go of it.

I don't care for my husband at all except as a friend. I often meet him with his girl friends, but it makes no difference to me.

My problem is this: I'm considered good-looking, and like to go out. I have many dates, but every time I go out with a man he gets fresh, and when he finds out that I'm not easygoing he doesn't ask for another date. Most of these fellows know that I'm still married, and that I'm going to be divorced, and they seem to think that they can act as they like. Why do so many men have the idea that a girl's no good because she's been married?

I am living with my parents and they help me take care of the children. My friends can come over any time and are

welcome. The fellows do come over sometimes, but they can't seem to get it through their heads that I'm not the type of girl they think I am.

What can I do to make them change their minds? I love dancing, and see no harm in enjoying a little fun. But how can I keep on going to dances and enjoying myself if the fellows I date spoil the evening? I wish I knew what's wrong.

PAT.

Well, my dear, some men have strange ideas about married women who go out with other men. If you were legally free to go out with other men, however, the situation would probably be different.

Why not chum only with your girl friends until you are free? I know that it will mean giving up going to dances, but you can enjoy yourself in many other ways. How about joining a women's club? Or, if you have plenty of time on your hands, find some hobby that would help you pass the time. But I should think that with three children to think about you wouldn't have too much spare time.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: Three years ago I met and fell hard for a fellow who played in a band. He said he would rather die than give up his trombone. I didn't ask him to give it up. I loved him and was happy with the way things were. We often quarreled and broke off, but usually made up the next day.

Then he found a job. He'd work days and play nights, and on the nights he came over to see me he'd fall asleep or didn't want to go anywhere. Naturally, that wasn't pleasant for me. However, we became engaged, and I thought everything was fine. But again we quarreled, and I handed back the ring. Soon after that he married another girl and gave up playing his trombone, too.

I can't understand why he married this other girl. He still loves me, or did two months before he was married. Now his mother and friends blame me because he didn't marry me.

I've been going places and trying to

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enjoy myself, but it does not help me to forget him. I've been worrying, losing weight, and wondering what's in store for me. I'm only twenty-two and feel as if my life were over. J. J.

In almost everyone's experience comes a time when something goes wrong and life seems to lose its savor. But like most things, this phase passes, and we suddenly wake up and readjust ourselves once more. In other words, we pick ourselves up and go on.

This young man disappointed you. But what is preventing you from picking yourself up and making new friends? He is married now, so you might as well put him out of your mind. You can do it, if you use a little will power. I am sure that you can find happiness with someone else, but you must give life and love a chance.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I offer my comments on Webster's letter? I agree that it is a girl's privilege to keep her past mistakes to herself. But if she feels that she simply must tell her boy friend, or her husband, then why should he hold it against her? Most men expect girls to be "good." Shouldn't that apply to the men, too?

From what I've heard and seen, most men are not angels, and if it is so hard for them to forgive a girl who has made a slip, they are only judging her by themselves. After all, we are all human and have our weaknesses. I think men who are so unforgiving are very unfair. They seem to think it is their divine right to have all the freedom in the world.

I think that human nature should be forgiven, no matter who makes mistakes.

A. M. D.

As you say, we are all human, and we all make mistakes of one kind or another. Certainly, life would be made easier for many who've made mistakes, if they were given another chance to make good, without being reminded of the past.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: At eighteen I married a boy of seventeen, though at the time I didn't know that he was younger than I. We lived together for several months, but couldn't make a go of it. So he went back to his people in another town, and when I didn't hear from him for a long time I decided to divorce him.

I'm twenty-one now, have been supporting myself, and paid for my divorce. I'm free now and glad of it. But I am so tired of doing housework for other people. I did have one good job, but I had to have an operation, and when I was well enough to go back they decided to take someone else. I've had other jobs since then, but didn't like any of them.

My parents want me to come home. But if I go home it will only make things harder for them as they are supporting two grandchildren and two of my sisters.

What can I do to be happier than I am? I long to have my own home, but it may be years before I have one. I've been out with different fellows, but they don't think about getting married. Do you think I'll ever meet a man who will love me and want to marry me? I'm considered good-looking, wear clothes well, and am a hard worker.

Maybe my problem isn't very serious, but I'm sure you understand how unhappy I am.

DISCOURAGED.

I can readily understand that you become bored with housework and long for a change. However, we cannot always have what we want when we want it, my dear. We must be patient and wait, and watch for opportunities that will help us make a change. Is there any other kind of work that you can do besides housework? Look into that. But if you are obliged to stick to housework for a while longer, keep in mind the thought that life itself never stands still. Because you are doing housework now, it doesn't mean that you will continue doing it always.

As for the future, you are still young and, to a great extent, your life can be

what you choose to make it. So don't give up. Try to find other work, if your present occupation makes you so unhappy. And if you can't find work you like, try not to feel so hopeless about it. Make an effort to have some friends, boys and girls. There is no reason to suppose that you cannot meet a young man whose first thought will be to make you happy.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I often wonder if other young wives are as unhappy as I am. I'm twenty-one, married, but instead of being happy I'm miserable.

My husband didn't have a job when we married, so we went to live with my people for a while. Then he suggested that we go to live with his mother. She was very mean, blamed me for the marriage, and for the fact that I was expecting a baby. Finally she actually asked me to leave, and my husband didn't even try to stop me.

As my people lived in another city, they had to send me the bus fare, and that was the last time I saw my husband. He doesn't write to me, though he told a relative that after the baby comes he is willing to have his mother take care of it. But I'm determined to keep the baby myself.

My husband and I lived together only four months. My people say he is worth-

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less and no good, and are ready to help me divorce him. But I don't know what to do.

There's another man in the picture. He knows the whole story and wants me to marry him if I get a divorce, and says he will even adopt the baby. I think that I could depend on him, but I still care for my husband.

One thing that makes life so hard for me is that my parents are always saying, "I told you so." And it is getting hard to take it. They say if I'd listened to them in the first place I wouldn't be in this fix now, and so on. I feel I can't listen to much more of this. Do you think that my husband might change?

BABS.

Who knows? Why not let matters ride until after the baby is born? Perhaps your husband will feel differently about the entire situation once he becomes a proud parent. You know, Babs, divorce is not always the right answer to disagreements in marriage. It is true that your husband has not stood by you as he should have. But it is not out of the question for him to change his attitude.

Suppose you write and ask him to come to see you, either now or when the baby arrives? Then talk things over. Find out what his plans are for the future. I am sure he realizes that you two cannot just let matters slide forever. So sit tight in the meantime. Everything may turn out much more satisfactorily than you think.

As for your parents, be patient with them. They are hurt and disappointed for your sake, and because they feel as they do they drum on the subject without realizing it is getting on your nerves. I'm sure they have your best interests at heart. Agree with them, if only to keep peace in the family.

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