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STREET & SMITH'S

# LOVE STORY

EVERY WEEK

MAGAZINE

OCT. 17, 1936

ILLUSTRATED

*I won't be your sister*

BY AUDREY MOUNTAIN



15¢ OCT. 17

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In next week's issue—"Red-headed Men Like Pink," by Dorothy Ainsworth.

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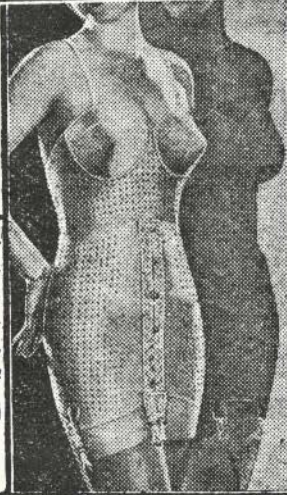
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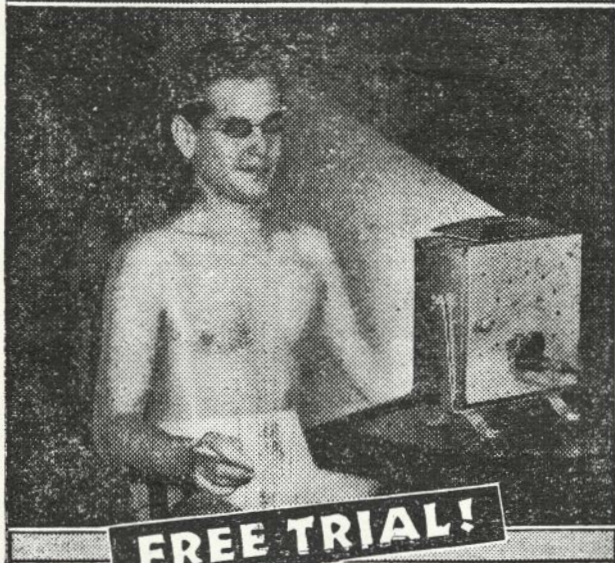
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INVENTOR

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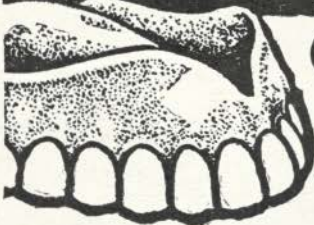
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A SERIAL—Part I.

# I Won't Be Your Sister

By Audrey D. Mountain

## CHAPTER I.

**J**AN, it's sweet of you to let me talk to you. If I had a little sister, I'd want her to be exactly like you." Dirk Ryan's dark eyes glowed affectionately as he touched Jan Carstairs's slim shoulder.

Jan's eyes, like drenched bluebells under winged black brows that gave

her face such extraordinary vividness, lifted wearily. The words she had heard so often that her very soul cringed under them, sounded again in her brain with a sickening familiarity. If only one of the men who brought their problems about other girls to her to solve, ever once really saw her as a girl herself! As a girl who was young, who had her mo-



ments of heart-shaking beauty, who wanted love and tenderness quite as passionately as Sonia Arloff, or Molly Brant, or any other of the girls who met their men at Jan's, and went away with them, leaving Jan alone.

"If I had a little sister," Dirk had said. Bim Carter had said it, too. Even Tommie Wayne had once said it, and Joe Prague had ended his troubled seeking of her advice about Molly Brant only by saying that he wished to heaven his sister was as sweet and understanding as Jan!

"That's all right, Dirk," she said now, fighting to keep her soft voice steady, fighting to keep back the stormy, unhappy tears. "Sonia cares for you, really. But she's spoiled. She likes men to sweep her off her feet, and you've only been indulgent and adoring. Try being a bit rougher with her. She'll love it."

"I will. And thanks again, Jan. I'm afraid I spoiled your day by asking to come this afternoon," Dirk began contritely, too late to be quite convincing. "Sonia's coming over a little later. She said she'd meet me here." Contrition was gone from his handsome face. He was too absorbed in his dream of Sonia's coming.

"Is she, indeed?" Jan thought hotly.

But she only said, a little stiffly, "I wasn't going anywhere, Dirk." She added, very low, "It's no fun going places alone," but Dirk, dreaming on in the glow of firelight that broke the April chill in Jan's pleasant, big old living room, failed to hear her.

She sat quietly in the big chair facing the glow. Her slim shoulders, under the shabby black velveteen

pajama coat and the extravagantly flowered thin silk of a coolie coat she had thrown on when Dirk telephoned from downstairs, straightened gallantly now and then, but always they drooped again when she forgot them. Her freshly shampooed, gold-brown hair fell forward in shimmering waves around her earnest face.

It was not a new problem. Again and again, in puzzled, unhappy wonder that had grown into an almost frantic bewilderment, Jan had tried to learn why men liked her, sought her sympathy and understanding, even sometimes kissed her in affectionate gratitude, and yet saw nothing in her but pal and little sister and good friend. Rarely was she asked to go out with men; if one of them did ask her, she had learned a sorrowful suspicion, had learned to watch for the beginning of their confidences about other girls.

Why was it that she seemed not to inspire love and devotion as other girls did? Why, if men found her sweet and understanding and likable,

did they never find her lovable? They liked to come to her home, liked to talk to her, seemed to like to dance with her to music of radio or phonograph. Then why did it never occur to them to take her out to dinners and dances and

drives? She danced well, she dressed well, except that all too frequently, her girl friends borrowed her clothes until she had nothing presentable or charming to wear herself. She was pretty—much prettier than Molly Brant or Sonia Arloff or Tess Claypoole, she told herself with a kind of painful honesty, as she had done a thousand times before. Her hands



were soft and white, her slim body had all the charm of vibrant young womanhood. Her eyes were beautiful, she knew, and her mouth had humor and sweetness and generosity written deep in its flower-flame. Her satiny gold-brown hair, her slender, pretty feet—

Oh, what was the use?—she thought despairingly. Mere prettiness, mere sweetness—evidently men wanted something else, something she didn't have. Tommie Wayne, his gray eyes narrowed in the brown of his stern, young face, had once told her that when the right man came along, he would think her everything that was exquisite and perfect. But that one right man was so very long in coming, her hungry heart said over and over again. Would he, perhaps, never find her? Would she go all through life, talking to men about other girls, comforting them when they were depressed or discouraged, and never know the glory of the one man's deep kiss on her mouth, the strength of his arms holding her close to his heart, the flame in his eyes for her alone?

She dropped her head in her hands, on a long, broken sob. It was a dreary picture, when she knew herself to be so magnificently capable of a fine love, when she wanted with the last deep fiber of her being to love one man supremely and be loved by him with the fire and beauty that love meant to her.

She had forgotten Dirk. He roused now from his own dream, to say idly, "Tired, Jan?"

She fought down a wild impulse to scream out the truth at him.

Her muffled tone said huskily, "Not tired. Just depressed—"

Before he could ask why she was depressed, the bell rang, joyously, insistently.

"Sonia!" Dirk said instantly, smiling.

Jan's heart was hot with rebellion as she went to let Sonia in. She would have to stand by and watch the glow in Dirk's dark eyes grow deeper as he looked at Sonia's mad-cap face, her flying black hair, her white hands that usually had a daub of paint still flecking their slim, expressive beauty. She would have to listen to Sonia's lazy voice mocking Dirk's devotion, to Dirk's delighted laugh, to watch them go away together, Sonia calmly scornful of her conquest, Dirk openly enchanted. And Jan would be left alone again, to her fire and her pleasant old room, and her despairing, unhappy thoughts.

But Sonia was not alone in the dimly lighted passage. Bim Carter was proudly escorting Tess Claypoole, Molly Brant's lifted face met the open adoration in Joe Prague's every look, Tommie Wayne's lean, clever hand under Sonia Arloff's small elbow, tried and failed to restrain the dancing little witch that had captured Dirk Ryan's romantic heart.

"We came after Dirk," Sonia's husky drawl said lazily. "We're going dancing. It's much too gorgeous an evening to waste."

"It is, isn't it?" Jan made herself smile, when she wanted to cry. She knew every one of those nicely dressed, clever young people almost as well as she knew herself, but she was not one of them. The devotion, the ardent interest, the dates and drives and corsages and pursuit that Molly and Tess and Sonia all took so casually for granted, would have meant heaven to Jan, and she had never known them.

"Come in. Dirk's here, waiting," she said, over a tightness in her throat. They crowded in, and im-

mediately the big old room was alive with laughter and gay young voices.

"How about coffee and some of your grand nut cake before we go, Jan?" Molly Brant suggested brazenly.

"Sorry, Molly, I'm out of both." It was not true, but Jan defended the small lie hotly in her own soul. She was not quite capable, to-night, of serving them with food and drink, and then seeing them drift out, carelessly, leaving dirty cups and sticky plates for her to wash alone.

Something in Jan's tone stiffened Molly. "Well, never mind. We ought to be rushing, anyhow. Ready, Dirk?"

Dirk was more than ready. He remembered to squeeze Jan's hand and say in a significant undertone.

"Wish me luck, Jan!"

Jan smiled with stiff lips, and drew her hand away as quickly as she could. "Of course, Dirk." How sickeningly often had she been asked to wish a man luck in his pursuit of another girl!

Tommie Wayne made no move for departure. Sonia said, in surprise, watching him stuff tobacco into a disreputable old pipe.

"Not coming, Tommie?"

"Not coming," Tommie said briefly, his gray eyes, narrowed under frowning dark brows, not lifting.

Jan sent him one quick, searching look, and her heart sank. Tommie was staying to talk to her, to ask for comfort or advice or encouragement. She couldn't do it, she thought frantically. Not to-night. She felt drained and empty, and dangerously close to a storm of tears. But something appealing, something tired and far removed from Tommie's almost brutally blunt sureness, touched her. Of all the men she knew, Tommie Wayne was dearest to her. If he needed her—

When the door closed behind the last laughing pair, she said quietly:

"Sit down, Tommie. Have you had any dinner?"

"No. Have you?" Tommie did not look at her, his mouth was set and grim.

"No." She waited, but he made no suggestion that they go out. She sighed faintly. Well, she didn't look a very likely candidate to take out to dinner, she admitted to herself grimly. The shabby velveteen pajamas failed to make an attractive dinner costume, and Dirk's call had not given her time to change.

But the coldness at her heart melted a little. To do Tommie justice, she thought, he couldn't have told what she had on. He had come to her because he was in trouble. And he probably hadn't eaten all day. When he was working hard on the smart sketches that were only beginning to link a scrawled "Tommie Wayne" with success and fame, he frequently forgot to eat.

That brought a tender smile to Jan's troubled mouth. Tommie was very close to being a genius. At his best, he was brilliant and witty, delightfully gay, with an underlying hint of savage purpose that colored his lightest moments with a hard grimness. At his worst, he shut himself away from his friends and fought out his black battles alone. He was in such a mood now, and it was the first time Jan had really seen him brought to the lowest depths.

Food first, she decided wisely. She said, cheerfully casual:

"Scrambled eggs and toast and coffee sound good, Tommie?"

"Nothing sounds good," Tommie muttered savagely, beginning a restless pacing of the room.

"Tommie, come in here and talk to me while I get supper," she coaxed.

He came slowly to the door of the

kitchen, stood a minute watching her with abstracted, narrowed gray eyes. Then he jerked his shoulders square again, plunged his hands distractedly through his brown hair, stuck them deep into his trousers pockets.

Jan smiled at him. For a few sweet moments, she told herself valiantly, she would pretend Tommie loved her and she loved Tommie, would pretend that it was vitally important to her that Tommie should be happy, sure again.

Tommie demanded roughly, "Why do you bother with me, Jan? I'm not fit for human society to-night."

"Suppose we say that I like you a lot, and it bothers me to see you as distressed as you obviously are now," Jan told him.

"But why?" Tommie insisted. "Why should you waste your time fooling with me when I've got the black devils so badly?"

"Oh, fiddlesticks!" Jan said briskly. "Let's eat. You'll feel better then, and you can tell me all about it."

"It's the sketches," Tommie told her, in simple fury. "They won't go right, Jan."

"They will come right, Tommie," Jan told him encouragingly. "You're too tired, you've worked too long on them. Did you bring them along?"

Tommie nodded. Color had begun to come back into his drawn tired face under the stimulus of Jan's encouraging tone.

They carried in the hot scrambled eggs, golden-brown toast, the steaming, fragrant coffee, to a table before the fireplace. Afterward, he lighted a cigarette for her, put her gently back on the divan, pushed two pillows under her shining head, lighted his pipe, and stretched out in a big chair where he could see her face.

"Jan, you're an angel. I feel almost human again," he said slowly.

Jan said a little hysterically, her lazy content shattered by what she was afraid was coming, "Tommie, if you tell me that you'd like a little sister exactly like me, I'll—I'll slap your face!" she ended violently, half-sitting up on the big divan.

His surprised gray eyes came soberly to her face. "I didn't intend to wish for a sister like you, dear," he said quietly. "I was only trying to let you know that I think you're the most wonderful girl I ever had the privilege of knowing."

"That's nice, but it isn't much better than the little-sister gag!" Jan muttered rebelliously.

Tommie gave her a long reflective glance, before he said gravely, "No, I suppose not. I seem to remember that the fellows in our gang have rather rubbed in this little-sister stuff. It's only that they all like you so much. You're the kind of girl a fellow is lucky to have as a friend and comrade. But it's been a long time since I thought of you as a little sister, Jan—if I ever did," he finished, so quietly that Jan could hardly believe what he had just said.

"What—what do you mean?" she whispered, color coming up into her face in a tide of richness almost suffocatingly sweet.

Tommie hesitated, his narrowed eyes still intent on her face. Words seemed actually on his lips. Jan waited, in a suspense so keen it was painful. Surprised, a tremulous expectancy crowded up into her throat so that she sat transfixed, staring at him with luminous, beautiful eyes, deepened by the fireglow and shadows in the fine old room.

Abruptly then, Tommie broke the spell of enchantment that for an exquisite moment had held them in some new thrall.



*"You're the kind of girl a fellow is lucky to have as a friend and comrade. But it's been a long time since I thought of you as a little sister, Jan." Jan could hardly believe what he said.*

"I didn't mean anything," he said curtly. "I think I'd better jam along home now."

Jan looked down at her own slim fingers. She had pretended, she thought bitterly, a little too well that

she loved Tommie and Tommie loved her.

She said thickly, "Your sketches—you were going to show them to me."

"I don't need to, now. I know they're all right."

She shivered. She could not have told why these moments with Tommie had so deeply shaken her. A hundred times, they had been alone together, and while she had always been very fond of him, his departure had only meant that she was a little sorry to see him go.

Now—— What was the matter with her?—she thought slowly. Why could she not smile at him, say good-by, and be content to leave it at that?

“Good night, Tommie,” she almost whispered, fighting desperately for control.

He put his hands on her shoulders, and for a frowning second longer, held her so, upright before him, his narrowed gaze intent on her burning face, her tremulous red mouth, her beautiful eyes hidden from him by the spiky fringe of shadow from her long, silky dark lashes. His hands were shaking—she could feel their hard tremor through every fiber of her body.

He said, very low, “Good night, dear.” As if the familiar little words were hard to say, somehow. He bent slowly, his face came closer and closer. Driven by some impulse she could not have explained, Jan turned her head swiftly, so that his kiss missed her mouth, and fell on the soft, blue-veined temple, where a feathery curl of gold-brown satin lay childishly sweet against the exquisite flesh. His lips were warm, and gentle, and shaking a little.

Jan could not look at him. Her throat had locked shut, she could not speak. He said again, reluctantly, “Good night, dear,” and his hands dropped from her shoulders. He turned when he was at the door, and Jan, giving him a brilliant smile that barely covered tears, lifted one unsteady hand in farewell. He went out without speaking.

That night, turning restlessly in her fine old mahogany bed that she had brought with a few other odd pieces from her parents' home in Maryland after their death, Jan told herself that Tommie's behavior meant only that he was grateful, that he liked her, that he appreciated her kindness, her faith in him. That was all it meant, of course. What else could it mean? With all his denial of his thinking of her as a little sister, she was sure Tommie saw her as helper and friend, instead of a girl to be adored. If she only could stop trying to do things for people!

She would never pretend again that she loved Tommie and Tommie loved her. The pretending had been too dangerously sweet; it had lighted a hungry flame in her lonely heart; it had pointed with too unbearable a sharpness the cold fact that men had only gratitude and affection to give her, instead of the love she craved.

## CHAPTER II.

Jan worked in an advertising agency. The next afternoon, when the rush of the day's work had left her limp and tired, Nick van Dyke stopped at her desk, and smiled down at her. Young Van Dyke's father was one of the biggest accounts the agency had; Nick was in and out of the office frequently, his decisions concerning the copy on the beautiful cars his father's factories produced, were final. Jan had seen him many times, but never without experiencing again a tingle of awed wonder and excitement. Nick was everything wonderful and thrilling, rich, unbelievably handsome, the only son of a distinguished and cultured old family.

Now he sat on one corner of Jan's desk, knowing quite well that whatever the Van Dyke heir chose to do

would bring no disapproval. He said, in his easy, assured voice:

"You're the only bright spot in this stuffy place, Jan. When are you going to let me call on you?"

"I—I didn't know you wanted to, Mr. van Dyke!" she stammered.

"The name is Nick," its owner said lightly. "I do want to!"

"Then do," Jan said shyly.

"When?" he persisted, still watching her delightedly.

"Day after to-morrow?"

"And why wait so long? We might have dinner. I'd like to see where you live, Miss Carstairs!"

"You—you might dine at my apartment?" Jan breathed, afraid of so great a daring. Immediately she was furious at herself. Offering to feed a man again! If she had kept still, Nick might have taken her to dinner somewhere glamorous and thrilling. Why couldn't she learn to let men do things for her?

"Great! Don't you see that's exactly what I've been angling for?" he asked, his ardent dark eyes intent on her face, his smooth black head only inches from her own.

He went away presently, his lean, faultlessly tailored body moving with an easy, faintly arrogant swing. He left Jan bewitched. This, this was completely unbelievable, she told her racing heart sternly. Not once had Nick shown the faintest inclination to treat her as a little sister! He had made her feel precious, tenderly cherished, infinitely desirable and sweet. As any girl, in her deepest heart, wants to feel.

Nick was coming. The song of those enchanted words went with her through her evening, through her vivid, starry-eyed awakening, through the hours of her work. It swelled in a richer tide of melody and sweetness as she breathlessly

shopped for tiny steaks, artichokes and strawberries, a rare old cheese she hoped Nick would like. She hummed the magic words under her breath as she swiftly whisked the apartment into shining freshness, and arranged a great vase of glowing golden daffodils in a pool of spring glory on the mantel.

When the bell rang to announce him, a table set intimately for two stood before the fireplace. Jan's mother's delicate old sterling flashed and sparkled in the mellow light, thin Haviland of another generation lay ready on a cloth of fragile old lace. The frail, wavering stars of golden candles' flame starred again in the beautiful blue of Jan's shining eyes. Happiness bubbled in her like champagne, color was rich in her cheeks, and above the flowing softness of a new green chiffon gown, the crimson of her mouth quivered and burned with a witching fire.

Her hands were shaking when she swung the door open for him. He said instantly, smiling in delight, "I haven't been inside one of these stately, used-to-be-grand houses since my grandmother died. I'd forgotten how amusing the stained glass and the carved dinguses on the stairways could be— Jan, you lovely little thing, if you could only see the picture you make in that floaty-green thing, with the candlelight and the gold of those daffodils behind you!"

As if paying involuntary tribute to exquisite loveliness, his head bent to kiss the small hands he still held.

Helpless color flooded up into Jan's face. Nervously, she pulled her hands free from his. She felt for an instant oddly uneasy, almost afraid.

"Do come in, Nick," she said, struggling hard for lightness. "It's chilly to-day, isn't it? Do you want

to stir up the fire while I do our steaks?"

Nick slid a caressing arm around Jan's green chiffon shoulders and shook her lightly.

"I'd bet money you're not a chatterer, Jan. If you do much more of it, I'll be convinced you're afraid of me. Stand still while I pin one of these daffodils in your hair. You're the very essence of spring."

Jan stood breathlessly still, soft color coming and going in her clear cheeks at his nearness. Her faint fear of him was quite gone. This was all joy, all thrilling sweetness.

His experimental brown finger touched her soft cheek incredulously.

"Looking at you, I could almost believe in fairy tales again," he said very softly. "This is Jubilee Day for me."

"And for me," Jan's quivering, happy heart echoed in silence. But she only gave him a tremulous smile.

"Can you amuse yourself while I do the steaks?" she suggested.

"Oh, let the steaks wait. Sit down here by the fire," Nick said lazily. "I have a feeling, Jan, that you and I are going to know each other rather well, and I'm impatient to get started!"

Somehow an hour was gone. Jan forgot time, forgot the dinner, forgot everything but Nick's intent face, his brown eyes that could not seem to leave her face. The murmured, intimate conversation went on and on, while the candles' frail flames sank lower and lower. The fire burned down to a glowing bed of cherry coals, and in the enchanted dusk of the gracious old room, Nick moved closer to Jan on the divan, and put his arm behind her on the back. The brightness in his brown eyes, the closeness of his mouth—

"Jan, I came out here this evening, expecting to find an amusing eve-

ning. Instead, I found heaven," Nick said, very low.

A delicious new terror raced through her like a tingling flame.

"You're so incredibly sweet," Nick said huskily. "Jan—kiss me."

For a long instant, they were quite still, in a bewitched stillness compounded of caught breath, quickened heartbeats, a divinely hushed waiting. Jan gave him one terrified, glorious look. His brown face was closer.

And then, with a husky word, Nick's arms closed eagerly about her small, vibrant self. His lips came down to claim hers with a leashed, passionate tenderness.

It was Jan's first love kiss from any man. The glory of it blazed through her with a wild, heady sweetness, the restrained fierceness of it burned away the shyness of her mouth until her lips quivered and clung under his.

He lifted his head, scanned her face with some of the same awed wonder Jan herself felt. As if, in the space of a dozen exquisite heartbeats, a miracle had swept them both with golden wings.

"Jan, my darling," he said, shaken by her dearthness, her fragrant, tremulous sweetness surrendered to his arms. Demanding, claiming, acknowledging her, all in three low words.

"Yes, Nick?" Jan whispered, while the whole dazzling world wheeled slowly before her shining eyes, and the bright stars in spring skies leaned lower to listen to ecstasy, and the very daffodils on the mantel bowed their golden heads to the miracle of love.

"Oh, my sweet Jan," Nick said, kissing the fringed white lids shut over the shining of her eyes, kissing the corners of her red mouth, kissing the soft temple Tommie's kiss had



found two nights—two centuries ago.

Jan put away his demanding arms, got unsteadily to her feet.

"Do you know what time it is? You must be simply starved."

Nick rose, too, caught her two hands in his.

"Well, now that you mention it, I believe I could eat," he said, laughing.

Nick thought the steaks were perfect. He asked Jan suspiciously if she had known he was practically an idiot about artichokes, he poured brandy over the luscious big strawberries when they came, he praised Jan's coffee extravagantly. As Jan had hoped, the cheese she had chosen was his favorite.

The candles burned down and guttered out, in a last flare of brightness. They lighted fresh ones, and sat on at the small table, sipping coffee and Benedictine, talking in an endless low murmur.

She had just filled Nick's cup for the third time, when a thunderous clamor awoke in the hall outside her door. Hands banged impatiently, voices imperiously demanded entrance. Before she could move, the door flew open and three inquiring male heads filled the opening.

Tommie Wayne. Dirk Ryan. Bim Carter. All hilariously gay. Behind them, Jan caught a glimpse of Joe Prague with Molly Brant on his arm, but Sonia and Tess were not present.

They swept in, and Jan rose to face them, a cold fear chilling her heart. Why, why of all nights, must the gang burst in now? Nick would think—— What would Nick think?

Nick agreeably appeared to think nothing at all. Behind his bland, inscrutable face, Jan had a sick certainty that she could read a blend of amusement and disgust and affront.

Tommie seemed rather abruptly to

have lost his hilarity. He said, in a mingled appeal and grim apology that got through sharply to Jan's reluctant senses:

"Jan, I'm sorry we broke in this way. We wanted to go dancing—we were going to pick up Sonia and Tess after we got you. And," he added outrageously, "I wanted to remind you of our dinner-dance date for tomorrow night!"

But they had had no date, for tomorrow night or any other night, Jan thought sharply! Was Tommie mad? His hard, carved young face did not change, his grim mouth did not soften, but somehow in that instant, Jan had a curious certainty that Tommie was asking her for more than a covering up of the fact that he had lied. He was asking her to forgive him for not having shown her before how much he wanted her, asking her to forget that he had had the chance to take her in his arms two nights before and had chosen to go away, instead.

Very gently, she kept faith with him. "I had not forgotten, Tommie," she said softly. His eyes thanked her wordlessly, and suddenly those eyes were hard to face.

She said, shakily composed, "I'd like you to meet Nick van Dyke. Tommie Wayne—oh, Molly, where are you?—Miss Brant, Mr. Prague, Mr. Ryan, Mr. Carter. Too bad Sonia and Tess couldn't come with you to-night. Nick, you'll have to meet them later."

"I'll be delighted," Nick said, giving Molly a pleasantly self-possessed bow, offering an easy, cordial hand to the men.

"Do we have to go anywhere to dance, Jan?" Dirk Ryan said, close to her ear. "Can't we stay here?" He watched her with an awed absorption as if he had never really seen her before.



"But Sonia? And Tess?" Jan said, laughing over a sharp pang of desolation and fear. They would stay here, they would spoil everything that was not already ruined in this evening with Nick that had been so

perfect before their coming. If only they would go!

Joe Prague had turned on the full brightness of the lights, so that shadows and magic were gone from the room. The table set for two, the



*"If you don't mind, Jan, I'll run along now." Nick's voice was cool and indifferent. A while ago he had kissed her, had found her desirable, but Jan knew that it was all over now. He would never come back.*

candles still flaring softly in their silver holders, the slim glasses of Benedictine, the filled coffee cups—

all of it seemed suddenly cold and forlorn and a little ridiculous. She remembered with a sick stab of pain

and shame the golden daffodil Nick had pinned in her hair. How absurd it must look!

"Sonia?" And Dirk frowned, in puzzled impatience, as if he had never heard the name before. "What has Sonia to do with this? Jan, I've never seen you so beautiful as you are to-night! Don't send me away—Jan, listen, I've tickets for the first night of 'Bright Danger.' Will you let me take you?"

The words, in Dirk's low, tender voice, still carried clearly in the quiet room. Her startled senses told her that this was too fantastic for belief. But looking up into Dirk's handsome face, seeing the new, half-startled adoration in his dark eyes, she had to believe he was entirely sincere.

"Are we or are we not going dancing?" Joe's cool voice said in the stillness.

"No. We're staying here," Bim Carter said decidedly. Joe shrugged and turned to the phonograph, Tommie and Bim began rolling back the rugs.

Dirk said instantly, "Answer me, Jan."

She ran a distracted hand through the soft gold-brown waves of her hair. "Answer what, you crazy Irishman?" she said, almost angrily. Nick had not spoken, Nick had not moved. Oh, why had this had to happen? If they had only gone quickly, if they had not even come!

Dirk laughed softly, caught her hand to his lips. "You've bewitched me, Jan." The slow, sliding measures of a tango drifted through the room, and Dirk remembered that Nick had been Jan's first guest, and waited a courteous moment for Nick to ask her to dance. But Nick only stood quietly, smiling over a fresh cigarette he had just lighted. A deeper chill froze around Jan's heart. It was all spoiled, spoiled!

Joe slid Molly into the dance. Tommie and Bim started for Jan. But Dirk was already beside her. He said swiftly, "Please, darling?" and Jan, numb with pain, went into his arms. To have handsome Dirk Ryan call her "darling" would have meant a great deal, a week ago. Now it was cruel mockery. Under Nick van Dyke's assured dark eyes, it seemed suddenly a little cheap.

"How could I have been so blind?" Dirk said dreamily as they danced. "You're the same girl I called my little sister. I came to ask you how to make Sonia like me better!" He laughed suddenly, his big arm tightened around her. "What a fool I was, Jan!"

"Dirk, you're insane!" she said sharply, her throat tight, aching with disappointment. "You're taking Sonia to 'Bright Danger'—I heard you ask her."

"Don't punish me, Jan. I was blind, but now I see!" Dirk exulted, in his mellow, tender Irish voice.

"How about cutting in?" Tommie's imperious hand rested on Dirk's shoulder. Dirk reluctantly let her go.

"Thanks for not giving me away," Tommie whispered as they danced. "I never wanted anything in my life quite so much as I wanted you to say you'd dine with me to-morrow night."

"Tommie, this is all so silly!" Jan said, conscious of Nick's dark eyes watching her, of Nick's arrogant height quiet and poised across the room. He could have cut in, she thought sickly, feverishly. He could, even now. But he didn't.

"I'll try, to-morrow night," Tommie's grim voice said over her head, "to convince you that I mean it!"

The music blurred into minors, stopped. Nick came toward her,

and her chilled heart leaped wildly in hope.

He said lightly in her ear, "This gang is a bit overpowering, don't you think, Jan? If you don't mind, I believe I'll run along now."

Tears that had been boiling in her heart crowded up into her throat. She tried fiercely to hold her voice steady, but it wavered forlornly.

"Nick, I—— Of course this must be unpleasant to you," she panted.

"Why, nonsense, my dear! Your friends are charming. But I wanted to see you alone, and any chance of that seems pretty well washed up now. Thanks for a delicious dinner and a delightful evening."

His voice was too cool, too lightly indifferent, she thought wretchedly. All spoiled, all of it. He had come once, he had kissed her a few times and seemed to find her desirable and sweet, but now it was all over. He would not come again.

"Run along back to your guests, Jan. No, don't bother, I can find my way out. Good night," he said pleasantly, and before she could protest, he had turned and left her.

He didn't care, he didn't care, she thought feverishly. He had said nothing of seeing her again, he had not asked to be allowed to come back. When he had gone, she put her cold face down into icy hands, and a dull, numb sickness started at her brain and crept freezingly down her whole body.

She told herself furiously that she had no right to care so much. What did she know of Nick van Dyke, really? A few hours of murmured conversation here, a few kisses, what basis was that on which to build a whole gossamer structure of dreams and shy hopes? Well, the gossamer was torn now. The radiance of what might have been was dulled almost before her trembling heart had

had time to realize its rich, shining beauty.

Tommie Wayne was beside her, a frown pulling his black brows together over his searching gray eyes.

"Does it mean so much to you, dear?" he said, very low. "Don't worry, Jan. He'll be back."

Jan gave him one desperate, agonized look. "He won't ever come back," she said, and turning unsteadily, went into her bedroom and shut the door.

New shadows lay deep around the burning beauty of Jan's blue eyes when Tommie came in the next night to take her to the Waldorf for dinner and dancing. But Tommie, at his brilliant best, pinned a corsage of fragrant gardenias against the shoulder of the black-and-silver dinner dress and stood back to admire the effect.

"The sketches went over in a big way," he told her jubilantly. "I delivered the last three to-day, and got an extravagant check."

"That's grand, Tommie," Jan said sincerely, trying to ignore the long drag of a day that had failed to bring her any word from Nick van Dyke.

"It's all your fault. I'd have chucked them long ago if you hadn't kept me at them. When the whole batch is paid for, I'm going to buy you a Fifth Avenue bus to celebrate!" Tommie promised.

"But where would I keep a Fifth Avenue bus in this apartment, Tommie?" Jan made herself ask innocently.

"How about buying us a big enough apartment so that we could keep one?" he said soberly, almost under his breath. "Mr. and Mrs. Wayne."

But Jan drew back, almost blinded with pain. She said pitifully, very low, "Please, Tommie. It's too late!"

Color ebbed sharply from Tommie's brown face. "You don't mean that, Jan!"

But Jan, trembling, a little faint with longing and hurt, remembering the passionate fire of Nick's kisses on her mouth, shut her eyes and said no more.

Dirk Ryan, resplendent in white tie and tails, presented himself to escort her to the first night of "Bright Danger"; not once did he mention Sonia Arloff. He watched Jan instead of the play, his attentive, handsome head was constantly bent to catch her faintest murmur of a word. When the play was finished, he took her jealously away, to dance at the Rainbow Room, happily conscious that now he could demand all Jan's attention, all her dances. She told him a sleepy good night at three o'clock, a little dizzily.

Fantastic as it seemed, Dirk had forgotten Sonia. Either he was the most skillful actor in the world or he was well on the way to being genuinely in love with Jan. Two weeks before, his devotion would have meant incredulous delight. Now, it seemed meaningless and a little flat. No word from Nick, no word from Nick, her aching heart said over and over. Beside the bleakness, the finality of that, Dirk Ryan was only a handsome shadow, whose mellow, Irish voice said words that could not dispel her suffering.

Saturday night, Bim Carter, Molly Brant and her Joe, were waiting when Jan got home. Bim wanted Jan for dinner, he said, in his deep, growling voice. Jan stared at his pleasant, bulldog face, and wondered what was happening to her.

"Is this a put-up job between you and Dirk and Tommie?" she demanded suspiciously.

"What do you mean, put-up job?" Bim growled.

Joe Prague put in neatly, "Jan, have mercy on this big hulk. He's been mooning around like a lost soul ever since we barged in here the night Van Dyke was here."

Bim's big face reddened, but his blue eyes under the crest of stubborn fair hair were unwavering on Jan's face.

Jan's lip shook a little at the sharp stab of Joe's careless words. The night Van Dyke was here! She said very gently, almost inaudibly, "I see. If you'll wait while I change, I'll be glad to go with you, Bim."

A square silver box sat in a swirl of wide satin ribbon on Jan's dressing table. Dirk's gift, probably. She tried not to let her eyes touch it while she dressed, but when she was ready, she opened the box, and stood for a long moment, her cold fingers caressing the satin softness. That box held one magnificent green orchid, that had come by messenger. The engraved card said only, "Thanks again for a delightful evening. Nick van Dyke."

Paying his respects to his hostess, Jan thought bitterly. Doing his duty by a girl who couldn't win the one man she wanted, the girl to whom other men's devotion had come too late. The orchid's frail loveliness would wither, and the beauty of the dream Nick van Dyke's kisses had brought to flower in her heart, would die with it.

Jan's beautiful eyes were heavy with tears she could not let fall when she went out to Bim.

He did his best. He kept Jan's gallant smile firmly fixed on the sweetness of her mouth. He found a gorgeous Chinese restaurant, where flowering almond and priceless China tea and rare incense all richened the air of their silk-walled private room. He bought her a great bunch of wet, sweet violets, and litchi nuts and



*If she could only stop crying! If she could only know that Nick would come again, would be once more his charming, wonderful self!*

strange Chinese candies, and gruffly pushed into her protesting hands a beautifully embroidered Chinese coat of a heavenly blue brocade so

stiff it would stand alone. He tried to kiss her good night, and patted her comfortingly when she gently refused.

She shrank from getting up the next morning, to a long, empty Sunday. She was trying to force herself to sleep again, when the telephone beside her bed rang sharply. She cuddled the receiver listlessly against her ear, half expecting, dreading, to hear Tommie Wayne's voice.

But Nick van Dyke's amused, clipped tones came mildly to her incredulous ears.

"You're not still in bed, you lazy little thing!"

A hot wave of blinding joy blazed through Jan.

"Who—who is this?" she gasped, though every wild, thrilling nerve in her body told her instantly who it was.

"Nick, of course," his agreeable voice said smoothly. "Could you be tempted by a long drive up into Westchester and dinner this evening at a nice little inn that overlooks the Palisades?"

"But Nick, I—I——" Jan began, breathlessly.

"Never mind," Nick said indulgently, laughing a little. "I'll stop for you in an hour."

When he came, he reached swiftly for both her hands. "This has been the longest week I ever lived, Jan," he said simply.

She could only look up at him, her eyes brimming with sweetness and joy and peace after pain. He touched her soft mouth with a suddenly shaking big finger, said contentedly:

"You've missed me, too. I was afraid your friends would keep you so busy you'd have forgotten me."

Forget him? Ah, never, never, Jan's happy heart vowed deeply.

Glory, glory, that whole perfect day. The drive through the spring sweetness of Westchester woods, Nick's hand holding Jan's small fingers locked in his as she sat close be-

side him, their rush of words, their sudden silences, Nick's special smile, caressing and warm, turning often hungrily to her glowing face—she was almost stifled by this tide of richness and joy that seemed unbearably sweet.

The river sparkled blue and serene, under thin, windy sunshine, with the Palisades starkly clear across the blue. The inn in Westchester, when they came cold and hungry to its hospitable door, gave them candle flame and pungent wood fire, delicious hot food and the shy sweetness of crocus and hyacinth and spring beauties to grace their table. And afterward, they left the low, oak-beamed room, to stand on the wide veranda and watch a great golden moon slide up the sky above dark Westchester hills. Jan, very still under the caressing big arm, lifted her dream-dazzled face to the delight in Nick's watching eyes, and slowly, without words, his dark head bent until the fiery worship of his kiss could claim her mouth.

### CHAPTER III.

Now Nick came often to Jan's apartment. Dirk and Bim were grimly intent on cutting him out, and Nick arrogantly, imperturbably refused to be cut. He said nothing, he never showed jealousy, but Jan was quick to feel his growing irritation against Dirk and Bim. Oddly, though, his most pointed dislike seemed to fall on Tommie, who came rarely, stayed only briefly, and seemed to have accepted with quiet finality Jan's word that his offer of marriage had come too late. Jan would not let herself think of Tommie in those radiant days. The thinning of his hard young face, the hurt that dwelt in the narrowed gray eyes that followed her every move-



ment—these things bothered Jan, shadowed her happiness.

Nick called her one day at the agency, to say in his confident, clipped way, "Jan, there's a swank party at the Versailles Thursday night. Tails and white ties, and gay gowns—a glittery affair."

It was nice of him to let her know what to expect, she thought happily. And the little nest-egg some instinct of caution had kept her tucking away week by week, would allow her to have a very grand new gown.

She would not trust the shop to deliver the preciousness of the beautiful white-and-silver frock and its shining accessories. She carried them home with her, and gloated over them joyously. The gown fitted her so suavely, and flared enchantingly around the silver slippers. The absurd scrap of silver hat was outrageously flattering perched on her shimmering gold-brown head.

On the day of the party, she dashed gayly home after work, planning a leisurely bath, a leisurely donning of thin lingerie and the new gown.

Perfumed, powdered, every shining gold-brown curl in exquisite order, she was ready at last for the white dress. She went singing to her closet, glorying in the happy evening ahead, with Nick's pride in her making the gay hours perfect.

Her eyes dilated sharply. The gown was gone. The gown, the silver wrap, the slippers—all gone.

Carelessly pinned to the sleeve of an office dress was a scrap of paper. Jan unpinned it with shaking fingers. Premonition was cold in her heart. Tears blurred the scrawled words on the white paper, and she shook them from her eyes.

**DARLING JAN:** I knew you wouldn't mind if I borrowed your white gown. I spoiled my only decent rag, and Joe is

showing me off to-night at a very ultra party his folks are giving. Inspection by the in-laws frightens me enough if I look like a million. In the rags I had, I'd have looked like a counterfeit dime.

Will return your lovely gown to-morrow, of course. **MOLLY.**

Jan put her head down in shaking hands and sobbed. Should she telephone Nick she was ill, that she had to work late, that she had wrenched her ankle? She wanted so desperately to go on this gay party, but oh, she had wanted him to be proud of her, had wanted him to know she understood and appreciated his tactful suggestions as to the proper kind of clothes!

She ransacked her closet, blinded with tears. She had been so happily confident of the white-and-silver gown's superb beauty, she had not even thought of a possible alternative. She had nothing even remotely resembling a formal, brilliant gown. Until now, she had not needed that kind of gown. A dinner frock, a modest evening dress, had been enough.

She had nothing, she thought feverishly, except the black dinner dress with its necklace and girdle of brilliants. Either she must wear that, or somehow make excuses to Nick not to go.

Defiantly, at last, she slid the black gown over her carefully dressed head. A wide band of solid brilliants fastened high about her slim throat like a slave collar, narrow cuffs of the shining stones held great, flowing, gossamer sleeves tight around her delicate wrists, a flashing girdle of the stones circled her slender waist. But always the relentless fact that it was only a dinner gown drummed at her heart.

She carefully wiped away tears, added another reckless dash of lipstick, set rhinestone stars across the

satin shimmer of her hair. She looked well enough, she told herself impatiently. The dress was pretty, becoming. What if Nick had seen her wear it before?

But it was all useless. She was not dressed as Nick undoubtedly expected her to be.

His first surprised, involuntary lift of eyebrow when he saw her, confirmed her suspicions.

"Nick, I can't go," she said wretchedly. "This is the only gown I have to wear. I thought I could brazen it out, but I can't. I had such a beautiful gown, and to-day" a sob choked her—"to-day, Molly Brant came in and borrowed it without even asking me." Tears rolled helplessly down her cheeks.

Nick put his arms around her. "Precious little baby girl, that's nothing to be so utterly miserable about!" he said coaxingly, smiling anxiously down at her. "You look adorable, and if you want to go to this party, we'll go. If you'd rather not, it's not worth even one of these tears you're wasting!"

His generosity, his gentleness, broke her completely. She could only drop her aching head forward on his shoulder, her trembling body held closely in his arms, and fight desperately for control.

"Powder your sweet nose," Nick urged stoutly, "let me pin these orchids where they belong, and let's go!"

All the way to the Versailles in the Van Dyke car whose chauffeur called Nick "Mister Nichoals," he held her circled by one big arm, his other hand covering warmly both hers. When they went into the glittering place, Jan's small head was high, her eyes were too brilliant, Nick's orchids quivered to her rapid breathing.

She was the only girl in the packed, noisy room who was not in formal dress.

Before they ordered, Nick sent a hurried waiter away, leaned closer to cover her hand with consoling big fingers. He hesitated, searching her overbright eyes, her set, smiling mouth. Then he said, his voice very soft:

"Darling, would you be happier not to stay?"

And Jan, on a great, hard-caught sob of gratitude, said thickly, "Oh, yes, Nick. Please!"

If she had only been brave enough to face it through, she thought sickly. She had been such a baby, such a fool! Nick had pitied her, he had been gentle and tender beyond belief, he had even scolded her softly for being so broken about it. But the whole evening that might have been so gay, so radiant, so glamorous, had been ruined.

Nick had said, a little grimly, when he brought her home, "Jan, don't you think it's about time you clamped down on this wild gang you go around with? This shouldn't have happened, any of it. You've let them walk on you until you're completely at their mercy!"

Well, that was true, too. But she could find no words to tell him so. She could only sit in stricken silence and try to still the shaking of her icy hands.

Nick, concerned and pitying, saw how white and exhausted she was. He lifted the small hands, kissed them lightly.

"Go to bed now, darling, and forget all this unhappiness. Sweet dreams, my Jan!"

But he had not asked to come again. In the sophisticated world where Nick van Dyke moved with such ease, there must be dozens of



*The blood seemed to drain out of Jan's heart as she saw Nick standing in the doorway. Her dressing gown was torn open over her nightgown, her hair was wildly disheveled, and Tommie was sprawling on the couch.*

girls to whom the loss of one formal gown would not spell tragedy. Perhaps, Jan thought, cringing from even the thought, Nick could tell one of those girls about this amusing

little disaster, and they would laugh together about it!

When the door had closed out his concerned face, Jan went slowly into

the bedroom. She stood for a long moment before the mirror, looking with tear-blurred eyes at the black gown that had not been good enough. If she could only stop crying! If she could know that Nick would come again, would be once more his charming, wonderful self!

Oh, what was the use! Wearily, she took off the black gown, bathed her pale face in icy water, stood with a towel pressed in silence against her burning eyes and shaking mouth. With a long sigh, she slid out of the lingerie she had put on a few hours ago so joyously, slipped over her shining head her nightgown, a trailing, shimmering thing of exquisitely embroidered white satin.

Her bell rang sharply, twice, three times. Had Nick come back, to be sure she was all right? Color blazed up into her face, her breath quickened. She snatched up the blue brocaded Chinese coat Bim had bought her, belted it snugly at her slim waist, slid her white feet into tiny blue mules.

She opened the door a cautious crack.

Tommie Wayne, swaying a little, pushed it open, put out a hot hand and clutched at her shoulder for support.

"Had to see you, Jan," he mumbled thickly. "Let me in."

"But, Tommie, I'm not dressed," she protested.

"Who cares? Had to see you," he muttered, pushing past her but still clinging to her shoulder.

She stared at him uncertainly. His brown face was drawn and haggard, he had not shaved to-day. Usually so immaculately groomed, his collar now was open at the throat, his tie a draggled string hanging crookedly across his rumpled shirt front. He wore no hat, his

brown hair was wildly disheveled. Jan could feel the heat of his hand scorching through the robe to her shoulder.

"What's the matter, Tommie?" she demanded. "Won't it wait until tomorrow?"

"No." He stumbled in beside her, a loose, shambling awkwardness about his knees.

"Where are you, Jan?" he muttered anxiously, in a hoarse, thick voice. The reek of liquor on his breath struck her full in the face.

She stepped back from him. So that was it!

"You're drunk, Tommie!" she said sharply. "How dare you come here in such a condition!"

Tommie reeled blindly. His hands groped out, seekingly, his lurch brought his foot against the couch, and he sat down abruptly.

"Jan, where are you?"

"I'm here, Tommie. What's wrong with you, anyhow?" she said stiffly, reluctantly coming close enough so that his groping hands found her.

The hands closed instantly, dragging her down. He sagged back on the couch, pulling Jan with him. Helplessly, she struggled for a moment against the steel-strong arms holding her so fiercely close.

"Tommie, listen to Jan," she said softly. "Let me go, and I'll sit here beside you, close, where you can touch me. Please, for Jan?"

No other appeal of hers had ever gone unanswered by Tommie Wayne. But now he seemed not to find any significance in her words.

"Never let you go," he said fiercely, blindly seeking her mouth. "Loved you always, Jan—love you now. Fool to let Van Dyke have you. He's just amusing himself with you. Never be a fool again."

The thick voice went on and on. Crushed down by his arms, Jan's head was drawn helplessly closer and closer to his. He kissed her wildly, hotly, his mouth burning against hers, as if he could not have enough of the sweetness of her lips. As if the touch of her slim body against his own had set flame to a raging passion which was no longer under his control.

Jan could hardly breathe. Strength drained out of her, and anger, and in their place came the most devastating terror she had ever known.

A sound at the door got through somehow to Tommie, even before it reached her. His arms involuntarily relaxed, and instantly Jan was free from him. Her frightened eyes swung a little blindly toward the door she had not had time to close, and her gaze sharpened there to an appalling clarity. All the blood seemed to drain out of her frozen heart, and she saw, in a flash of hideous brightness, how she must appear. Her dressing gown torn open at the throat over the trailing satin of her gown, her hair wildly disheveled, Tommie himself sprawling on the couch beside her.

"Nick!" The stricken word fell starkly across the hushed room.

Her stricken whisper reached even Tommie's blurred senses. He waved a hand protestingly, his impious, thick chuckles shattered the stillness as pelting stones might shatter a mirror.

"Van Dyke?" Tommie fumbled. "Tell him—I got here—first——"

Nick. Nick. Oh, speak. Say something. Anything. Listen to me! Her mind was a babble of imploring words that died before they could be born. No words now could bridge the gulf that stretched wider and wider between them as she watched in silent agony.

Nick might have been turned to stone. The hand he had lifted to knock at the door before he saw what it revealed, was still lifted. Something infinitely precious to Jan had died in his brown eyes, something ugly had set a new flame glittering there. His set face was like a stone mask, but even as Jan watched, a bitter understanding lifted one corner of his mouth in a sneer.

Without a word, he turned away. And Jan, in stricken, helpless silence, had to let him go, taking with him her last hope of happiness.

TE BE CONTINUED.

I WONDER WHY I FEEL SO LOW, I DIDN'T OVER-DO IT.

JUST TAKE AN ALKA-SELTZER, JOE. -- AND THERE'LL BE NOTHING TO IT.

IF I COULD ONLY EAT THE THINGS I LIKE, AND HAVE NO FEAR

THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO, AND ALKALIZE, MY DEAR.

MORNING MISERY

SOUR STOMACH

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# Girl in a Million

By Walter Marquiss

**T**HERE was a stir in the court-room as whispers sped around that the jury was about to file in. Lynda Carver stiffened in her seat. Her eyes turned again to fix intently upon the lean, masculine face of the young defendant, sitting a few feet away across the rail.

Anxiety, even chill apprehension, marked Bradford Rhodes's strained expression. Yet there was courage, too. A smile curved his pale lips—wistful and infinitely grateful.

There was a light in his eyes as he peered down fleetingly at a crumpled note which an attendant had passed to him only a minute or two before.

Whatever happens now, remember that I believe in you!  
LYNDA

A door opened abruptly. Twelve men filed into the jury box. With a flutter of sound and movement, court officials and spectators rose to their feet. They rustled down again

when Judge Carver, tall, stern and gray, mounted the bench. Judge Carver was Lynda's father. He leaned forward.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict?"

The foreman stood up. He was a grizzled, stringy farmer from up in Dawson township. Watching him, lips slightly apart, Lynda was scarcely aware that she was holding her breath, while her heart pounded madly.

"We, the jury, find the defendant not guilty!"

Lynda sagged in her chair, suddenly weak and quivering. Tears sparkled in her wide brown eyes as they met Bradford's. Pulsing hearts shared the joy which was all the greater because it was so unexpected.

She was unconscious of the loud buzz of angry voices that greeted the foreman's announcement. The smart *rap-rap-rap* of the judge's gavel seemed to come from a long distance.

Then her eyes were on her father. His features looked harder, more grim than before. His voice was clipped and brittle.

"Gentlemen of the jury, the court is frankly amazed at your verdict. You have chosen to ignore the preponderance of the evidence so ably presented in this trial."

The men in the jury box stirred uneasily. Dead silence dropped upon the crowded courtroom. Lynda stared up at her father with a rush of indignation and anger.

"You have heard the evidence presented by the prosecution. And

you have heard the scurrilous efforts of the defense to malign and undermine the character of a respected, honorable citizen of this community."

Lynda glanced at the president of the Piatville State Bank, Henry Milsap, who sat with the prosecuting attorney. Of distinguished appearance, with the encroaching gray of middle years, Milsap sat with head bowed, complacent, smug. Again, Lynda felt a wave of instinctive dislike for him.

"Thus," the judge continued harshly, "you have elected to deal with a crime that resulted in the wrecking of the Piatville State Bank and the ruin of hundreds of its depositors. You have found this defendant not guilty. The court can only add its regret that it does not possess the power to set aside your

verdict, and decree such punishment as the crime deserves!"

Lester Rush, who was small and wiry, quick of movement, was on his feet. He was Bradford's attorney.

"Your honor, I protest your remarks to the jury! May I remind you that my client has been acquitted, fully and legally, in

fair trial?" he said with feeling.

"Your protest is noted, Mr. Rush," Judge Carver retorted. He looked down at the court clerk. "You may enter it. The jury is free to go. The defendant is discharged."

It took Lynda all of ten minutes to make her way out of the courtroom in the crush of departing spectators. They crowded the wide



corridor outside, waiting, muttering. An angry buzz greeted the jurymen as they emerged.

Police officials forced a lane through the press, escorting the jurymen to the main entrance. Lynda turned the other way. She went out into sunlight, streaming into a rear courtyard, where her roadster was parked.

A tall young man came toward her from an angle. Obviously, he had been waiting for her. She stopped to face him with an anxious, tremulous smile.

"Brad!" she murmured. "I'm awfully sorry about what my father just said."

He looked down, frowning slightly. There was pain in the nervous lines of his face. A long sigh escaped him.

"Oh, I don't know that you can blame him, Lynda," he said. "The circumstantial evidence was pretty strong. It was only luck and that last speech of Lester Rush's that got me off at all!"

"But you aren't guilty, Brad!"

His smile lighted his whole face.

"It's sweet to know you believe that. I'm afraid you're the only one who does!"

"But they will, Brad. This will all blow over in just a little while, and everything will be all right."

But it didn't blow over. A month, two months after his trial, Bradford Rhodes was still a marked man, avoided by the whole town.

Most of them had lost money through the crime of which he had been accused. None of them would forget the circumstantial evidence of his guilt. Even Lynda's unswerving loyalty could not outweigh the ghastly fact that the evidence was condemning.

She had been proud of Brad, of

his rapid rise in the Piatville State Bank—a junior executive at the age of twenty-four. But tragedy had followed swiftly on the heels of his latest promotion.

She knew only the details which had been brought out at the trial. Brad had been able to supply nothing further, for he was as much at sea as she was.

He had been intrusted with fifty thousand dollars in negotiable bonds, to be delivered to a Howard Graham in Chicago. The errand completed, he had met a vivacious blond girl who had once been a fellow employee in the bank. The chance encounter with Florence Parsons had proved disastrous.

Brad had taken the girl to dinner and the theater. The next morning he had called at the home of friends whom she was visiting, and she had accompanied him back to Piatville in his car.

A week later the world had seemed to explode under Brad's feet, and under Lynda's, because she loved him. Howard Graham had popped up in Piatville with the declaration that the bonds which Brad had delivered to him were forgeries.

There had been hectic sessions. President Milsap had maintained with dignity, that the bonds he had intrusted to young Rhodes were genuine. Laura Stone, his secretary, frightened and hesitant, had corroborated his statements.

With her own hands, she had taken the genuine bonds from the vault and given them to the president. She had seen him seal them in a heavy envelope. Her own hands had delivered this same envelope, intact, to Bradford.

From the first, suspicion had fastened on Brad. The accusation stated that on the way to Chicago, he had substituted the counterfeits



for the genuine bonds. This suspicion became conviction in the minds of investigating officials when the sheriff made a surprise raid on the home of Florence Parsons.

Obviously forewarned, the Parsons girl had fled from town. But

meager living by attending the counter of a roadside lunch wagon on the outskirts of the town.

There Lynda called for him in her car. She picked up a tawny-haired young man whose broad shoulders were bent as if by a terrific burden,



*"Oh, Lynda darling," he said hoarsely, "what made you think I could ever give you up?"*

in her panic and haste she had left behind her, hidden in a bureau drawer, approximately one half of the stolen bonds!

Rumors had leaked out that there was trouble at the bank. A run had flared like a prairie fire, and before it could be checked, the bank had closed its doors.

Brad was arrested, and presently brought to trial. And now, two months after acquittal, impoverished and disheartened, he was earning a

whose blue eyes brooded with anguish, whose spirit was bowed down almost to the point of breaking. Just to look at him brought an agonizing stab of pity, and resentment against the people who had done this thing to him.

They rode in comparative silence, far out into the country. Lynda, open and honest to the core, hated this need of meeting him in secret. But to invite him to her home was unthinkable. For her stern, rigid

father had not bent one iota from his conviction that the young man was guilty.

She parked the car at a point where a lonely country road edged a park. They alighted, walked through a shallow ravine, and sat down together on the bank of the wide river. Brooding in silence, Brad stared out at the yellow water, while his hands kneaded nervously together between his knees.

Lynda watched his profile anxiously. His tense bearing suggested that something throbbed in his mind, something which he was reluctant to bring forth in words.

"I still believe," he burst out at last, "as surely as I'm alive, that Milsap substituted those bogus bonds before Miss Stone gave them to me."

"You don't think it was Graham, then?"

"No, I don't. It's obvious that the whole thing was a frame-up against me, so that Milsap could get away clear with those bonds. Why did Flossie Parsons just happen to bob up in Chicago, to be seen with me and ride back to Piatville with me?" He shook his head and drew a long breath. "It's too pat, Lynda, too pat!"

Again he brooded in silence, while Lynda watched him. She longed to say something that would comfort him, but in her own discouragement, she could think of nothing.

"Oh, I was a fool, of course," he muttered, half to himself. "I was a fool to let Milsap get away with it the time I found that worthless note of his. It was practically a forgery, but he explained it so plausibly and returned the fifteen thousand dollars——"

His voice faded out and fifteen or twenty seconds slipped by before he

added, "I couldn't believe then, that Milsap was really dishonest!"

He seemed wholly unaware that she was holding one of his hands in both of hers, leaning toward him, looking up at his averted face. Again he shook his head dispiritedly.

"I haven't been able to find out a thing since the trial. People who might be able to help me, won't even talk to me. Even Laura Stone sent out word that she wasn't at home when I went to her house, though she knew I saw her through the window! And, of course, nobody knows what became of Flossie Parsons."

Lynda sighed wearily.

"I haven't been able to learn anything, either, Brad."

He turned to face her. Swift fire leaped feverishly into his eyes, chasing away the brooding shadows.

"Lynda, you've got to stop it!" he said sharply.

"Stop it, Brad?" She stared at him.

"You've got to stop trying to help me! It's so futile. Everybody in this town believes I am guilty, and hates me. You'll have them looking at you the same way they look at me, and you'll be an outcast, too! You can't fight this kind of thing, Lynda. It's too subtle, too insidious! Even my own sister believes I'm guilty!"

She looked at him, a slow, wistful smile quivering on her lips. She shook her head, almost imperceptibly.

"What kind of girl would I be, Brad, if I didn't stand by the man I love?"

"Don't talk of love!" he cried, his tone sharp with anguish. He jerked his hand away from her grasp. "It's so impossible!"

"What is impossible, Brad?"

"Oh, it's been hounding me night and day, all these weeks." He rubbed his shaking fingers through his disordered hair. Agony burned in his eyes. "Gnawing the very heart out of me! I can't go on like this. I'm beaten, broken!"

"Brad dear, please!"

"I'm not going to see you again, Lynda," he said huskily. "I can't let you ruin your life for me!"

"But we love each other, Brad! What else matters?"

"Everything else matters!" he cried, almost savagely. "I have thought it over from every possible angle, and it simply can't be! The whole world is against us, against our love. Lynda, there's only one thing left. I—I've got to give you up."

His voice broke. He bit hard on his lower lip to still its trembling, and turned abruptly away from her.

Her heart was throbbing heavily, with intense pain. Tears filled her wide brown eyes.

"Then, Brad," she said falteringly, "you don't love me enough."

"Don't love you enough! Oh, my darling, don't talk like that!"

"How can you, if you're willing to give me up?"

"I'm not willing. I've got to! It's for you! Dearest, can't you see?"

"I can't see anything," she cried passionately, "except that we're not cowards! We can't turn and run because people are unjust. Oh, Brad darling, I believe in you and love you."

"Lynda, don't!"

He was trembling from head to foot. He got unsteadily to his feet and leaned heavily against a tree, his head drooping. Lynda rose beside him, and entwined both arms around him.

"I love you, Brad!" she whispered brokenly.

He looked down at her. His face was a battleground of conflicting emotions. All at once, as though motivated by something more powerful than his will, he jerked her close to him. His arms closed about her shoulders, almost crushing her slender form.

"Dearest! Dearest!" he groaned.

She tilted her face toward him. Their eyes met for a long, throbbing moment. Then Brad bent his head swiftly and his lips captured hers.

Locked in his embrace, she felt herself sinking. Brad sat down on the ground, holding her on his knees, her head cradled in the crook of his elbow.

He kissed her again, lips cleaving to hers as though he could never let her go. She felt the hot blood rushing into her cheeks; her brain was fairly reeling with the mad ecstasy of his kiss.

When he freed her lips at last, she lay inert in his arms, breathing more quietly, her eyes closed. She lifted the fluttering lids and looked up at him. "Oh, Lynda darling," he said hoarsely, "what made you think I could ever give you up?"

There was evidence of returning strength in his lean, expressive features. The light in his eyes was clear again.

"I love you, Lynda, my dearest dear," he whispered. "I want you more than I've ever wanted anything in the world. You've given me strength and courage. I can fight now, sweetheart, for you!"

"And with me, Brad!"

"Yes. But there's still a vast obstacle between us."

"What obstacle?"

"We can't be married, you know, until——"

"Then I'll wait for you, darling, until we can be married, no matter how long I have to wait."



*"Lynda, I can't keep it back any longer," Laura Stone cried out. "Bradford Rhodes did not steal those bonds!"*

There was a deep breathlessness in the look with which he regarded her. His arms tightened convulsively around her.

"You would do that?" he whispered, his voice shaken with a kind of awe.

"I love you," she answered simply.

She rode back to town after she had left him at the lunch wagon, still tingling with the memory of his good-by kiss. In her being was a deep, all-pervading hunger for him.

And yet her spirit burned with a fierce pride in him—pride in the strength of his character which had sent her away from him with only a good-night kiss that trembled with its infinite tenderness.

The tempest of her emotions had stirred up a faint headache. She stopped at a drug store for a box of headache tablets.

As she crossed the sidewalk, a slender girl came toward her—Laura Stone. Lynda paused to

speaking with her, but Laura swerved suddenly, and crossed the street.

Lynda's cheeks flushed, and she bit hard on her lower lip. She was positive that Laura had seen her and had deliberately turned aside to avoid her. Was this the first sign that the people of Piatville were ostracizing her because of her loyalty to the man she loved?

She lifted her head proudly, defiantly, and marched into the store.

At home, she found that her father had not yet returned from his office. She went up to her room to refresh her faded make-up, and to swallow the needed pill. Returning downstairs, she jerked nervously as a sharp peal of the doorbell rasped through the house.

She saw Bertha, the maid, cross the hall and open the door to admit a statuesque, grim-visaged woman. Lynda went forward to greet the caller.

"Hello, Gertrude."

Gertrude Milsap did not smile. Her eyes were bright, sharp and piercing. She spoke harshly, accusingly.

"Lynda, did I see you this afternoon with Bradford?"

"If you saw me, you probably saw me with him."

"You don't even try to deny it?"

"Why should I deny it?" Lynda demanded.

"I can't see how you'd be very proud of it! Don't you realize what your association with him is doing to your reputation?"

Lynda's temper stirred.

"I don't know," she retorted sharply, "that I even care about my reputation in a town where a sister can turn against her brother!"

"He is not my brother!" said Gertrude Milsap. "Do you think I will claim any relationship with a man who tried to throw his own vicious

guilt upon the shoulders of my husband? A man who could make love to a woman like Flossie Parsons and——"

"Don't you dare say that!" Lynda flared. "It's not true!"

"I did not come here to argue with you, Lynda. I came to tell you that I have just left your father's office. I felt called upon to inform him of this disgraceful affair of yours!"

"Is that all you have to say?"

Mrs. Milsap shrugged. "Yes, I think it is." She turned toward the door and went out.

Lynda stood in the window as Brad's sister drove away. A painful sense of breathlessness swept over her. It was partly due to anger, partly to a growing panic.

Lynda never had felt close to her austere father. In many ways he had always seemed like a stranger to her. And now, with an inevitable scene before her, she needed all her courage.

But she had her pride and her love for Brad to give her courage. She was outwardly calm when she saw Judge Carver drive into the graveled lane, a few minutes later. Within, she was quaking with mingled fear and determination.

He came in with long, purposeful strides, his face set and grim. He paused just inside the door, when he saw her.

"Come in here, Lynda," he said crisply, and led the way into his library. She followed him. Before he spoke again, he sat down behind a long desk and adjusted his horn-rimmed spectacles. Then he looked at her through them searchingly.

"Lynda, what is this I hear about your being seen with Bradford Rhodes?"

"What have you heard?" she asked nervously.

"Just that. Is it true?"

"Yes."

He let out a sharp breath, frowning.

"I did not believe it! I thought my daughter had some pride!"

Lynda bit her lip. A faint stirring of anger helped to reënforce her determination.

"I have seen him several times since the trial," she said quietly. "I shall see him again!"

"And why do you persist——"

"You ask me why?" she interrupted. There was something almost ethereal in her lovely countenance as she looked at him. "Because I love him!"

His jaw sagged slowly, and he stared incredulously at her.

"Preposterous!" he burst out. "I'll not have it! This man is a felon!"

"He was cleared of being a felon, father, in your court!"

"That is beside the point. The point is, as long as you remain in my house, Lynda, I expect you to be loyal to me and to my principles!"

She met his eyes. Her lips parted to speak, but closed without a sound. Her chin quivered, and smarting moisture gathered in her eyes.

"Very well," she murmured, almost inaudibly. She turned toward the door.

"Lynda!"

She looked around. Her father was standing behind the desk, leaning forward.

"Where are you going?"

"I don't know," she whispered. "I can't stay here!"

"Lynda"—he was now breathing heavily, and there was evidence of pain in his face—"Lynda, we're both badly worked up now. We'll say nothing more about it until we have had time to think!"

"I'm not worked up, father," Lynda returned. "And there is

nothing to think about. I—I can't be loyal to what you call your principles and, therefore, can't be content here. I—I'm going!"

"You're going to him," he demanded harshly.

She shook her head slowly.

"He'll not have me, until he's able to prove his innocence!"

Judge Carver's breath came unevenly. For once, he was burdened with a problem too deep for his judicial wisdom.

"Good-by, father," Lynda murmured. She went out of the library, and a half hour later, out of the house.

She sat by a window on the top floor of the Hotel Piat. The sun shone outside, but to Lynda, the whole world looked black and dismal.

Two dreary, lonely days had passed since the scene in her father's library. Last night she had seen Bradford. He had seemed so aloof; he hadn't even kissed her!

He had scolded her for leaving her father's home.

"You're making an awful mistake, Lynda. I'm not worth it!"

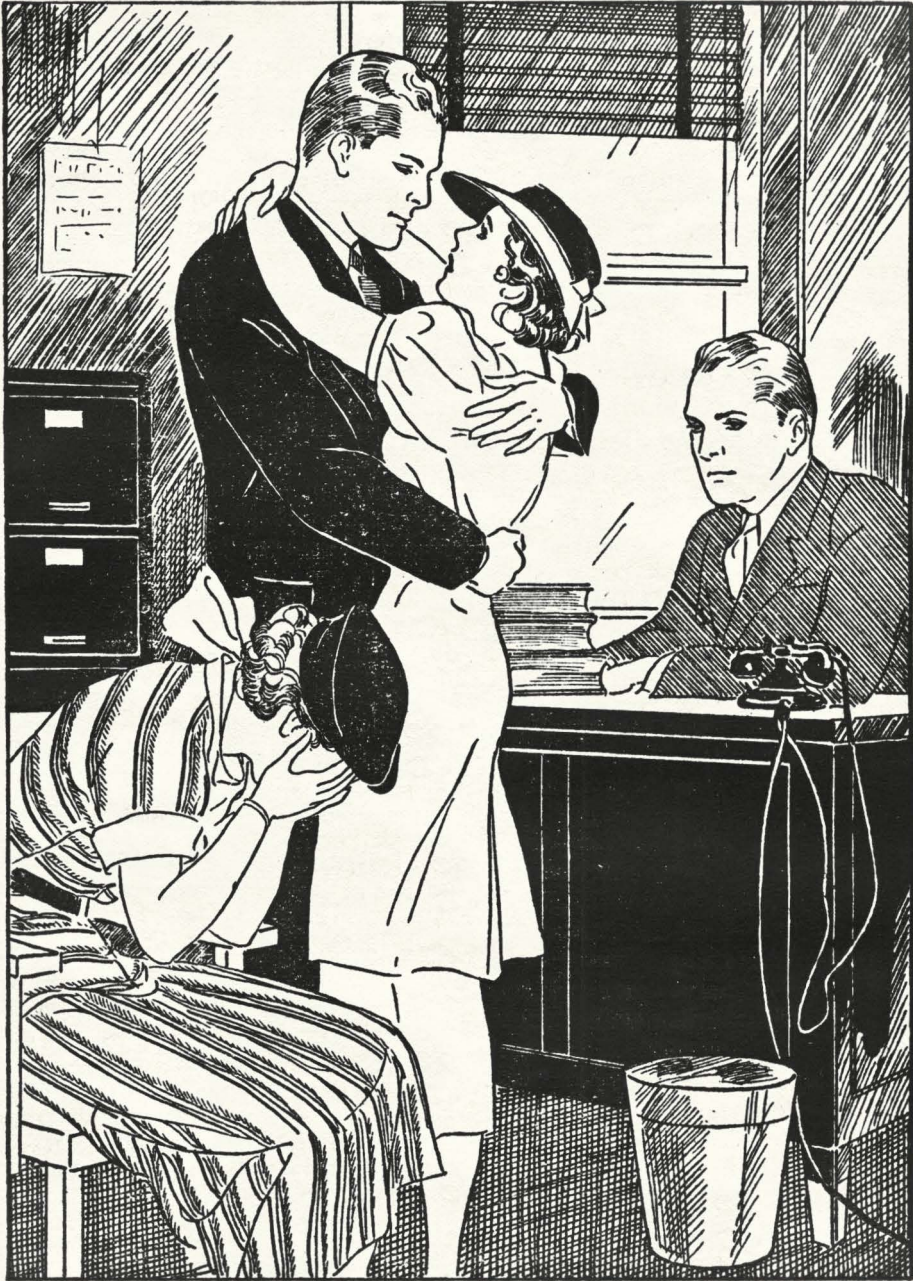
She had a tortured, dejected feeling that perhaps he was right. Perhaps nothing was worth the misery she was enduring.

Her father had phoned her during the morning, pleading, then almost commanding her to come home.

An hour later, a messenger had brought her an envelope. Inside was a substantial check with a brief note:

Until you come to your senses, you will probably need this. Your Father

Restlessness twitched at her nerves. She snapped to her feet, went out of the room, down into the



*Oblivious to the weeping girl, and to the fact that they were in Judge Carver's office, Bradford gathered Lynda close and kissed her with lingering tenderness.*

fresh, open air. A moment later she wished she had not come out, for Mrs. Brady, a friend of long stand-

ing, passed her by with an elaborate pretense at not seeing her.

Lynda turned to go back to the

hotel, drooping, miserable. As she came around a corner, she almost collided with a slender girl. The girl caught her breath sharply, then half whirled around, as if to flee. She stopped, and stood staring at Lynda with parted lips.

"Laura Stone!" Lynda cried, startled by the white, haggard expression. "What in the world is the matter?"

"Lynda, I've got to talk to you!" The words seemed to tumble out involuntarily, and once they were uttered, she stared wildly around her as though seeking some escape.

Lynda's heart was beating madly with intuitive excitement. She grasped Laura's hand in a tight grip.

"Come up to my room!"

They went together through the hotel lobby, and up to the sixth floor. Once in her room, Lynda sat looking at Laura's white, frightened face.

Laura glanced about her desperately. Then she looked at Lynda.

"So it's true," she gasped. "It's true that your father drove you away from home!"

"It's true, at least, that I'm not living at home," Lynda answered softly.

"You love him that much—enough to give up everything?"

"I'm afraid I do, Laura."

All at once, Laura put her hands over her face. She cried softly, while Lynda crossed to her and put a comforting hand on her shoulder. Laura looked up, wide-eyed.

"Lynda, I've been so miserable these weeks! Oh, it's all so unfair—so terribly unfair!"

Lynda held her breath. She couldn't speak for the mad racing of her heart.

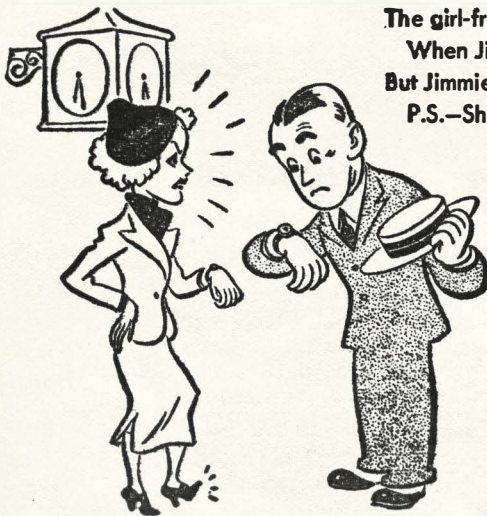
"Lynda, I—I can't keep it back any longer! Bradford Rhodes did not steal those bonds!"

"Wait!" Lynda cried. She ran across the room to the telephone. In a moment she had Brad on the wire.

"Brad—oh, Brad! I want you to meet me right away at my father's office! Don't ask why. Just come!"

She hung up the receiver, whirled back to Laura Stone.

"Come! We're going to the courthouse. You've got to tell my father what you started to tell me!"



The girl-friend made an awful fuss  
When Jimmie turned up late,  
But Jimmie brought her Beech-Nut Gum...  
P.S.—She kept the date!

Keep calm with



BEECH-NUT  
PEPPERMINT GUM  
is so good it's the most popular  
flavor of any gum sold in the United States.



Lynda stood at one end of her father's long desk. Brad was facing her, opposite. Judge Carver had not yet quite recovered from the young man's audacity in daring to come here.

Laura Stone sat in a chair beside the desk. Her face was white and drawn. She looked years older, and terribly frightened. The story she had to tell faltered from trembling lips.

"I—I just happened to slip into Mr. Milsap's office that day. I saw him sealing some bonds in a long envelope. Several other bonds were on his desk. The—the ones he gave Bradford Rhodes were the forgeries!"

"Why haven't you told this before?" Judge Carter demanded sharply. "Do you realize you committed perjury at the trial?"

She bit her lip, looking down, while tears streamed down her pale cheeks. Lynda felt a pang of pity for her.

"I—I didn't dare tell, because last summer, when my mother was so awfully sick, I—I stole some money from the bank. Mr. Milsap found

it out. It was thirty dollars. He—he replaced it, and told me if anything like that ever happened again, he'd send me to prison!

"When I saw him changing those bonds, he reminded me of what I had done. He said if I breathed a word, he would send me to prison."

Her low voice faded out. She sat crumpled in the chair, shaken with fear and shame.

Lynda was looking at Brad. The weeping girl was gone from her thoughts. She even lost awareness of the fact that she was in her father's office, with her father's eyes regarding her somberly.

She reached out her arms and groped through her tears. Bradford gathered her close and kissed her with lingering tenderness.

She was snatched back to earth by the sound of her father clearing his throat. She turned toward him.

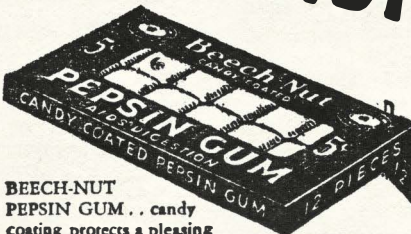
He dropped his eyes. He blinked down at his right hand, nervously fumbling with a long penholder.

"Lynda," he said huskily, "I guess the time has come for a gray-haired judge to admit he has been a

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stubborn old fool. I'm as ashamed of myself as I am proud of you."

Lynda tried to speak, but the words clogged in her throat. A sob of joy escaped her. Judge Carver looked up at Bradford Rhodes.

"Young man," he said crisply, "an apology would only insult you. All I can say is, not one girl in a million would have stood by you when every one else was against you. What I mean is, young man, you are getting a girl in a million!"

There was a light in Brad's lean face. The smile that crossed his lips was tremulous.

"You're telling me, sir!" he exclaimed, as he clasped the judge's

offered hand. Then he turned again to Lynda, whose eyes sparkled with crystal tears. Reverently, he bent to kiss her. Their lips clung for a glorious eternity. Once more, the judge's voice filtered through their heaven.

"Bradford"—his tones were gruff—"may I have your permission to kiss the bride?"

With a cry of happiness, Lynda flung her arms around her father's neck. The judge held her for a moment tenderly, then returned her to Bradford's waiting arms. He received her with a choked, "Dearest," and strained her to him, as though he'd never, never let her go.



### LOVERS' LANE

**I**N the canyons of the city,  
 When the dusk comes drifting down,  
 Where we hear above our heartbeats  
 All the noises of the town,  
 We stroll along the sidewalks,  
 Where the other lovers are—  
 From the canyons of the city,  
 We'll look up and see a star!

The first star! Wish upon it!  
 We both wish the same sweet thing—  
 A little chintz apartment,  
 A kettle, rug, a ring!  
 Where a lone tree sheds its darkness,  
 You kiss me once again,  
 And the canyons of the city  
 Are a happy lovers' lane!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES



# Close to the Stars

By Naomi Sell Talley

CYNTHIA RANDALL leaned on the rail of the S. S. *L'Estra* and watched the full moon of the tropics send a shimmering trail of quicksilver along the indigo water to the liner's side. This was so far away from her typewriter in Wyck & Blandingham's law offices, so far from musty law books and uninteresting briefs, that it seemed like a dream. It was too lovely to be true. Cynthia caught her breath with a slight sob.

"Does it always affect you that way?"

LS-4C

Without turning her head, Cynthia could see the shine of brass buttons and spick-and-span white linen beside her. Another ship's officer! They were like ants. Cynthia sighed resignedly and continued her contemplation of the night sky. Undoubtedly, it was the bald-headed one with the red nose. Had she spent her year's savings for this?

"Does what"—she tilted her chin slightly higher and away from the brass buttons—"affect me what way?"

"The moon," the cheerful voice re-

plied. The brass buttons moved a little closer and a white-sleeved arm was beside hers on the rail. "Does it always make you cry?"

Cynthia winked a tear into oblivion and swallowed.

"I'm not crying and it's not the moon and I don't like people to be so inquisitive," Cynthia told him. That ought to stop him.

"Well, well! So it's a man." The rich Irish brogue was teeming with sympathy. "Don't you like men?"

"I hate them," Cynthia promptly replied. "They're so conceited, they think they know everything. They don't care for anything but business, or else they're like the moon—full all the time."

"Ho, ho," the Irish voice broke into laughter. "Don't be so hard on them. Don't you know the moon isn't full all the time? To-night's the first time in a month. Give them a chance."

The laughter didn't sound at all like the bald head and red nose, and Cynthia turned her head the least bit. It wasn't. She lowered her chin slightly and looked again. His nose had an Irish tilt, and his mouth was good-humored.

"You might look at me," he was saying. "I don't know everything yet, and while I admit I'm a very valuable man around here, I'm not in the least conceited. And I assure you, I'm not full."

Cynthia promptly turned her back. "I wish you'd please go away. Go look after your ship. Do things to it." She surreptitiously wiped her eyes and anchored down a stray curl.

"A nice back," he ventured musically. "Yes, I'd say a very nice back. Perhaps a little exposed for a lady who doesn't like men."

Cynthia whirled around, her bare arm brushing his white linen. "Won't you please go away?" she

begged. "Can't you see I want to be alone?"

Whimsical blue eyes smiled at her out of a pleasant face. The man pushed his cap back and settled comfortably against the rail.

"Why not be alone with me?"

"Oh," Cynthia gasped, "you——"

"That would be nicer, don't you think?" he teased.

"Now I know who you are," Cynthia exclaimed. "You were with that tall, red-headed girl last night—one of the willowy sisters."

"That's right," he assented cheerfully, "the willowier one. Try saying that. I liked you in that white dress you wore last night, better than this." He contemplated closely the black net. Cynthia drew away hastily. "I notice you wear white a great deal," he added confidentially.

"You are very observing, I must say. But I'm afraid I don't know you. We've not been introduced," she informed him haughtily.

"Oh, that will never do." He straightened his shoulders and pulled his cap down over his eyes. "The name's O'Connell, of the Belfast O'Connells—the last of the lot, christened Terry." With a sweeping gesture he removed his cap and bowed low.

"Now, don't you like that bow?" he asked, beaming with pride. "I learned that from the first mate, the baron. Now we're introduced properly. I'm a very proper man, you know. He folded his hands and looked at her severely.

Cynthia sniffed skeptically and turned away down the promenade deck. The man fell in step beside her, and promptly caught her by the arm when the roll of the ship threw her sidewise.

"You see, it's a good thing I'm around," Terry assured her. Cynthia said nothing, but held her head high

and haughtily. She would ignore him, freeze him with her indifference. Men took so much for granted—all of them, except Richard. But then Richard was lacking in other things. She stumbled again. "Now, now, look at that. You haven't got your sea legs yet," Terry scolded, holding her arm tightly.

"I really don't need you at all," Cynthia told him. "For all you're such a proper man, you don't sound proper. I'm going in now."

"Oh, no, not now," he protested. "It's much too early. Besides, we're going up on the bridge. You've not been up there yet."

"Thank you, but I don't think I'm going. I came on this cruise to get away from men."

A muscular arm politely but firmly helped her up the almost perpendicular ladder. "My dear, I'm conferring a very great honor on you and you don't seem to appreciate it. Don't you know that only ship's officers are allowed on the bridge?"

"Then I'd better leave," Cynthia said. "There's no telling what I might do. I might even burn it. People do burn bridges."

"Please do," he retorted laughingly. "Not this one, but yours. Now look at that moon from here."

Cynthia subsided weakly against the rail and looked at the moon. She had to admit it was perfect. Ahead, the ship's prow was cutting cleanly through the waves, leaving a wake of shimmering white foam on the dark water. She had the sense of flying, of being apart from elemental things. Down below, in the bow of the boat, deck hands were singing softly to a lightly twanged guitar. Almost, she wished for Richard. Perhaps even Richard could be romantic under such a moon, on a white ship that skimmed the ocean like a bird in flight.

She sighed as a film of cloud slipped across the moon. It was as if a veil had been dropped over the water, dulling its brightness. Then Terry's arm was around her waist. Cynthia backed away, toward an open doorway.

"No, don't go in there," Terry warned. "That's the chart room." He brought her back to the rail.

"Is it part of your business," she inquired coldly, turning to look at the impudent profile beside her, "to escort lady passengers personally to the bridge to see the moon?"

He laughed lightly. "Me? It's mighty few ladies that see the moon from the bridge with me. Not that I don't have plenty of opportunity," he added modestly. "Plenty of opportunity!"

"He's not conceited," Cynthia commented, shaking her head gravely, "not conceited at all. It's evidently his proper upbringing." Just then, a sudden gust of wind set her shivering. "I think I'll get my coat," she said. "Wait here for me."

"No, there's no need of that. Stand here against the wall. It breaks the wind."

Cynthia stepped back against the cabin wall, and into his arms. He kissed her lightly on the cheek as he drew her close to him.

"Oh, you, you——" she managed to gasp before his lips pressed down hard on hers.

He let her go finally, after a kiss that lasted a full minute.

"You—you're beastly," she cried, not very convincingly, with a guilty feeling that she was not as angry as she should be.

"Why? Oh, it was sort of spontaneous, don't you think?" Again he flashed his boyish grin. "Your eyes are so lovely with the shine of the moon in them. You see, I'm

partial to brown eyes. Well, I'm not sorry I did it."

"I should think you wouldn't be," Cynthia retorted spiritedly. "It's I who should be sorry."

"But are you?" he teased, tilting her chin upward, his eyes shining merrily. Cynthia slipped from out the encircling arm. In a moment, she was risking her life in an attempt to run down an almost perpendicular ship's ladder in high-heeled silver slippers and a trailing lace skirt.

Alone in her cabin, Cynthia rubbed her mouth vigorously with a towel, surveying her flushed face in the glass.

"My word," she gasped breathlessly. "A perfectly strange man, and he kissed me! I hate men—though," she added pensively, "he is a handsome brute."

Cynthia had gone down quite late for breakfast, relieved to find a mere handful in the dining saloon. It would be terrible to run into a conceited, smiling Irish officer who had kissed her so brazenly the night before.

Back in her cabin she considered staying inside until luncheon, but a blue-and-gold morning on the Caribbean was far too lovely to waste in such a way, and besides the room had to be cleaned.

She found a secluded corner on the sun deck, shut off by two fat knitting ladies on one hand and a lifeboat on the other. Armed with a book, three magazines and a pair of dark sunglasses, she seated herself carefully in the steamer chair. It was all right to avoid men, but there was no use looking a perfect fright in case one did meet them, so Cynthia had worn her new white hand-knit dress. He liked her in white. But good heavens, what did she care what he liked? Richard never knew what

she wore, or cared. But Richard was hopeless. That was why she was getting entirely away from him.

There was just no use ever expecting anything of Richard. He was so wrapped up in business. That's why they had quarreled. She'd given him his ring back and run away. There was always Dan, in case, but then Dan simply wouldn't do. She had hoped he might, until that last evening when he'd been so disgustingly drunk, and the scene in the club was the last straw. No, Dan wouldn't do, even with his money and charm. Nor would Richard. He was too serious. He'd never had a romantic thought in his life. It was no use. All men were impossible.

Cynthia wept a few tears, just to feel right about Richard, then looked anxiously up and down the sun deck. Not a white uniform in sight! She sighed and, donning the dark glasses, settled back in her deck chair. Who had ever said that a girl wouldn't be safe traveling alone on board a ship? Ridiculous! Cynthia yawned. She might as well sleep.

Cynthia's eyes opened slowly, and she blinked several times behind the round, owlsh glasses. Between her and the lifeboat was a spick-and-span white uniform, resplendent with brass buttons. Her eyes traveled upward, then she closed them tightly.

"I'm asleep," she said faintly. "I—I'm asleep."

"That's quite all right," he answered cheerfully, "I'll just stick around until you wake. I'm in no particular hurry."

One of the fat ladies stopped knitting, stared a minute, then leaned over and whispered something in her neighbor's ear. Immediately, they gathered together knitting bags and



*He caught her in his arms and drew her close to him. Before Cynthia could voice a protest, his lips pressed down hard on hers.*

hurriedly departed, settling somewhere on the opposite side.

"Now that's what I call consideration," the officer approved, taking possession of the chair nearest Cynthia. "Oh, sorry if I'm disturbing your slumbers."

"Can't you leave me alone?" Cynthia asked plaintively, taking off the

dark glasses. She liked the crisp way his brown hair arched his forehead.

He had then pulled the chair close beside hers and lay back, his cap tilted, his

blue eyes twinkling down at her.

"Oh, yes, I could leave you alone, I suppose, but then you wouldn't want me to. It would be no fun on a cruise with no man around." He smiled impudently, and Cynthia's heart bounced up and down.

"Such self-effacing modesty," she accused. "Is that what they pay you for—to entertain the ladies?" She sat up, preparatory to leaving, then leaned forward and rubbed a smudge from a white oxford.

"Here, I'll do that!" he rubbed briskly at the spot with his handkerchief. "Don't you know you shouldn't use that kind of polish? It rubs off." He wiped his hands carefully.

"Or are you the shine boy in the barber shop?" Cynthia taunted.

Terry settled himself in the chair comfortably, looking sidewise, and grinning his disarming, boyish grin.

"I'm the chief engineer," he told her.

"Oh, yes? Well, why aren't you running your engine?"

"My dear child, you're terribly ignorant." His eyebrows lifted in exaggerated surprise. "Chief engineers don't run engines," he informed her gravely. "They don't work. They're much too valuable for that."

Cynthia stared at him for a moment wonderingly out of round brown eyes, then closed them and anchored the dark glasses protectively on her nose.

"Such brilliance," she declared, "is positively unbearable."

"What I want to know," Terry asked, taking away the dark glasses, "is what kind of husband do you think I'd make?"

Cynthia turned her head and opened her eyes. The merry blue eyes and tip-tilted nose were only a few inches away. She drew her head back quickly.

"For the fat lady who just left, I'd say a very good one. You could always chase her knitting balls, you know."

"Oh, yes, I know I'd be extremely good at that, but I didn't mention

the fat lady." He laughed good-naturedly.

"No? For whom, then?" Cynthia inquired politely, watching the thin trail of smoke from the steamer on the horizon.

"Now you're getting somewhere," Terry said with emphasis. "What I was saying, is what kind of husband do you think I'd make for——"

"Pardon, chief." The deck steward stood beside his chair. "Captain Darnell is looking for you."

"Then tell him I'm right here!" Terry turned again to Cynthia, but the captain had followed the steward.

"Chief O'Connell," the captain spoke, "may I see you a moment?"

The young officer leaned toward Cynthia and whispered, "For none but the old man would I leave you, darling. Wait patiently my return."

"Of course. What else would I do?" Cynthia replied sweetly, gathering up her belongings and promptly departing.

Luncheon in her stateroom was a ghastly affair, and Cynthia sent back the tray, keeping only the chilled fruit. After all, she didn't buy an expensive Caribbean cruise ticket to bask in the cramped quarters of the ship's cabin. Outside, she could hear laughter and the determined walking of energetic passengers around deck.

She dressed in her yellow sports dress and pulled a yellow felt hat over her dark hair. "What will the dear chief think of this ensemble?" she wondered, touching her lips lightly with lipstick. "I'll not wear white again this whole trip. The conceited thing!"

The sun deck was practically deserted now. Cynthia, stretched out in a deck chair, marveled at the intense blue of the Caribbean waters. Such beauty as this got into one's



blood, and Cynthia's thoughts went back to Richard. Would Richard ever take time off to see the world? Not he! That would be time wasted for him.

A deck chair was dragged beside hers, and she looked up. "Surprise, surprise!" She clapped her hands. "If it isn't Chief O'Connell and the brass buttons. Where have you been so long?" she asked in mock anxiety.

"I knew you'd be worried, but here I am at last," he answered blithely.

"The answer to a maiden's prayer. How very thoughtful of you," Cynthia bantered, her eyes dancing.

"Of course," he assured her blandly. "But then, as I was saying, what kind of husband do you think I'd make—for you?"

"For me, my good man?" She pulled her glasses down to the end of her nose and arched her eyebrows in mock astonishment. "I'm completely swept off my feet!" Then her face brightened. "Why, it's a proposal," she said. "I always take them down in writing. Will you sign?" she asked hopefully, flourishing a pencil.

"I knew you'd yield!" Terry took the pencil, signed his name on a piece of paper gravely, and returned both to her.

"Oh, they usually do?" Cynthia smoothed the yellow skirt. "But what," she inquired, "could you offer as qualifications? A seagoing husband—just what could you do? Chief engineers don't work, you say."

"I could tie knots." Terry smiled his most beaming smile.

"Of course. Stupid of me not to think of that," Cynthia told him. "Knots are most important in the scheme of things. While I am away slaving for bread and butter, you can tie knots. That settles it. In the

morning you tie knots. In the afternoon, what?"

"I can untie them," he assured her.

"Perfectly logical." Cynthia made a note on the paper. "And in the evening, what?" She arched her brows teasingly.

"I could start tying knots again." Terry's eyes were shining with fun. "Is it a bargain?"

They laughed together. Then Terry grew serious. He told Cynthia of his home in Ireland, where he had lived as a boy and had worked as an apprentice in the big shipbuilding works in Belfast. Before she realized it, the afternoon was gone and a steward was sounding the chimes that meant dressing for dinner.

"To-night," he begged, as she rose to leave, "let's go to the bridge again. Please!"

"Find me," she called back as she crossed the deck to the stairway.

"If I have to get the ship's compass," he promised.

Cynthia was late to dinner. Immediately after she had finished her dessert she went to the cardroom, where interminable games of bridge went on. Terry would never think of looking for her there, for she had told him she hated bridge. She turned listlessly, the pages of a movie magazine.

Then she heard a low whistle. In the window back of her was a white cap and uniform, a handsome Irish face smiling at her.

"I spy," Terry pointed his finger at her. "You're it. Come on out." He met her at the door.

"Let's burn more bridges," he suggested, as they climbed the narrow stairway. An officer stood at the rail, motionless, his hands crossed behind him. "The baron," Terry whispered. "Let's beat it." Taking

her by the hand, he led her through the dark chart room to the port side. "This will make a merry blaze," he said, and promptly took her in his arms.

"Wait," said Cynthia, backing away, "not so fast! You may be Irish and all that, but suppose we burn the bridges, not blast them with dynamite?"

"But Cynthia dear," he begged, "aren't we engaged, practically?"

"We are not," she told him, "and why so easy with my first name?"

"Oh, darling, then. Like that better?"

"I'm leaving right now," she told him emphatically, but he caught her hand.

"No, Cynthia, please don't go. You know I love you, really."

"No, I don't, and it isn't real," Cynthia assured him positively. "It couldn't be!"

"But it is," Terry pleaded. "As real as anything you know—as real as the moon and the stars and the sea."

"But the moon and the stars are so far away," she evaded. "How can we know they're real?"

"Sometimes," Terry whispered, his arm about her, "sometimes you can almost touch the stars, they are so close. You know they're real then."

Cynthia dreamily watched the sky with its round moon rising out of the ocean, and its bright stars. Yes, they almost seemed close enough to touch. Terry's cheek was against hers. This was romance—the moon and the sea and Terry. His arms were about her, his lips against her hair.

After a time, Cynthia buried her face in his shoulder. Terry lifted her chin so he could look into her eyes.

"Why so quiet, little girl?" he asked softly.

"I was touching the stars," she said.

Santo Domedro was not a large city, as cities go, but it boasted a gayety equal to that of many larger continental resorts, due to its location directly on the main steamer routes to South America. There, luxurious cruise liners lingered long enough for their passengers to spend hours in sight-seeing, and to dine in its exotic night clubs.

Cynthia had looked forward to the stop at this port of exceedingly gay night life and beautiful women. She would wear her most formal gown and her lovely silver *lamé* wrap for the evening's tour.

She had not seen Terry all day, as the program for the passengers had kept every minute filled with shore excursions in the morning and visiting the quaint shops in the afternoon. Touching the stars! Cynthia lingered over her dressing, remembering Terry's ardent words. The Irish surely had a way with them, particularly Terry.

She hummed happily, glad that her formal evening gown, a quaint starched chiffon, was white, since Terry liked her in white. Her sandals were scarlet, and she pinned to her shoulders a cluster of flame-colored hibiscus which she had bought in the afternoon from one of the beggar boys who had swarmed around the car at every stop.

Cynthia surveyed her reflection in the long mirror, thoroughly satisfied. Her dark hair lay in smooth waves, and the white starched chiffon was all that any evening gown could be—a thing of beauty and joy. But what of Terry? There could be no joy without him. He should have sent her some word.

As Cynthia went slowly down the stairway to the saloon deck, the

steward was sounding the final call to passengers for the night-club tour. Cynthia looked up and down the deck, thinking she might catch sight of Terry at the last moment. It was deserted. Wonderingly, she followed an elderly man down the gangplank to the last waiting car. Terry had been detained, but surely he would catch them later.

Two of the fat knitting ladies were in the back seat, and the small seats were taken by two men, already well on their way toward a big evening. Cynthia settled herself in the front by the trimly uniformed native driver. The first stop was to be a gay night spot nine miles out, where they would have dinner and dance.

The chauffeur swung the big open touring car at a breath-taking speed in and out of the maze of traffic along the harbor front and through a wide thoroughfare. Soon they were skimming on a white shell road, along which a double line of coconut palms stood. The moon had not risen. In a dusky-purple sky, a single glowing star hung low in the sky. How close to the earth it seemed—close enough to touch, as Terry had said.

The thought of Terry brought a feeling of bitter disappointment that he was not with her. She wondered why he had failed her on this, of all evenings. Of course, something had detained him at the boat. But why had he not sent a message, that she might know?

The warm breath of the tropic night fanned Cynthia's face as they sped along through the countryside—a breath laden with strange, tantalizing odors. The fragrance of a cluster of white flowers she had bought as they left the boat, was almost unendurably sweet. She could not refuse the pleading eyes of the little brown boys who thrust their flowers into the car, eagerly holding up their

hands for American silver. Suddenly, without reason, she wished for Richard—wished that he could share this sense of romance.

Then they were at the night club, a rambling one-story structure of stucco and red tile, surrounded by grounds where tall palms leaned whispering toward the sea and flowering shrubs made the night air heavy with their scent.

Inside, was an imposing foyer with marble colonnades. On the right was a gold-and-scarlet women's lounge, where dark-eyed native girls took the wraps and passed cigarettes. In the rear was a patio, with tables set around a dance floor.

A native orchestra was playing, and under the stars, couples were dancing in the soft light that came from hidden colored globes in the palms and lime trees around the patio wall. Then the floor was cleared, and a native girl came out and danced a queer, whirling dance. This, too, seemed unreal, Cynthia thought, as she sat silent, fingering her glass, not hearing a word of her companions' conversation. How different it would have been with Terry!

Hearing her name called, she looked up. A little man in white linen was bowing to her—the first officer from the ship, the baron. "I must," he said in his broken English, "dance with the loveliest lady in the room."

They danced easily to the soft, lazy strains of the orchestra. The baron guided her deftly through the maze of dancers. "You see," he told her, "I learned the waltz in my own Vienna. It is a most difficult dance, as we do it. You Americans do not know."

"You dance splendidly," Cynthia was saying, when over his shoulder she saw Terry. A door had swung wide behind a laden waiter, and she



*Suddenly she heard low voices and laughter. "Darling, you know I love you"—the voice was Terry's, and Cynthia caught her breath sharply. Her face burned as she recalled how Terry had made love to her.*

had seen him at a table in a private dining room with a lovely blond girl. But no, it could not be Terry! Terry was at the ship. But they had danced nearer and the door swung wide again.

It was Terry. Cynthia stopped, losing step in the waltz. The baron caught her into the dance again. "You dance beautifully, my dear," he said, looking at her closely. "You are most charming and lovely

to-night, but not happy. Is it not so?"

Startled, Cynthia looked into the kindly gray eyes. Surely, he knew that Terry was in there, and had done this purposely! But how could he know about her and Terry? Then she remembered. He had been on the bridge the night before.

After the baron had bowed himself away, Cynthia left the table and slipped out, unnoticed, from the patio into the garden. Miserable and lonely, she wandered along a path to a low wall overlooking the sea, and sat down on a bench shadowed by a leaning palm tree. Dully, to her ears came the booming of breakers far down the side of the cliff. Beside the bench, against the wall, was a thick shrub, whose white flowers filled the air with a fragrance very much like that of orange blossoms.

Cynthia pulled one of the star-shaped flowers and crushed it in her hands. She had looked for romance and found it, yet it had failed her. Love grew swiftly, as Terry had said, but what did it mean to him, with his boyish smile, his teasing blue eyes? Had he been sincere, his love real? She shivered. Of course he had been sincere. To-morrow he would explain.

Too restless to sit still, Cynthia climbed, by means of some stones, to the top of the low, wide wall where she could sit and look out on the ocean. The moon had risen and hung low in the sky. So remote was she in this strange land, so far from home and Richard, who cared only for business, that she felt as if this were all a dream. Then she heard low voices and laughter.

"Darling"—the voice was unmistakably Terry's, and Cynthia caught her breath sharply, not wanting to hear—"your eyes are so lovely with

the shine of the moon in them. I'm very partial to blue eyes, you know."

Cynthia sat as if paralyzed. She could not move without attracting attention. Her face burned as she recalled, scornfully, Terry's love for brown eyes. No, he must not know she had heard. Again came Terry's voice. "I've missed you so, and now you're going back with me. There'll be no moon this trip, but stars—stars so close you can almost touch them."

Cynthia smiled ruefully, remembering again. "You know I love you," Terry was saying. Then they had passed on down the path, and the girl's happy laughter came back. Cynthia sat stunned. Fool that she had been to believe Terry sincere! Then her head high, Cynthia made her way back to the patio.

They went on and on to other clubs, dancing, watching strange native dances. As the night wore on, the gay spots became gayer, the parties livelier, and it was apparent that the elderly ladies and the two men of Cynthia's party were becoming fatigued. Cynthia suggested returning to the boat.

Riding back through the sleeping countryside, under the avenue of palms, the odorless night fanned her with its warm, sweet air. The white flowers were wilted on the floor of the car, faintly fragrant—like her romance with Terry, she thought, lasting but a night.

Wearily, she walked up the gangplank and climbed the stairway to her deck. The foyer was empty but for the steward sorting towels, and a man in a dark business suit slumped down asleep on a divan, beside him a sheaf of drooping tropical lilies. Cynthia had turned to pass to her stateroom when she looked again. There was something strangely fa-

miliar about that dark head, even though the straw hat was tilted forward over his face. Richard had smooth dark hair like that—dear old steady Richard. But it couldn't be! She hurried forward. It was Richard!

"Richard"—she tugged at his arm to awaken him—"Richard, what are you doing here?"

Richard straightened his tie and stood up, blinking sleepily. "I didn't know whether you'd want to see me," he began, "but——"

Cynthia had her arms around him, shaking him. "You old precious," she said, kissing him. The kiss landed smartly on his nose. "How did you get here?" she demanded excitedly. "My gracious, you look good to me. Can't you kiss me?"

Richard, now thoroughly awake, immediately showed her that he could, and did.

"I had to go to Mexico City on business for the firm and flew down. I checked up and found you were docked here to-day and to-night, so I caught a plane. It was only five hundred miles and I—I thought maybe you'd give me another chance."

"Richard, you old dear. You flew five hundred miles just to see me? I can't believe it." She hugged him again in reckless disregard of the steward.

"Well, I thought I'd see a little of the tropics since I'm here. Can't be here long—just a business trip."

"Oh, Richard, Richard!" Cynthia laughed happily, her weariness forgotten. "You're so real."

"Of course I'm real. Why not?" Richard asked, holding her hands tightly. "Honey," he went on eagerly, "I thought maybe we could patch things up and marry while we're here. It would be a swell place

for a honeymoon, in the tropics. Would you?"

Richard's gray eyes were agonizingly serious. Cynthia smiled and squeezed his hand. She hadn't ever loved any one as much as she did this man, despite all his business. She was sure of that now. That other love-making on the bridge seemed fantastic, farcical. She felt ashamed that she must have that to remember.

"Do you really think, Richard," she asked softly, "that I'd make you a good wife?"

The seriousness was gone from Richard's eyes. Cynthia had never seen such an ardent look in them. "Darling," he told her, "I know so." He kissed her again—a long, tender kiss. "But you're the one I'm worried about. What kind of husband do you think I'll make?"

Richard was surprised at the effect of this simple question, for Cynthia was laughing hysterically. He couldn't understand, and told her so.

"Just so"—she gasped between gales of laughter—"just so you don't tie knots."

"Tie knots?" Richard was frankly puzzled. "Why should I tie knots?" he asked.

"For no reason at all, darling," Cynthia managed to say weakly.

Richard laughed uncomprehendingly, tightening his arms around her. "Honey, what do you say we fly back? I'll wire the firm for a couple of weeks off. No, by George, I'll ask for a month. I'll just take it and they can fire me if they want to. This country sort of gets you, and I want to see it. How does that suit you?"

Cynthia thought of nothing in the world that would suit her better. It would have been impossible—Terry,



*Cynthia looked at the sleeping man and could hardly believe her eyes. "Richard"—she tugged at his arm—"Richard, you old precious. How did you get here? My, but you look good to me! Can't you kiss me?"*

the blond girl and herself on the boat together.

"And, sweetheart," Richard was saying, "you'll love flying. I know you've never been up, but it seems so unreal, away up there so close to the stars——"

"Don't, Richard!" Cynthia placed her hand over his mouth. "You can't touch the stars. I've tried. Now you're getting romantic, and that will never do."

"But, honey," he protested, "I thought——"

"Yes, I know what you thought, darling. You thought I wanted you romantic, but I've found out differently. I want you just as you are!" she cried.

Richard kissed her for that, then looked at his watch.

"It's three o'clock, Cynthia. You're tired and you'd better turn in. I'll call for you at eight."

"But the boat sails at seven, Richard. Please get here before then."

"It will never sail with you. I'll see to that. We'll go right now and be married. But I forgot, I'll have to attend to a little business first, so you'll have to wait to marry me." He picked up his hat and saw the forgotten lilies. "Oh, here are some flowers I brought you."

Cynthia buried her face in Richard's flowers for a moment, then looked up smiling. "What sort of

business," she asked sternly, "do you have at that time of morning, young man, that can't wait until you marry me?"

"I've got to buy a young woman a brand-new, non-skid wedding ring!" He gave her a little shake. "How does that suit you?"

His eyes were warm on hers.

"Perfectly!" Cynthia lifted her radiant face for Richard's kiss. "From now on, I'm strictly business."



#### FRIEND OF MINE

A SAUCERFUL of clouds, a handful of trees,  
Here and there a larksong, here and there a rose,  
A strawberry chimney sniffing in the breeze  
And a garden where the pigeons come to doze.

Not a thing has changed and not a thing is new;  
A mist for the orchard, a moon for the hill;  
Only with the gloaming, after birds are through,  
Seems so kind of empty, seems so kind of still.

A ragged-eared pup with a language all his own,  
Here and there a shade tree, here and there a stream;  
Something in the wood patch, in the finch's tone  
Making even breathing lazy as a dream.

There have been no changes, things are just the same,  
Friendly books and pictures, flowers for the hall;  
Only with the twilight, with the candle flame,  
Seems we all are waiting, listening for your call.

BERT COOKSLEY





# Mixed Foursome

By Ida May Owen

**I**T was glorious to be the only person in the world on a new day.

Evelyn raised her brown arms to greet the sun, stretching every muscle in her slender body, exulting in the sense of freshness which she felt. With her sun-tanned face turned up toward the morning sky, she marveled at the miracle of its blueness.

Why, she asked herself, didn't she set the alarm clock ahead and get out early on the golf course more often? Better still, why didn't she bring Arthur along? They could begin right, on an unspoiled day. The petty irritations which were beginning to nibble at their romance

could have no place in this perfection.

The clubhouse was deserted. There was no sign of life from the pro's shop nor the caddy-master's place. The greens-keepers had not yet turned the watering system on the fairways. She was alone in paradise.

She placed her ball on the first tee and waggled a bit to get the feel of her driver before she swung. The pellet soared into the air and came to rest a satisfying two hundred yards away.

"Not bad, old girl," she told herself as she picked up her bag of clubs and walked toward her ball.

"If Arthur could see that, he wouldn't be so superior."

Arthur was good at golf and he liked to win. He had rows of shiny cups around his bungalow, not to mention numerous trophies, which were evidence of his prowess. He had entered Evelyn as his partner in the annual mixed foursome tournament of the club, then had spent every spare moment in coaching her, so that she would not ruin his record. Evelyn sighed. There was nothing more wearing than an educational fiancé, she thought.

The trouble was that Evelyn played only for companionship and cared nothing about being a victor. It was hard to click on a job and be a girl wonder at sports, also. She felt fortunate to be a script girl at Kingdom Films. She gave all she had to the studio and had little energy to give to Arthur and his strenuous games.

But she wouldn't let Arthur Cromwell down. Secret practice, dawn golf, was her solution. She trotted over the course at a lively pace, playing each shot thoughtfully.

When she reached the seventh hole, she decided to play three balls. The seventh was the hole that nearly cost her Arthur's love. The Santa Isabel Club was proud of the fact that it had a water hazard, a stream which had its beginnings in the mountains. They had spent money on the creek, deepened it, dammed it, until, at the seventh, it made the short hole a difficult one.

Arthur, of course, played the seventh in par, or birdied it, laying his ball close to the pin in one. He had no patience with the type of mind which yielded to a mental hazard—Evelyn's type of mind.

Evelyn advanced to the tee. This time she would stay out of the

water. A perfect day—no distracting Arthur, no tittering caddies, no sympathetic, amused spectators! She could not go wrong. She would drive three successful balls in succession, and conquer the seventh.

*Plop! Plop! Plop!* One ball after another zinged from her club and met the stream with a splash. She couldn't see where they went, for the bank intervened, but she knew their destination only too well.

Picking up her bag, she ran to the brink of the creek. Now, for the first time, she wished for a caddy. It was practically impossible to fish out the balls with the long-poled dipper which was left on the bank for that purpose.

Assured from a hasty glance around that no one was about, she kicked off her shoes, stepped out of her culotte and tossed aside her halter top, as she decided to go in after her lost balls. The water was crystal-clear, and she could see all three of them on the rocky creek bed.

The briskness of her exercise had made her warm, and she stood for a moment reveling in the morning sun, then slid into the stream.

The water was surprisingly cold, and she gave a shocked cry before she doused herself and plunged into the exhilaration of a swim.

She knew that she should hurry, but the temptation to linger was strong, and the push of the current against her skin was pleasant. She reached around, searching and groping for her balls, and was ready to end her adventure, when something grazed her and splashed into the water by her side.

Her reaction was anger. Intuitively, she knew that she had just been missed by a driven ball. Stunned by the realization that another fraction of an inch might have

made a great deal of difference, she stood transfixed.

Then, like a lightning flash, came the awareness that some one had shot that ball and must be heading for the creek. Panic-stricken, she started to wade toward her clothes on the bank, just as a head appeared—a blond, man's head.

Evelyn saw the young man first, and ducked back into the water.

Surprise, amusement, delight—one emotion after the other chased across the strong, expressive face. Evelyn, still clutching her golf balls, moved away crabwise.

He was a tall young man in shorts, with eyes like sky-mirrored water. He was evidently a stranger, because his fair skin, still raw with sunburn, had not yet become California-colored.

He spoke first, nonchalantly. "Wonderful place, California," he remarked, as if a nymph were a customary part of a water hazard.

Then, as Evelyn did not feel chatty, he continued, "I don't suppose that you noticed where my ball went."

"It almost brained me!" Evelyn retreated under water.

"Sorry. I wouldn't do that. What is the penalty for hitting the mermaid?"

"A gentleman would count a stroke and shoot another ball," suggested Evelyn, hugging herself to keep warm. "Or he'd skip the hole."

He grinned, showing strong white teeth. "But a Scotsman would hunt for his last ball. I don't suppose that one of those in your hand says 'John MacRae' on it?"

Furiously, she tossed them ashore, one after the other. The tall figure stooped, picked them up, read Evelyn's name on them, and laid them in a row on the turf.

"Sorry again," he apologized. "There's nothing to do but to dredge for it." He began to dip with the long-poled dipper.

She could see the ball a couple of feet in front of her, as it lay in the silt and rock, washed down from the canyon.

He tossed the awkward retriever aside. "Good idea, morning dip. Half a mind to join you."

"No, no!" cried Evelyn. He was joking, of course, she told herself, but he looked young and impulsive. She ducked and fished out the ball. She let it fly. It was a difficult shot, for she was in the creek to her neck, but her anger gave strength to her arm, and the young man was caught unaware. The hard globe pinged on his temple and sent him reeling backward.

"Not so wild, young woman," he roared when he had recovered. "You nearly got my eye!"

Appalled at herself, she turned away so that she would have no qualms over the young man who was still glaring at her, hand to brow. Then she heard the reassuring crack of the club as it lofted the ball to the green, and turned to catch a mocking bow from the young man. He picked up his tools, strode a hundred yards upstream to the footbridge and crossed to the seventh where he holed out, without a backward glance.

Evelyn waited until he disappeared down the eighth fairway before she ventured from the protecting water. She scrambled up the bank, got back into the clothes which clung to her damp skin, and cut over to the clubhouse without going around the course. She couldn't get away quickly enough.

Parked beside her old coupé was a new roadster with a Minnesota

license. She was right, then, about his being a stranger to Santa Isabel. A tourist, probably, crashing the course. No golf fanatic, though. Arthur Cromwell would never have dubbed into the creek. Well, she hoped she'd never run into this John MacRae again. She would avoid

morning practice even if it meant a lost tournament, and its consequence, a lost Arthur.

The misadventure spoiled the beautiful day for her. Time had flown, and she had to hurry into fresh clothes for a wild dash to the studio.



*Evelyn started to wade toward her clothes on the bank when a young man appeared. Panic-stricken, she ducked back into the water. The young man grinned.*

Evelyn Shipman lived with her parents in Santa Isabel, town in the Los Angeles suburban area, and commuted to her job. There were some advantages about this mode of life, for it saved money, not to mention the fact that it made her accessible to Arthur. She was later than she had feared, and Vanstrum, her director, had not been able to start shooting without her. In addition, the film was not going very well, and they were already behind schedule.

So, when Evelyn appeared, Vanstrum said, "Ah, Miss Shipman! So nice of you to drop in," instead of hailing her as "Shippy," as he usually did. He proceeded to lecture her before the whole cast for not noticing that the leading lady wore a bandanna in the close-up which had been missing from the preceding scene. A small oversight, to be sure, but one which would have brought in hundreds of letters from lynx-eyed fans. Good thing it had been caught in the rushes.

The day continued, out of step. Evelyn wished, as the morning wore on, that she had stopped for a cup of coffee, for the heat of the lights and the tension they all were working under, gave her a blinding headache. She had to fight to keep her mind on the many details of her job, for every time she relaxed, a blond youth seemed to laugh at her—that John MacRae person.

That was why Evelyn had very little energy left to offer her energetic fiancé that evening.

He was waiting for her when she arrived home, chatting with the folks and glowing with health and vigor. His day had been spent at a desk, for he was cashier of a chain bank, and his most arduous activities had been to make minor decisions.

Evelyn's heart gave a sudden leap when she saw him. It always behaved that way. It never ceased being surprised that this glamorous young man should confer his attentions on Evelyn.

"Hi, Ducky!" He did not rise to greet her. You might have thought, if you saw him sprawled there, that he was a magnificent native from some Pacific island—the brown skin, the wide shoulders, the dark, waving hair. The incongruous lightness of the gray eyes would have set you right, though, and made you realize that his color and physique were the products of exercise, sunshine and leisure. "Snap into your duds and we'll have time for a round before dinner," he said briskly.

"No, please, Arthur." Evelyn flung herself into a chair and pushed her brown hair away from her forehead. "I couldn't. I haven't even the pep to push a putter."

This rebellion roused Arthur to action. He sprang to his feet. "The tournament! Have you forgotten the tournament to-morrow?"

"No, Arthur. Truly I haven't. I practiced a little this morning." She wondered if the blush she felt showed. "It's been a terrible day. I'm dead tired."

"We'll just play a few holes," he conceded. "I want to work on that swing. We'll eat at the club."

"No, no!" Evelyn shook her tousled head in alarm. "I won't eat at the club. I—I couldn't."

"Go along, dear," urged Mrs. Shipman. "It will do you good." She was pleased to have Evelyn connected with the movies, but grateful that Arthur Cromwell was the sort of man she was familiar with instead of one whom Evelyn might have met at the studio. She distrusted all Hollywood men.

"Good, I'll say!" Arthur pulled Evelyn to her feet and flexed her arms. "Get the old circulation going. Use different muscles. That'll set you up."

She was deaf to their suggestions, and it was only after Arthur agreed not to go to the club that she went out to freshen up.

In his car, a substantial black coupé, she tried to throw off her distaste for competition and to please Arthur. She was proud of him. He was so clean, so strong. He would go big in the movies if he weren't so scornful of them, she thought.

"Why does this tournament mean so much to you?" she asked.

"I don't know. Because I've won all the others, I guess. Because I always get mixed up with some fool girl and lose the mixed foursome."

"Meaning Betsy Straight?" she hinted. Betsy, the athletic daughter of a prominent Santa Isabel realtor, had been Arthur Cromwell's preceding fiancée.

"Yes, Betsy. She could drive like nobody's business, but she dubbed every iron shot. She lost the tournament and made a fool of me."

"But you wouldn't break off for a little thing like that!"

"No-o. We had a fight. Know why I fell for you, Ducky?"

Evelyn snuggled close to him. She raised her great, tired eyes to his handsome, healthy face, and waited for the sweet reasons that Arthur would give her.

"Tell me," she breathed.

"Because you have the best short game of any girl in Santa Isabel. Because you swing a mean mashie. Because you're deadly with a putter. If you could drive the way you can pitch, there'd be no stopping you. That's why."

"Oh," said Evelyn. "Oh!"

"We've got to win this, Ducky.

The fellows have been kidding me. I took all their bets. Are you with me in this, honey?"

"I'm with you," she pledged.

"Then O. K. Where do we eat?"

"Let's run into the Brown Derby. I'm not dressed for the Troc or any other place."

"Take's too much time," objected Arthur. He knew a place where one could drive in and get half a fried chicken in practically a jiffy, and they went there. Refreshed by food and coffee, Evelyn's depression lifted, and she offered no objection when he took her to a roadside driving tee.

He worked over her like a pro. "Keep your head down. Get that left shoulder down. Let your left arm do it. Give it all you've got. Sock 'em, girl, sock 'em. Bring your hands in——"

Then night ended the long day like a blackout. Evelyn was exhausted. She was in no mood for a long ride by the ocean. Muscles she hadn't known she owned, ached furiously. She felt miserably inferior—as if she weren't the girl for Arthur, after all. It was still fairly early when they came back to the Shipman bungalow.

"It's because I've had a hard day's work," she apologized. "Vanstrum's swell, but he's got the jitters."

"Give it up," commanded Arthur. "There's no sense in being shut up in the dark all day. Marry me, and you'll never see a movie unless we haven't anything else to do."

"I love it," she defended. "It's thrilling. Only——"

"Only you should love me most," he ordered. "I should mean more to you than anything in the world. Kiss me, Ducky."

She raised her lips to his, thrilling. The kiss transported her out

of herself. The struggles of the day were forgotten. She would have liked to dally there, but Arthur sent her in so that she could get her rest for the tournament.

Evelyn was too fatigued for sleep. She stretched out on her bed, forcing herself to relax, and worried about Arthur. Could marriage be a success when there was no real common interest? Her association with Arthur had developed her golf, it was true, but she couldn't think of it as a life work. It took too much time to be a champion. And after you did win, what of it?

Back in Iowa, she had had a course in library training. After her father and mother had moved to California one of her profs had gotten her into the research department of Kingdom. Vanstrum himself, had picked her for a script clerk. It was only the beginning. She could go places if Arthur only had some sympathy with the movie industry. Would she have to give it all up? She finally slept, her problem unsolved.

All the way to the club Arthur kept giving her final advice. He was confident that they would win. As they joined the crowd grouped around the first tee, Betsy Straight came up to them.

"I'm out for your scalp, Art," she told him. "I've not forgotten the way you rode me last year. The girl is good now." She was a tall, brown girl who carried herself proudly.

"Try and do it," he challenged. "This year I've got a partner who knows a mashie from a croquet mallet."

"I'll take her on," boasted Betsy. "We're paired with you, you know."

"I'll bet you fixed that," laughed Arthur. "Who've you got?"

"I imported my partner. Hi, John, come and meet the folks."

John came, a tall, golden youth, who was raw and rosy where the others were tanned. Betsy introduced him as John McRae, her cousin.

"Haven't I seen you somewhere before?" he asked Evelyn as they shook hands. He looked at her.

"Probably in Hollywood," Betsy put in. "John writes scenarios or something."

"It was a pick-up," Evelyn said. "I picked up his ball and gave it to him."

"And how!" John exclaimed, his hand to his brow. Evelyn noticed that he still had his discolored bump.

Their foursome was called, and Arthur advanced to the tee for a beautiful drive down the fairway. Betsy followed him with a well-placed shot, which lacked Arthur's length, but was good. As they moved on, followed by four caddies and a small gallery of friends, Arthur walked hand in hand with Evelyn, pleased with the start they had made. A good beginning argued well.

In this annual mixed foursome event only two balls were used, since each partner played every other shot. That meant that Evelyn played the ball which Arthur had driven, while John carried on where Betsy left off. Evelyn's second was short, but Arthur made a nice pitch to the green and she holed in easily. John laid his on the rim; Betsy missed the long putt, which John



dropped. They finished the first all square.

"This is going to be good," Arthur told Evelyn. "Betsy and the cousin play about the same game. I'm better than either and you are worse, so that makes both teams even. Now, keep your head and we'll do our stuff."

Evelyn concentrated and came off well with her irons. They finished the sixth with a tie.

Evelyn was up when they came to the dreaded seventh. Just as she got ready to shoot, she glanced at John MacRae. He was looking at her with an amused stare that spoke volumes. He was thinking of the way he had surprised her in the water yesterday. He would! Angri-ly, she jabbed at her ball. *Plop!* Into the water!

"You might keep your eye on your ball," sputtered Arthur, as she came back to the bench.

Then John whaled away at his ball. *Plop!* It also went into the creek.

"Thank goodness for that," muttered Arthur, as they walked to the bank. "Now they get a penalty, too." The caddies fished for the balls, while Arthur's friends from the gallery razzed him. Evelyn saw that Betsy was giving John a piece of her mind, and she envied the humorous calm with which he took his scolding.

Arthur made a splendid over, which Betsy duplicated. They were well pleased with themselves. Their attitudes said, "Any fool can carry on from there."

But Evelyn couldn't. Her poise was completely shattered. She missed her putt and left it for Arthur to save the hole. John sunk his, however, and Arthur was one down at the seventh.

Evelyn blew up. Everything she did was wrong. If she swung hard and pressed, she went wild. If she relaxed, she topped or dubbed her shots. They lost the eighth and the ninth and were three down at the turn.

Before the tenth, Arthur made her drink a lemonade and gave her a pep talk. It completely unnerved her.

Betsy, gloating, got away magnificently on the tenth, but Arthur surpassed her. Evelyn sent the second shot into the rough where, surprisingly enough, John joined her. Arthur's out was skillful but Betsy only moved her ball a few feet. John dubbed the next one.

"You're not threshing in Minnesota," Betsy reminded him. The three extra strokes were costly, and they lost their margin.

By the fifteenth they were all square again, and Arthur had regained his complacency.

"Your game has certainly improved," he told Betsy magnanimously, after they both got away. They walked down the fairway together, leaving Evelyn to John.

"You're throwing this game," Evelyn accused him. "Every time I dub a shot, you place yours just beside it."

"We're just a couple of stooges," John replied. "The battle is on between those two."

"You play the next three fair. Arthur's too sporting to win a give-away."

"Betsy's too bossy. She needs a lesson. Besides, I don't like the way he talks to you."

"Arthur likes to win," Evelyn explained.

"I like a betting foursome with a drink at the nineteenth hole, but darned if I get this tournament stuff!"





*"I'm through," Evelyn told him fiercely, "I'm through with you. I never want to see you again!"*

"I get along all right when I play for fun, but I blow up under pressure," she admitted.

"Look at them—two husky souls with but a single thought," John pointed out.

Betsy and Arthur were impatiently waiting for them. Her talk

with her opponent had cheered Evelyn, and she played her best golf on the next three holes. John followed her lead and both pairs parred the dogleg and birdied the eighteenth.

In the play-off Arthur was tense. "If you blow up now, I'll never forgive you," he told Evelyn. She was

ashamed for him but, fortunately Betsy was giving John some last advice, and they didn't hear.

Suddenly, Evelyn no longer cared. The extra hole was the now deserted first, always a favorite of Evelyn's. Her careless drive was a perfect one, while John's was a vicious hook.

"You fool! That will cost us the tournament," growled Betsy.

It did. Even her able recovery could not save them. Arthur had won his match, and his elation was evident. He acted graciously toward Betsy, complimented her on her game and dated her for a future round. "You've got everything," he told her, "the physique, the shots. You ought to take up golf seriously." High praise from Arthur!

"See you at the dance?" John turned abruptly to Evelyn.

"I—I suppose so," Evelyn answered. She had a vast distaste for everything concerning the golf tournament.

"Sure," said Betsy heartily. "We'll be on hand to see the victor crowned. Besides, we have a good chance to be runners-up."

"If we don't like the party we'll walk out on it," John promised.

Evelyn eyed him distrustfully. That misbegotten hook, which gave them the match, needed explanation. Well, this was Arthur's day. She'd see him through, and then they'd have it out. No more competitions!

After a shower and a rest, Evelyn felt better. She dressed for the dinner-dance carefully, in a stunning white gown that clung to the lines of her slender figure.

The dinner was all that she had feared. The prize was theirs, twin silver cups, presented with facetious adulation by the club president. Arthur responded in a way that made Evelyn blush—he was so scru-

pulously complimentary to the others, so elaborately deprecating of his own excellent game. She accepted her own with a brief, "Thank you."

"You needn't be so high-hat," Arthur, at her side, murmured.

Betsy did her bit, along the best-team-won line. John said briefly that he had never had so much fun in his life, and that he would use his trophy for a jigger. It was just like back home in Cedarvale, Evelyn thought. They were miles away from the sophistication of Hollywood.

But later, the dancing was good, the punch stimulating, and she lost her irritation. Much later, John led her to the punch bowl, around which the stags were gathered. Arthur was there, flapping the bills, which were the bets he had collected. Betsy stood by his side.

"Meet the little woman," Arthur boomed as Evelyn approached. He put one arm about her, the other about Betsy. "Meet the two best gals in the club. A little grooming and we'll see a match that is a match. What say, gals?"

"O. K.," agreed Betsy, gayly.

"Not me," cried Evelyn.

"Why, Ducky!" Arthur rebuked.

"I'm through. I'll never play in another tournament." She turned and ran toward the dressing room.

Arthur pelted after her, catching her in the corner of the veranda.

"What do you mean, acting like this?" he demanded.

"I'm through," she told him fiercely. "I never want to see a golf club again. I'm through with you, too."

"You're crazy. You don't know what you're saying."

"I do! Marriage with you would be Olympics."

He glowered. "Plenty of other girls——" he threatened.

"Try Betsy," she suggested, then left him abruptly. She was no longer even interested.

When she came out with her wrap, John was waiting for her.

"We're going to a real party," he informed her, his eyes smiling down into hers. "We're going to the Troc."

As Evelyn nestled beside him in the roadster, he told her about himself—reporter in Minneapolis, short stories with a Middle West setting, a small-town novel which had been sold to the films. He hoped to click.

"What do you think of the movies?" Evelyn asked.

"Best racket there ever was. Just in its infancy. Think they're great and——"

"Me, too," Evelyn interrupted. Her eyes were suddenly shining.

He slowed down and asked earnestly, "Do you believe in love at first sight?"

"I'm just that nutty," Evelyn confessed.

"Me, too. I've always believed that some time, somewhere, I'd meet a girl and I'd know in a minute that she was *the* girl. Yesterday, when

I saw you crouched down there in the creek, staring at me with big indignant eyes, why, it—it did something to me. And then, when you let fly and almost beamed me——"

"I'm sorry," said Evelyn. Her voice was soft, tender. She reached up and caressed the bump on his forehead.

"I'm glad," John exulted. "It was then that I knew I loved you."

He found a place to park and took her in his arms. At the touch of lip to lip, their spirits fused. Vanstrum would have given a good deal to have had his leads give a close-up like that, but their long embrace would have bothered the censors.

Evelyn forgot Arthur, forgot the tournament, forgot even the job. Dimly, through the fog of ecstasy, she told herself, "It's all right. We like the same things. We belong to each other."

As if he read her thoughts, John murmured against her lips, "We belong to each other, darling, forever and ever," and promptly returned to the rapture of kissing her.

Then Evelyn became oblivious of everything—herself, the world. This man, John MacRae, was all that mattered, now and forever.





# Much Too Nice

By June Jennifer

**W**ITH an utterly disinterested air, Rod lit another cigarette. "But it isn't really any business of yours, is it?" he demanded. "It is the privilege of every man to make a fool of himself in his own way."

Billee Northrup sighed. She was trying so hard to make him understand. "Any man, perhaps, but Phil Duncan," she said earnestly. "I won't have Phil taken for a ride by a girl like Felicia Heminway. You see, Phil is different—sort of sweet

and idealistic. She'd ruin him, sure as anything."

Rod smiled slightly, not a very pleasant smile. "She will probably marry him."

Billee looked frightened. "It is just what I am afraid of. I can't let that happen to Phil. We've got to think of some way to save him. Since he's inherited all that money, the girls have been chasing him like a pack of wolves. Rod, can't you think of something?"

Rodney Farrel looked angry. "The only thing I can think of is that my fiancée is working herself into a frenzy about another man! That she is spoiling my vacation by raving about him and his troubles. I don't care whom this dear old pal of yours marries, and I wish you would stop talking about him. I've had just about all I can stand."

"But, Rod——"

He stood up abruptly, throwing his cigarette at Kiki, the cat, who hissed at him and leaped nimbly to the wall surrounding the terrace. "I'm fed up! If you say another word about Phil Duncan——"

"But, Rod, you must understand! Phil——"

Then they were quarreling, and a moment later Billee Northrup and Kiki were alone on the terrace, while Rod was tearing away in his car.

Billee was frightened. Her slender hands folded into fists, and her big cinnamon-brown eyes were round and wide with distress. Rod could not possibly have walked out on her like that, just because she wanted to keep Phil from being snatched by Felicia Heminway! He couldn't, and yet he had.

She had not known Rod very long, and this was the first time he had visited her home town. They had met while she was attending college and, after an almost breathless courtship, had become engaged. Billee still felt breathless and a trifle incredulous when she thought about it.

She could not look at Rod's handsome face and tall, masculinely graceful form without feeling awed. The first time she had ever seen him she had stopped and simply stared because he was, with his blue eyes and helmet of bronze hair, so much like the romantic young men that girls dream about but very rarely find.

She still could not understand what he saw in her. With her soft brown eyes, her light, curly hair and baby-pink complexion, she was not even a type. Her mouth was too small, even though it was a vivid, natural red, and she was such a tiny thing. How could Rod have selected her when he could have had his pick of a hundred more attractive and glamorous girls? She felt humbly grateful to him. Sometimes she had to pinch herself to be sure it was not all a dream.

She was frightened now. Was the dream ended because she had prated so constantly of good old Phil? Worried as she was, her red lips curved into a rueful smile as she considered how absurd it was for Rod to be jealous of him—like a gorgeous bird of paradise being jealous of a partridge.

It was not that Phil Duncan was plain. He was not bad-looking at all with his gray eyes, stubborn chin and thick brown hair. But he was



awkward and inclined to be shy—with every one but her, that is. He could not be timid with a girl he had played and fought with from the time they both were able to walk.

Rod just didn't understand how she felt about Phil. Not only did she feel a sort of proprietary interest in him, but all her life she had been getting him out of scrapes.

And now he was, although he might not know it, threatened by the very worst scrape of all! While she was away at college, an uncle had died and left Phil approximately five hundred thousand dollars. Overnight, of course, he had become the most popular and sought-after male in the town.

Returning for the summer vacation, Billee had found things in a deplorable condition. Felicia Heminway, whom Billee detested, had already established herself as girl friend No. 1. Phil was taking her about everywhere—the big, helpless boob! Didn't he have sense enough to know she was only after his money? She had never condescended to look at him before.

When Billee had seen the young man parked admiringly in front of a jeweler's plate-glass window, staring at engagement rings, she had known that something had to be done to save her old pal from his most colossal folly. Rod, being a man himself, would be able to advise her, she'd thought. Instead, he had blown up and walked out on her, perhaps never to return.

Dolefully, Billee dragged herself into the house and up to her room. She wanted to crawl into bed and weep, but she restrained herself. Perhaps Rod would come back, she thought hopefully. But even if he did not, there was still the problem of Phil to be settled. She would go

and see that young man, she decided. At least, it would pass the time away until Rod cooled down.

At Phil's apartment, a manservant admitted her with a bored, weary air that indicated that feminine visitors to the place were no novelty to him. Phil, in a huge chair, looked up as she was ushered in.

"Hello, brat," he greeted her. "What do you want?"

Billee, elevating her tilted nose, surveyed the luxurious scene. "Hello yourself," she answered. "Gone ritzy, I see. I could use a cocktail."

But when it came she only sipped at it. In one of the big armchairs she looked, in her white silk crêpe, like a lovely child. But her very adult mind was busy as she studied Phil's indolent form. He was nice—much too nice for Felicia!

"Phil," she said abruptly, "Rod and I have had a fight. I want you to take me to the Brinkley party tomorrow night! Pul-lease!"

Phil snorted, his gray eyes scornful. "Humph! So you can use me as a cat's-paw? No, thanks, I have other plans."

"That Felicia person, I suppose." It burst from her angrily. "O. K. Could I use that tricky-looking phone?"

He sat up stiffly. "Whom are you going to call?"

Billee grinned wickedly. "Who else but Carter Burch? He'll be glad to squire me, I know. And he's so fascinating, don't you think?"

Phil jumped up. He glared. "You aren't letting Carter Burch take you anywhere! Sit down there." He almost slammed her into a chair. "I thought I was through with the job of bringing you up. Now you are back on my hands."

She let that pass. Phil always considered himself her superior be-

cause he was male ~~and~~ ~~two~~ years older than herself. She concealed a grin. She knew that pretending to telephone to Carter Burch would get under his skin. Poor Phil had a chivalry complex, and Burch was an utter rotter whose specialty was love-making.

"I will go with Carter if you don't take me yourself," she said stubbornly.

"Oh, all right! You always were a spoiled brat. I'll have to put aside everything, I suppose, and beau you around until your young man comes to his senses. Look for me to-morrow night."

Billee nodded. If Rod called up or—— But he did not call up or appear the next day, and evening found a very subdued girl in yellow satin waiting for a tall figure in evening clothes who seemed, she thought with considerable irritation, to be bored with it all. She sighed deeply as she thought how much money had changed him—how far removed he was from the old Phil who had been her pal.

The Brinkley party was already in full swing when she and Phil arrived. Rod was there, dancing with Felicia Heminway! Billee flashed him an astonished, delighted glance. Dear Rod! He was helping out, after all, in his own way! How clever of him to pretend to be making love to the blond girl! He was so handsome and debonair that Felicia would not, despite Phil's newly acquired fortune, be able to resist him.

Her heart sang contentedly as she danced with Phil. They had always danced well together and now they seemed to float in each other's arms. She almost chuckled as Rod regarded her over his partner's shoulder with rather a stony glance. He was playing his part well.

She would tell him that she un-

derstood, congratulate him upon his finesse when she danced with him. It was swell of him to do this for her, and she did not temper the adoration in her eyes.

But, during the entire evening, Rod did not dance with her at all or speak to her. When she returned home, escorted by a silent Phil, she was somewhat bewildered, but kept reassuring herself that it was all a part of Rod's adroit plot.

Phil caught her finger tips. "Tough break, brat," he said. "Keep the old chin up! Going to the Tucker house party up at their lodge this week-end?"

She nodded. "I've been invited, of course, but if Rod——"

"If Rod doesn't take you, I will. Now run along and get some beauty sleep. And don't worry! We'll get that young fellow back for you. Trust Phil!"

She ran into the house but she could not sleep. The evening was over, and she had not felt Rod's arms around her or his lips on hers. He had not smiled at her once. Of course, ~~it~~ was all a part of the game he had decided to play for her sake.

She got up and stood staring out the window, through the trees, at the shining surface of the river. When she was younger she had always gone to the river with her troubles, swimming her restlessness away. Slipping on a brief, knitted suit, she ran down the back way. She would swim to Cedar Island.

She was not aware until she was halfway there, that she was not swimming alone. Catching her breath, she turned on one side. Perhaps Rod—— But it was not Rod. Phil! He grinned at her.

"We haven't outgrown getting the same idea at the same time. You haven't forgotten how to swim, brat."



"Beat you to the island," she challenged.

They finished, as always, neck and neck, just as a full moon came over the hills to the left, turning to silver the strip of river sand. Here they sat and talked a little, dozed a little, too. Billee awoke suddenly, startled. Laughing voices echoed in her ears.

*Billee gazed out across the water, at Rod in a canoe with Felicia Heminway. It was just like Phil to be sound asleep, when she wanted him to see Felicia with Rod!*

Rubbing her eyes, she gazed out across the water. A red canoe was bobbing along, borne by the current. She stared, unable to believe her eyes. Rod was in that canoe, and Felicia Heminway. The two of them





girl waved airily and Phil, grinning, saluted with two fingers.

Rod's strategy had not done a bit of good! Billee,

still dressed in formal attire, just as they had come from the dance. Felicia's laughter sounded like a shallow, silver bell.

Billee sat up, hugging her dimpled knees, a perplexed frown between her blond brows. Wasn't Rod carrying this thing just a bit too far? But she knew Felicia and the way she had with men. If Felicia insisted upon the river, how could any man refuse? She looked at Phil angrily as he lay, turned over on his stomach, his brown head buried on his arm, apparently lost to the world. It was just like him to be sound asleep when she wanted him to see the Heminway girl boating with Rod!

She was exasperated with Phil, especially when she saw him the next day, driving his car with Felicia, a delicious vision in pale-pink organ-die, by his side, a triumphant smile stealing across her crimson lips. The

feeling very cross about everything, went home and sat on the terrace with Kiki on her lap, hoping that Rod would come. He might at least telephone her to see if his course of conduct was meeting with her approval. But Rod was, she thought proudly, the type to do a thing thoroughly, if he did it at all.

Only, it was pretty forlorn, waiting around for something to happen. Phil came over casually and Wednesday evening he took her to the theater where, in the next box, Rod and Felicia were sitting. Afterward, they went to Phil's apartment for cocktails.

All the time, Rod was aloof and cold toward her while Phil, apparently not at all disturbed, paid her awkward little attentions that any feminine eye could see were certainly forced and planned for some desired effect.

Billee burned with humiliation as

she saw Felicia's bright, spiteful eyes upon her. Felicia understood—perhaps Phil had even told her—that he was merely paying her attention in order to bring Rodney Farrel to heel. She suddenly announced that she had a headache and was going home.

Rod jumped to his feet. "I'll take you," he volunteered.

Billee's heart gave a jubilant leap. Rod was tired of his rôle! She looked at him, so tall, handsome and thrilling-looking, and ached to throw herself into his arms right there before them all.

She caught the malicious glitter in Felicia's blue eyes and hesitated. If she left the girl and Phil alone in the apartment, that young man, convinced that he had fulfilled his duty, might be very susceptible to Felicia's charms. She fixed upon him pleading eyes. He took the hint and rose. "No; I'll take you home," he said formally, and Rod stepped back, frowning as Billee accepted the offer with a bewitching smile.

"Seems to me you are rather overplaying your hand," Phil told her curtly, as he drove the short distance to her home. "You left them alone together."

She gasped. She had not thought of that. Rod would be angry all over again, too. She looked so wretched and unhappy that Phil patted her hand. "Never mind; it will all come out right," he said grimly. "I'll see that it does."

She turned her brown eyes upon him. What did he mean by that? An awful thought occurred to her. He might propose to the blond girl so that Rod would be out of that particular corner of the picture. And Felicia, being what she was, would accept so quickly, that he would be facing the altar before he knew what it was all about.

Again she gasped. She had played right into Felicia's hands. Trying to save Phil, she had probably ruined him. That girl would soon show herself in her true colors and break his heart. She was shallow, vicious, and would squander his money.

She had tried to save him, without knowing in the least what she was doing. After all, as Rod said, a man had a right to make a fool of himself in his own particular way. What was it to her if Phil's way meant marriage to a scheming blonde? She stole a glance at him out of the corner of her eye and straightened up.

He certainly was big enough to look out for himself! He couldn't always expect her to get him out of the messes he got himself into. Her eyes became big and round, flashing with golden fire.

"All right," she snapped. "Go on, be a fool! Marry Felicia Heminway and see if I care! You never did have a particle of sense and you never will have!"

Phil stared, brought the car to a stop right there in the middle of the road, and whistled softly. A smile suddenly split the astonished calm of his face. A chuckle came from his lips.

"So that is what has been worrying you, Miss Fixit," he said. "Hm-m-m! I might have guessed. So you don't want me to marry Felicia? Why?"

Billee sobbed. "I haven't been worrying about you. I wouldn't waste my time! Marry an Indian squaw if you want to! Go to Turkey and marry a harem."

Phil coughed. "Harems are going out of style. Now we have Reno. One girl at a time is the modern motto."

She hated him when he was flip-pant. Suddenly, she hated him anyway. Here she had sacrificed her-

self, quarreled with Rod and almost broken her own heart, just so that he could laugh at her. It was all a huge joke to him.

"Take me home at once," she commanded. "Didn't I tell you I had a headache?"

Alone in her room, she huddled miserably in the middle of her bed, her headache a reality now. Perhaps Rod would call her up or come to her, late though it was. Perhaps she ought to call him. She dialed the number but he was not home yet. She tried again and again.

Rod came to see her the next day, but he did not take her in his arms. His face was dark and troubled, his eyes and lips sullen.

"A pretty mess you made of things," he complained. "You've hedged me into a rotten spot."

She stared at him dully. "You, Rod? What do you mean?"

"You know what I mean. You got me sore, being so concerned about your old pal. I thought I would flirt with Felicia Heminway to teach you a lesson and I—well I got in a trifle too deep, and now she probably thinks I am in love with her and want to marry her."

Billee sank into a chair. "Rod! But it has only been a few days."

His good-looking face grew darker. "A fellow can travel a long way in a few days—with a girl like Felicia, especially. She knows her way about and I happen to be only a poor, weak man."

"Oh, Rod, I never dreamed—I—I only wanted to rescue poor Phil. Do you want me to give you back your ring?"

He caught her to him then. "Little foolish! Of course not. I want you to try rescuing me! Drop Phil and cut out leaving me at the mercy of that man-eating blonde!"

LS-6C

She was between laughter and tears. "All right, Rod, I will. I guess as an angel of mercy and that sort of thing, I am not so hot. I guess you are right. Phil is entitled to make his own mistakes."

Rod held her close and kissed her lingeringly. "I don't want to make any," he confessed tenderly. "Darling, don't leave me lying about."

She laughed. It was so good to be in Rod's strong arms again, to feel his lips on hers. Yet, even the rapture of being held close by Rod did not blot out the thought of Phil. Suppose he married Felicia? His money would run like water through her fingers, and after he was broke—well, that would be the end. She shuddered.

"What's the matter—cold?" Rod asked.

She looked up, startled. She had forgotten him—only for the moment, of course. Rod Farrel was not the kind of man you could forget for long. She raised her brown, adoring eyes and discovered a strange expression lingering in his.

She grasped his arm. "Rod! What is it? You looked so strange."

He shook his head. "Nothing. I was just jealous of that fellow again, I guess. You won't see him any more?"

It was impossible, of course, not to see Phil if he wanted to see her. Probably he never would again. He knew now that she did not want him to marry Felicia and, although he had laughed at her, perhaps he'd be resentful after thinking it over.

But he did not seem angry when he came over on Friday afternoon. He cocked one gray eye at her questioningly. "Didn't we have a date or something for the week-end, brat?"

"Oh, Phil, I am going with Rod."

He wriggled his chin thoughtfully

between his thumb and forefinger. He had done that, in just the same way, when he was a freckle-faced kid. Oh, he was, in spite of his half million dollars and girls like Felicia Heminway who pursued him, still just a kid. A film of tears blurred the outlines of his figure.

"Everything O. K. then?" he asked.

"Yes, everything." She tried to make her own voice sound proud and happy, but a miserable little sob was in her throat.

"Love the guy, Billee?"

"I adore him, Phil. He's so handsome. I cannot understand yet how he came to pick me out.

I'm such an ordinary-looking little mutt."

Phil's gray eyes stared. He leaned slightly toward her. "You're what?"

She repeated herself humbly. Phil's stare continued for a moment, then he snorted, walked away and climbed into his car.

She did not see Phil again until they were at the Tucker Lodge on the Russian River. Billee loved the big log house, set on a gentle slope above the water, with its extensive garden of native flowers, shrubs and paths winding through the redwoods. She delighted in showing Rod all the old, familiar places, all the secret nooks she had known since childhood.

They were just returning to the house when they met Phil and

Felicia. The girl smiled sweetly at Billee. "Isn't this just too romantic?" she chirped brightly. "Phil is taking me to the magic spring. You know, they say that if you throw a coin into the water you'll get your wish fulfilled." She held up a silver quarter and smiled archly.

Phil grinned. "I wouldn't count on it much," he warned. "I sacrificed a whole dime once when I was a youngster wishing for a pony, and all I got was a mongrel dog."

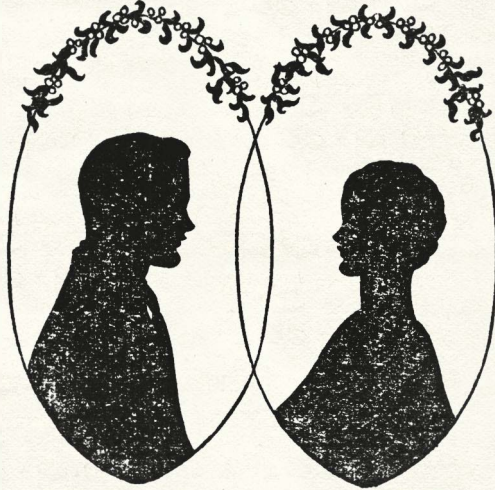
Felicia smiled serenely. "Oh, but I am just sure my wish is going to come true."

The memory of that confident smile had

lingered with Billee as she dressed for dinner that evening. Felicia would wish, of course, something about a man. But which man? Rod was so charming, and Phil had all that money.

She laughed shakily. Just casting a coin into the magic spring would not give either of them to Felicia. It was just a common spring under a rock, surrounded by ferns and azaleas, its bottom some kind of quicksand that swallowed up the coins cast in. The Indian legend that it was a wishing spring was utter nonsense.

The dance after dinner seemed to be a success for every one but Billee Northrup. Felicia was enjoying herself, dividing her dances between Phil and Rod, and flirting with both of them impartially. Since the party



had a leap-year flavor, it was feminine privilege to select partners, and Rod, of course, could not refuse when Felicia asked him. Phil, apparently, did not want to.

Billee's soft brown eyes grew large and troubled. It was impossible to tell which of the two Felicia favored and, as the evening advanced, the girl grew more wretched and uneasy. Rod was devoted but his manner, somehow, was absent and different. Phil, too, was strangely quiet. Was jealousy of Rod tormenting him? Would it hasten him into marrying Felicia?

Unable to endure the situation any longer, late in the evening, Billee stole up to her own room and stood looking out the window. If only Felicia would let both young men alone! Rod was an engaged man, and Phil—Phil was far too good for her. She wished—

Suddenly, she thought of the magic spring. Of course, there was nothing to the ancient Indian superstition. Didn't Phil laugh at it?

But perhaps a whole handful of coins would help. She went through her purse feverishly. In a moment, she had coins clasped in her hot hand and was out the side door, running crazily toward the spring.

It was silly, of course, but she knelt on the mossy bank of the spring and slowly opened her fingers so that the coins fell into the pool.

"I wish——" she whispered. Her lips moved slowly.

She started up suddenly and ran back along the zigzag path. She stopped just as suddenly. Some one was standing directly in the way. She saw a man's broad shoulders and, a moment later, the light froth of a girl's gown. Then she heard Felicia's light, charming laugh.

"Oh, Rod, don't be so silly," she pleaded. "Of course, I don't love

Phil. But all that money—I intend to marry him. You don't want to marry me anyway."

Billee's heart almost stopped. "Of course not," Rod's voice was saying. "You're a dangerous woman. You'd make a punk wife for any man. I want a wife I can trust, like my little Billee. But I happen to be rather crazy about you." His head bent.

Billee, her limbs turned liquid, saw that they were kissing. She felt chilled. So Rod was like that! He wanted to marry her because he could trust her, and carry on an affair with Felicia at the same time!

She heard them speak again, Felicia in a pettish tone. "Phil is awfully slow," she complained irritably. "I am getting sick and tired of it."

Rod laughed. "Why don't you compromise him, you little devil? Let yourself be discovered in his room to-night. I gather the young man is conventional. He'll be chivalrous enough to marry you."

Billee heard no more. The two of them were trying to frame Phil! She turned swiftly and stole down another path, then darted breathlessly into the Tucker living room, staring around her wildly. Where—oh, where was Phil?

She saw him finally, almost flung herself upon him.

"Phil," she cried, "take me home! I want to go home."

"But Rod"—his face seemed very set and white—"what will he say?"

She began to tug at him. She must get him away. "I don't care what Rod says. I want you to take me away."

"O. K. Come on."

But instead of leading her to his car, Phil urged her down the slope to a circular bench above the river. He pushed her down and seated himself beside her. "Now, what's it all



*She looked deep into his eyes and what she saw there made her gasp. "Phil," she breathed, "you—you love me!"*

about?" he demanded. "Been fighting with Rod again?"

Billee shook her head. Suddenly, she began to sob. Phil, after a moment of hesitation, put his arm around her. "What's the matter, beautiful?" he asked huskily. "Tell old Phil about it."

She raised her head. Phil had

called her "beautiful." To—to comfort her? She looked deep into his eyes and what she saw there made her gasp. She clung to him suddenly.

"Phil," she breathed, "you—you love me!"

His arm tightened. "Guilty as charged. I always have, you know. But I promised your mother I would

not say anything until you were through college. You see, she thought that you might imagine yourself in love with me before you had a chance to meet other men, just because we had been pals so long."

"But—but Felicia?" Her eyes were dazed. "You—you let me worry myself to death about her."

"Felicia was just Felicia. After you wrote you were engaged, it did not seem to matter much what I did with my life and that money. I never cared for her. It was you, always. I'd give my life to make you happy."

Billee snuggled up to him. "Oh, Phil, will you?" Her eyes were shining. "I've been so silly. Rod thrilled me because he was so handsome, and I—I thought it was love. I thought that I was worried about Felicia's marrying you because you were my dear old pal. But suddenly, to-night, I knew that it was because I loved you myself."

Phil held her close. She was

deliriously happy in his arms, thrilled not with the surface excitement that Rod's caresses aroused within her, but to the very depth of her soul. With his lips on hers and his eyes gazing with flaming love into her own, she felt one with him, as if they had been fashioned for each other, two parts of a perfect whole.

He was a song in her heart, an altar fire that burned her blood to golden radiance within her. Love was Phil!

"And I did not know it," she whispered, "until I knelt beside the magic spring, shaping my wish. Suddenly I knew, clearly, that there was only one thing I could wish for—your love, Phil."

"My darling!" was all he said, and tilted her face to his.

The redwoods whispered, an owl hooted, the river rippled, and in the lodge the radio dispensed music; but on the little circular bench above the water, all was sweet and still.



### LOVE'S DREAMS

IT seems I never dreamed at all  
 Until you stole my heart;  
 And now I cannot think but what  
 A dream or two must start.  
 And out of seeming nothingness  
 Our song of love is found,  
 This beauty of a thousand dreams  
 With which the days abound.

HELEN MARING

# There Is No Love

By Philippa Preston

A SERIAL—Part II.

## CHAPTER V.

GARY got up and sat beside Crystal, pulling her around so that she faced him in the sunlight. His eyes were intent on her.

"Supposing I had told you this story instead of my mother? Supposing she had not fainted and cried? Would you have thought the same?" he asked.

"What's the use supposing, my dear? She came, and that is the end. She showed me what would happen. It was like spreading out a picture for me to look at."

"That is all impossible." Gary let go her hands and got up, striding around the room, backward and forward, his face set, his eyes hard and cold.

"It sounds impossible." Crystal pushed her hair from her forehead. He saw the sun catch its lights as on the first day when he opened the door for her to walk over his threshold and straight into his heart. "But so is the life your mother would live if we gave way to our own desires. The anxieties, the quarrels would wear us out. We should hide our thoughts, we should hear her crying in our ears every



time we tried to enjoy ourselves. I couldn't buy things without wondering if your sister could afford them, too. Gary, I've been thinking it over as I walked. I could not face what I know would be waiting for me."

Crystal paused. She met his eyes courageously, and they stared at each other in silence. It seemed they were both saying a silent farewell to their future together. Gary uttered a deep sigh before he said:

"Have you thought what we are to face, instead?"



"Yes, dear heart, I have."

"Crystal, let's get out of this," he said violently. "Out on the Island, where we can get away from this mess. I've got my launch all ready."

She got up and spread out her arms, raising herself on tiptoe, so that her slim figure was outlined by her thin dress.

"Let's! I want to go fast—very fast."

Crystal made no attempt to talk to Gary as they drove over Queensboro Bridge, onto Long Island and out to the shore. Every little while he glanced down at her white face, feeling their unhappiness was incredible. At last he drew up at a private pier where his cruiser lay moored in charge of a mechanic.

Gary helped Crystal on board the trim, glistening white-and-silver boat.

"I shall not require you, Tyson," Gary said to his man and with a salute the mechanic prepared to help Gary cast off. Not until they were well away from the pier did Crystal speak.

"Gary, couldn't we go on and on, until we just reached the end of the world?"

"If I did not love you so much I'd agree, but my caring makes it necessary you should not feed the fishes. I want to think about the sun shining on your hair the way it does now. I want this boat to carry a picture of you, and sometimes maybe I'll come out in her and shut my eyes and think of you."

He was standing at the wheel in spotless white, for he changed on board, the cruiser having two cabins and a tiny gallery. They were heading out straight from land, the wind caused by their tremendous speed blowing the spray over the bows. From the pile of cushions in the observation lounge Crystal could almost feel they were going to the end of the world. Resolutely she refused to look back to the shore, where all their devastating misery waited. Here they were free and together.

Crystal lay stretched out full length, her arms crossed, her chin pressed into their slim roundness. Gary was glad he had the excuse of the wheel, not to take her in his own.

"My beloved, there is a lonely bit of shore over there, shall we anchor for a while? I want to give you

something to eat. The refrigerator is full, my man sees to that, and the sun is getting lower."

"Must we stop?"

Crystal slid off the cushions and came to stand beside him. The protective window was open, the salt air made her cheeks damp. He slid one arm around her until she was pressed against him. The boat was riding the sea as though possessed of the vital life that flowed

between her skipper and the woman who should have been his mate.

Gary did not answer her question but gently he released her and steered toward the shore. This freedom was too provocative, it was dangerous. Soon the engines were

#### THE STORY SO FAR:

Crystal Terry, secretary to Henry Haverill, wealthy real-estate man, is sent to deliver papers to Gary Lonsdale, millionaire aviator and sportsman. They fall in love with each other. Gary proposes, is accepted, and takes Crystal to meet his family. His mother visits Crystal and tells her that if she marries Gary he becomes a poor man, the money, by his uncle's will, going to Loretta Haverill. In order to keep the money, Gary must marry Loretta. Heartsick, Crystal finally promises Gary's mother to break with him. When Gary comes to her, Crystal tells him her decision.



*They stared at each other in silence. They were both saying a silent farewell to all their dreams, to their future together.*

silent, the cable ran out and they rocked gently. After their meal, Gary drew her down beside him on the cushions, pillowing his head on her lap, holding her tightly so she could not move. Her fingers tangled and untangled in his crisp hair, they fluttered about his face, tracing out this line and that, weaving the pattern of them into her mind.

It was almost dark before Gary stirred. He sat up now, his hair rumpled, a ghostly figure in white against the sea, and looked at his watch.

"Time I took you back to New York, sweet," he said quietly, and immediately went forward to do things which sent the engines into life again and themselves flying back beneath a starlit sky. When they reached the pier, Crystal stepped out as though she stepped back into reality. Gary had changed again and, as they walked away from the boat to his car, Crystal said:

"Don't take me home. I'll get a taxi. I want to remember you like this against the sea, with the stars."

He held her hands.

"How can I do that? Anything might happen."

She shook her head. Tears streamed down her cheeks. She dabbed them away but he saw them in the darkness, like great shining pearls.

"I'll take you home," he spoke roughly.

Obediently she climbed into the car, leaning back in the corner, her face averted as she cried, quietly, terribly, and it made Gary long to kill. Presently the tears ceased, but she did not stir until he stopped before her apartment, then hastily she dabbed some powder on her face and got out, taking care the street arc did not shine on her.

"Don't come up, Gary."

Before he could stop her, she ran up the steps, into the house, back to the rooms left as they were. She shut the door and stood leaning against it, panting breathlessly. The roses drooped on the table, there was the scent of costly perfume, the breeze crackled some tissue paper. Little signs that pierced her heart like Gary's tears would have done.

Gary's hall clock chimed eleven as he let himself into his apartment. He flung off his coat and went into his study as the telephone rang.

He was in no mood to answer it. The sound of Crystal's voice was in his ears, and the sight of her tears in his mind.

The bell's request for an answer went on. He thought for a moment of letting it ring, but the sound got on his frayed nerves and he lifted the receiver to hear his mother on the other end.

"I can't sleep—none of us can, Gary, until you put an end to our suspense. Can't you come to-night? You could be here in an hour."

"No, not to-night." Gary tried not to sound curt. "But you can be assured I'm considering my slaughter. I'll be over in the morning. Good night."

No, he could not decide to-night. Crystal had made up her mind, but he refused to accept its decision. To-day could not be real, the whole progress of it belonged to some nightmare in which one struggled vainly to awake from bitter tears. He poured himself out a drink, gulped it down, and then went over to the window. He did not want to go to bed because he felt so far from sleep. The city still scintillated beneath its millions of lights. From afar he could hear a radio playing a waltz, and it brought back to him

the first day he held Crystal in his arms.

"In the shadows let me come and sing to you,  
Let me dream a song that I can bring to you."

He smiled as he thought of the rapture of those minutes, the feeling of her slim youth through the thin dress, the gliding, swaying, glamour of the music and the scent of her hair.

With a smothered curse he came back to reality and turned away from the window into the room that spoke of his work. For a moment he glanced around at the plans, maps, models, books and a table containing the very latest compass for him to test out in his next flight.

"This is going to be my life, if——" He squared his shoulders. Not until the morning would he face certainty.

He was thankful day brought torrential rain. The summer was going swiftly into the golden fall, and with it came less certainty of regal weather. Sleep had not bothered him except in short snatches when he would start up to realize what had happened.

He was gray, drawn, and as he climbed out of his car at his mother's home, he looked back at the sea that had been blue and clear the day before, and which now came in long white rollers driven before the gale. It tuned in with his mood. The house was changed, too, with its wet awnings and masses of hydrangeas heavy with rain.

He found Peggy alone in the morning room and she jumped up as he came in.

"Hello, Gary. What are you going to do?"

"I haven't made up my mind yet. Where are the others?"

"Oh, around somewhere. What do you mean, haven't made up your mind?"

"Just that." Gary took a cigarette and tapped it without looking at his sister. He did not want to see the abject terror in such youth.

"Well, it's mean of you to keep us in suspense." She went to the door and wrenched it open, shouting across the hall, "Mum, boys, he's come."

"The executioner," Gary thought, and then bent down to kiss Clare as she came in. With a pang he saw she had been crying.

"Gary, I haven't slept." She almost collapsed into a chair.

"We've had a swell time." The boys lounged into the room and they were all watching him.

"Have you decided against work?" Gary asked quietly. He was fighting for time. He was like a runner watching his goal in the distance, wondering if he would be able to reach it.

"Say, we went over all that yesterday," Peggy cut in, "and we said what we thought."

"And Gary, dear, the bills! Why, we owe between us"—Clare swept the four into one—"nearly twenty thousand dollars."

Gary started as though he had been shot.

"You owe twenty thousand dollars!" he choed incredulously.

Their faces crimsoned.

"Yes, we are always ahead of the dividends," Peggy mimicked his horrified amazement. "Mumsie loses money I think. Anyway, we're overdrawn."

"Good heavens, I had no idea of this. And with your income, too!" Gary felt he was drowning in despair.

"The boys are expensive, but, then, Gary, they are young."

"I was young, too, once! It seems such a hell of a long time ago that I can scarcely remember what it felt like, but I didn't run up bills at college and make you pay them."

"Say, you must have been a saint with a halo," Henry sneered.

"No, only a little honest," Gary retorted grimly. He strode away from them all to the window and back again. They held their breaths with anxiety. But Gary, hardly aware of them around him, only knew this last bit of news put the cap upon his hopes. All night he had felt perhaps, but now— He had planned to sell their luxurious possessions to make a start, but that idea was out if debts would swallow up the



*Alone in the apartment, she leaned wearily against the door. Rose petals—Gary's roses—dropped onto the table; the scent of perfume filled the air—all reminders of the Gary she had lost.*

proceeds. And there might be more. He pushed his hair back and came to a standstill, facing the half circle into which they unconsciously arranged themselves.

"I guess you have got me beaten. O. K. I'm your victim."

He turned away without another word. He had to get away before his hot, angry thoughts took shape in words. He threw himself into his car as a frantic call came from Peggy, but he did not look back.

What a pity he couldn't drive the car off a cliff into the sea, but he had to live in order to marry Loretta.

And as he drove, Crystal was listening to Henry Haverill's voice on the telephone in her apartment.

"I am not beating about the bush," he began, and Crystal's heart gave a leap. What did he want? Couldn't they leave her alone? She tried to make her voice curt and hard, but only succeeded in letting the break come into it.

"What is it you want, Mr. Haverill?"

"Just to ask if you'll come back? I need you badly, there is work only you can take care of, and I thought maybe——"

He broke off and waited. Crystal leaned on the little table where the telephone stood. Going back to her old life? She wanted a job, and sometimes she would hear news of Gary, she would be nearer to him there.

"Very well, I'll call you back and tell you what day I'll be back to work. Thank you." The last words were forced out.

She hung up the receiver and sat back, staring at Gary's roses.

Loretta Haverill's apartment adjoined her father's, but did not communicate. When she left college she

declared parents could not be expected to see eye to eye with their children and, therefore, should live alone. As Henry Haverill was a widower, and she an only child, she felt a slight, very slight, compunction about leaving him to look after himself, and suggested they should rent apartments on the same floor, but conduct them quite independently of each other.

Henry agreed. Loretta thought, as she smoked cigarette after cigarette to quiet her jangling nerves, while waiting for Gary, her father would agree to her cutting off his head provided she did not get herself into a mess doing it.

She looked at the clock. In ten minutes Gary would be here. She had just heard his curt voice over the wire asking if she could spare him a "few minutes." A little while before Clare Lonsdale had told Loretta of the dreadful scenes, and how he had once more gone, she did not know where.

"I told him you knew nothing about the terms of the will. Of course, he knows you know now."

Knew nothing about them! She shrugged her shoulders at the absurdity of the idea. She had known that will by heart ever since she entered her teens, and she had told Henry she wanted to marry Gary.

"And you will," he had told her comfortably.

"Bah," she uttered the exclamation aloud and got up from the low gold-brocaded couch to stand in front of the mirror. She always enjoyed looking at her reflection, critically trying to find faults, and then striving to correct them. She wanted to look well for Gary's coming. She wondered if the dress of ruby-red crêpe, with its brilliant belt, suited her. She was too thin for

tailored clothes, they emphasized the long limbs, the arms that were "bony," and the hollows in her shoulders which nothing would ever make smooth and rounded.

But she knew her eyes were fine, large, dark, burning restlessly, and unable to let her perceive their discontented, unhappy look.

"Mrs. Gary Lonsdale," she said to her reflection just as the door opened and, in the mirror, she saw Gary enter the room.

## CHAPTER VI.

"I am a little early," was his greeting as she swung around.

"Sit down in this chair, it's the most comfortable." Her throat pulses were beating, her heart thumping with nervous tension.

"Thanks. You know why I have come?" He leaned forward, his elbows on the arms of the chair, his hands clasped. Loretta sank into a corner of the divan where there was the most becoming light to soften her angular lines.

"Why, yes." She tried to make her voice young, unafraid, but it was stiff.

"I want to hear what you think of this damnable scheme?"

"Not very complimentary," she flamed angrily. "Is it so very damnable?" She saw how desirable he was, his handsome, keen face, his height, his loose, yet muscular build. She saw, too, the hard, inscrutable expression in his eyes, and suddenly she knew it was no good pretending.

"As much so as it can be." Gary's voice was curt. "It seems that there is nothing else for me to do but ask if you agree to carry out the terms of this will? I don't love you. I could not love you if I lived to be a thousand, because I love Crystal Terry. You know all this and,

knowing it, are you anxious and willing to marry me?"

She clenched her fists and dug them into the cushions, thrusting her chin forward.

"Yes, I am. I love you. I have wanted to marry you ever since I was able to think. I don't care so long as my name is Mrs. Gary Lonsdale, and I have you. I don't care for anything so long as you belong to me. Why do you think I have spent three years visiting your family and being bored to death with your mother? I have endured it for the sake of seeing you, talking to you, hoping that I could make you love me. And I have failed in that, but all the while I have known you would be mine in the end."

"I thought you did not know anything about the will?" Gary's voice was weary. He wondered drearily, how many more lies and schemes he would fall over.

"I didn't"—Loretta pulled herself up quickly—"but I just felt you could not belong to anybody else, and when you brought that girl home—"

"Please, we will leave her name out of this business discussion."

Loretta colored. She saw Crystal as she was that evening, young, lovely, and Gary's. There could be no mistake about his caring. For a moment the horror of intense jealousy swept up into her mind in an engulfing tide.

"Very well, as you like. Anyway, she means nothing to me now."

"You are quite determined that I am worth marrying under such conditions? Remember, the money is yours if I fail. If I refuse to play my part of the bargain, you can scoop the pool and be a very wealthy woman."

Loretta spread her arms along the top of the divan. Her fingers bore

two heavy ruby rings, and a large square-cut emerald. Gary suddenly thought they were like snakes.

"I know, but I want to be your wife. The money is important, but nothing in comparison to saying to a salesgirl, 'Send it to Mrs. Gary Lonsdale!'"

Gary got up with such violence he knocked over a small table bearing a heavy vase. The flowers fell out, and the water trickled in a small river across the thick carpet.

"I am sorry." He picked up the vase and roses.

"It doesn't matter. We seem doomed to smash and spill, when we meet. I broke that cocktail glass when you announced your wedding." Loretta decided upon a new attitude. She would be casual and easy.

"I think I'll go." Recalling that evening overwhelmed Gary.

"I shall expect you to take me out to dinner where we can discuss all our plans." Loretta stood in front of him. "I have at least the right to ask you to appear delighted. I can't help what you feel inside."

Once again jealous anger swept aside her newly made resolutions to be calm and casual.

"I shall see you are kept in countenance," Gary said gravely. He looked at her critically for the first time. He saw the glittering, restless mind and thought: "If this had to be, I am glad there is nothing in her to remind me of what I have lost. Crystal can remain in the secret places of my heart."

"The announcement of your canceled wedding and our engagement will be in to-morrow's papers."

He started. He had forgotten the publicity. His mind flew to Crystal. All day he had not realized he would not be calling for her, that he would not see her, and as he remembered, a mad desire seized him.

How could they live without each other? How could he not see her again? He forgot where he was, the room faded and it was Crystal who stood in front of him, not Loretta. He made a queer movement forward and then stopped, awake again. Would the rest of his life be spent in dreams and nightmares?—he wondered. Loretta, watching him, guessed what he was thinking. He looked at her, pushing one hand across his forehead, but she knew he did not see her. Then stumbling past, he wrenched at the door, blundered out and down to his car.

He must see Crystal. How could the day go without hearing her voice? He did not reason that they had said "Good-by." It was an impossible thing to have done. He turned up Park Avenue, and then he glanced at the hotel where they were to have been married. Abruptly he pulled into the block where cars might be parked. The roses would all be there ready for to-morrow, he had not canceled anything.

He went through the wide vestibule and instantly a manager sprang to life.

"The roses look very beautiful, Mr. Lonsdale. I have had the suite which Miss Terry will use lined with pale-pink roses, as you said it was her favorite flower. Would you like to see it?"

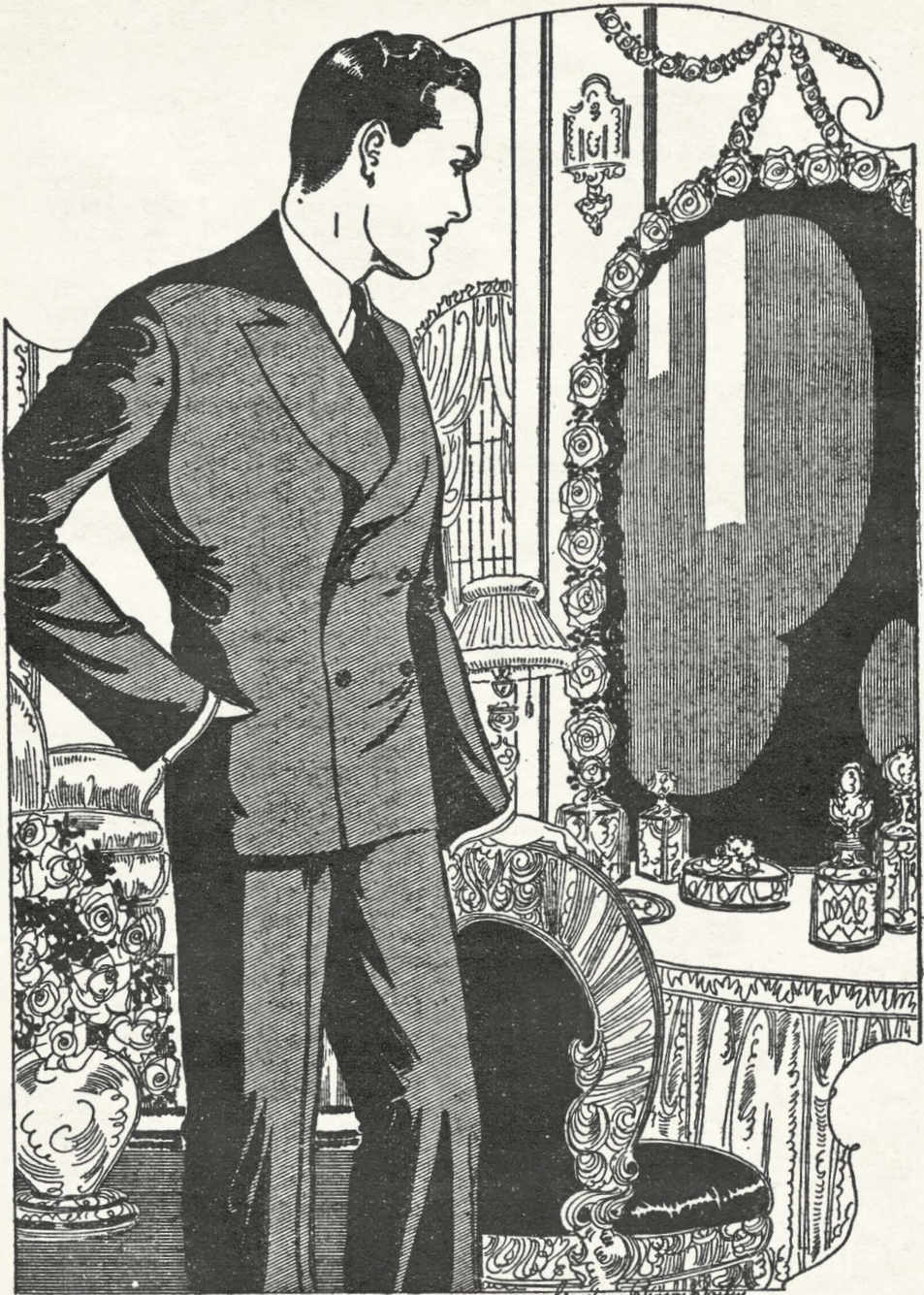
Gary stared at him for a moment before answering. The manager hid the surprise he felt. There was something wrong, this was not the same Gary Lonsdale who had come to order the lavish preparations for his wedding.

"Yes, I'll go alone. Don't bother to come."

The manager shrugged his shoulders when the elevator door closed behind Gary.

He was shot up and out. There





*Gary stood and looked at the dressing table at which Crystal would have sat—Crystal in her wedding dress, dressing herself for him!*

was no mistaking the corridor leading to the principal suite. Tall pillars of roses, joined by greens, the

doorway framed in an arch, workmen still busy. Gary went past them into the huge ballroom that

was heavy with the perfume of thousands of flowers, and then back into the suite where Crystal would have changed into her wedding dress. He stood looking at the dressing table, the mirror framed in roses, bowls of them flanked the floor mirrors, a special set of glass bottles had been arranged, filled with her favorite perfume.

Then he turned away.

Once more on the pavement he climbed into his car. Where to? He sat still, his arms folded upon the wheel, staring at the whirling maze of traffic and hurrying folks. There were poor and well off, hurrying this way and that, going places, seeing folks, but he had no reason for going anywhere. He looked at his watch. Eight o'clock—he had planned a wonderful evening with Crystal, for every one, since the day he met her, had been spent together.

This day could not finish without her. Impossible! And with that, he started the engine and shot forward into the stream of traffic.

Crystal answered his ring and held the door wide, holding onto the joy that threatened to choke her. She knew by his expression why he had come.

"I know—I— It's rotten of me, but do you understand? May I come in?"

"Of course." She led the way into the sitting room. Gary's roses were everywhere.

He stood jingling the change in his pocket.

"I felt I could not go on not seeing you. Is there anything against our walking, just walking? Lots of folks do just walk."

"I'll get my hat." She went into the bedroom. She came back in a minute, in the small hat that she had worn the day she first met him.

Gary remembered it because he recalled every detail of that moment.

"We'll go toward the river. There's more air." He wanted to kiss her, but he was struggling to get a new foothold in her life. He would have to be friends, it would be better than nothing, he'd hold onto a slender bit of her life if he could see her, speak to her, hear her voice, see the light come and go in her face.

They went out into the night. He left his car parked in front of the house and they went over toward the river in silence. At last Crystal looked up at Gary.

"There is lots we should talk about." Her fingers closed tightly on her pocketbook. "I've been thinking all day about—about my clothes, and all your presents."

"If you are going to say, 'I am sending them back,' don't trouble. Tell the janitor to chuck them all in the furnace, if you refuse to keep them."

"I didn't refuse, Gary."

"Then what's the trouble?"

Up one block and down the other. Gradually, they threaded their way to the river, silver in the moonlight.

"There isn't any trouble, Gary. Have you seen Loretta?"

"Yes, but don't let's think of her. Can I come sometimes and just do what we're doing now? I can't kiss you while we're walking. It sort of keeps one distant."

"Yes."

Silence.

"I'm going back to Haverill's. I shall see him in the morning."

"Good heavens!" Gary came to a standstill.

"I've got to earn my living, and his office is not so bad, and I'll hear about you sometimes. I shall probably type letters beginning: 'With reference to the summer house you wish to rent——'"

"I suppose you'd hit me if I asked you to type the same sentence all day long for double the salary Henry Haverill pays you?"

"Why the same sentence?" She turned and went on walking while he strode along beside her.

"Because I couldn't think of any other. It would save trouble planning your day's work. Would you hit me?" he demanded.

She smiled, a wan, tender curving of her lips.

"I guess I'd have to. But I know Haverill will take me back. In fact, he phoned me this morning and asked me to come back."

"The swine!" Gary's veins pumped with anger. Had he been blind all these years when he counted Haverill as decent, a good friend?

"Well, he has some business worrying him which I have always looked after and perhaps he figured it that I would want to work again, anyway."

Silence. They felt it falling between them as they both struggled with the thick folds of their misery. Then Crystal stopped where the trees made deep patches of darkness.

"Gary, get married soon. I want to know it's over and the door slammed. It's awful thinking it might open after all."

He answered slowly:

"O. K. I suppose dying is always better when it's quick."

She bit her lip to keep back the tears which threatened.

"I think I'll go home," she managed at last.

Without another word they turned back.

When he reached his apartment, Gary found the entrance filled with reporters. He thrust his hands into his pockets and his jaws out.

"See here, boys, I'm not giving interviews. I don't care where you've

got your information about my wedding, but you're not getting any from me."

Protests, pleadings, they poured over him until at last they found them useless and sheered off on a fresh trail. As the door shut on the last one Gary poured himself a drink.

This was only the beginning.

When his man roused him in the morning from a night of fitful dozing, he brought in the newspapers with the morning coffee. The headlines blazed across the pages:

SENSTIONAL CHANGE OF BRIDE.  
GARY LONSDALE'S WEDDING  
WITH THE LOVELY STENOGRAPHER  
CANCELED. MISS LORETTA  
HAVERILL NEW BRIDE.

Gary threw the cursed sheets across the room just as the telephone rang with Loretta at the other end.

"You've certainly made a good job of the publicity," Gary began curtly. "If you'll tell me the date of the wedding, I'll call up the florists, jewelers, furriers and tell them you will be ordering anything you require in my name."

He felt, rather than heard, the anger from the other end of the line.

"I am overwhelmed with your old-fashioned courtesy," Loretta said sharply.

"No, it's just up-to-the-minute modernity," he retorted grimly. "If you have nothing better to do, will you dine with me this evening?"

"I'll be ready by nine." The receiver clicked at the other end.

Gary put his own down as his valet came in to say his secretary had arrived and wanted to see him.

"All right." Gary lay back against the pillows, his hands clasped behind his head, which he turned as the pale, young man flustered into the room.

"I have seen the papers——"

"That's all right, Saunders. Phone the Ambassador and cancel everything. Tell them to send all the flowers to the nearest hospital. Cancel every confounded thing," he ended almost in a shout.

"Yes, I——"

"Call Miss Haverill and take any instructions she has to give about her wedding arrangements. Now scram, Saunders, I want my bath."

Crystal sat with the paper propped up in front of her untouched breakfast. She had steeled herself to face a new world that morning, but its reception was even more horrible than she could have imagined.

Her portrait stared out from the wilderness of print, details of the broken engagement, the "romance" of the new one, with Loretta's picture smiling from the page. A description of the suite which had been prepared by Gary for his "lovely stenographer," followed by awful questions: "What will happen to the rose-lined rooms? Mr. Lonsdale refuses to talk, but his bride-to-be gives the news."

Crystal stared at the roses which had come, as usual, as soon as she was awake. She wondered if Gary would continue to send them until she was an old woman and too near-sighted to see their beauty, but only able to smell their fragrance. This should have been her wedding day, a breathless, exciting, marvelous day. The ache of remembering what she had planned made her feel sick.

And in one hour's time she would be back at her desk in Haverill's office.

A ring at the door brought a messenger with a letter. Crystal's heart thumped as she saw Gary's writing. Inside was a brief scrawl:

CRYSTAL, I am dreadfully sorry. I expect you have seen the papers. GARY.

"No answer," she said softly, and shut the door. She read the few words over and over again, then locked them away.

Her journey to the office went by in a dream, she took the wrong subway train, nearly missed her station and arrived with her head thumping, and an ache creeping into her chest. She wondered furiously if it were crazy inviting this self-torture, going back into the past that would remind her a hundred times a day of all she had lost. But an intangible intuitive something drove her through Haverill's doors as it had urged her to accept his offer.

To her relief, she was the first to arrive, although Henry was already in his office. She hung up her things in the old place, found her usual desk waiting for her. She sat down and was motionless for a minute, trying to gather her self-control firmly in hand before the others arrived. The cashier came first, tucking away his morning paper with a guilty air as he tried to say a breezy "good morning."

Crystal's cheeks felt hot and she held onto herself as a group came chattering through the door into immediate silence as the girls and a couple of men caught sight of her.

Crystal got up then and leaned with her back against the desk. She was pale, and her smart, well-made suit gave her figure an added fragility.

"Guess we'll get it over." She glanced from one to the other. "Otherwise, it will get in the way of our work. As you see, I've come back because I want a job and I know this one. You will all have seen that there isn't going to be any wedding with me as a bride."

She smiled courageously and nodded as she turned back to her machine, which she could not see

clearly until her nose was blown with great violence. She felt the strained silence, the hushed embarrassment of them all until Grace Manners called out:

"It's O. K., Crystal, we'll forget it."

Then Haverill's buzzer sounded. She knew they were watching her as she gathered her notebook and pencil. She went through the swing doors, along the corridor, and into his office with her mind an absolute blank.

Haverill rose. For one minute she admired his lack of embarrassment, but that was always one of his charms, his only one, as far as she knew. He never let any look or gesture betray what he was thinking, and as he held out his hand she let him take her fingers for a second, her mind numbed now with all that flowed between them.

"I'm glad to see you back, Miss Terry. There's a mighty lot to do, and I'm grateful you are willing to take care of it."

She sat down by his desk.

"I have to work, Mr. Haverill, and as I know this job, it seemed the most sensible thing to accept your offer."

He tapped a pencil on the blotting pad as he said quietly:

"What happens outside this business has nothing to do with either of us."

"No"—Crystal's eyes were clear and as inscrutable as his own—"I quite agree, nothing whatever."

## CHAPTER VII.

Loretta wore dark-green chiffon with a silver belt, diamond earrings, and a green chiffon coat collared with masses of green chiffon roses. As she waited for Gary, two brilliant spots struggled through her make-

up, and her eyes needed no cosmetics to add to their uneasy, excited brilliance.

It was as though all her life's desires were coming to a climax this evening. She had been out with him often, but it was always in a brotherly fashion. She had endured family parties where she counted no more importantly than Peggy; she had gone home and wept with rage because he had taken her home after a party and never asked to come up for "a drink," and when she invited him, there was always some hurry, some scientific work bursting to be done.

But to-night he was calling for her in state. But just as she thought of it, planned the way she would greet him, imagined what he would say, and she would say, the maid came in with a note. Loretta seized it and tore it open.

DEAR LORETTA: I am exceedingly sorry not to be able to keep my promise to call for you, but I have been held up at the last minute with an important aviation meeting. Will you meet me at Cara's? The table is reserved, and my secretary has called the manager to say you are expected.

I shall go straight there.

GARY.

She crushed the paper and threw it to the other side of the room. The evening was ruined. Her excitement died down as easily as it had flamed. She pressed the bell with fingers that would have pushed it through the wall.

"Tell Smith to bring my car," she snapped as the maid appeared.

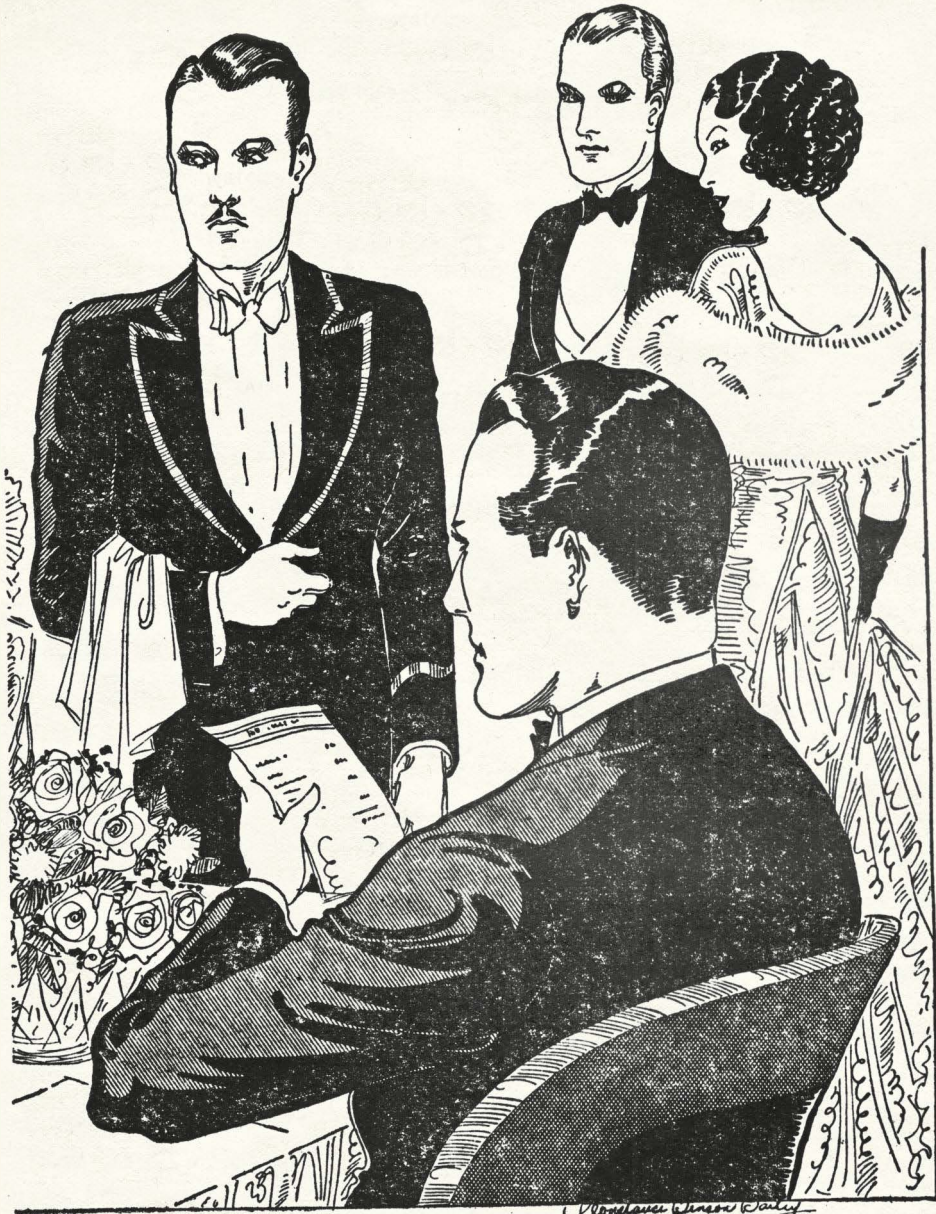
She swept down to it with her brows frowning until they almost met in a dark line. Into her car and out again, scarcely seeing the manager when he came forward to greet her respectfully, hiding his burning curiosity since he, too, read newspapers.



*Gary was indifferent to Loretta's enthusiasm. Finally, enraged, she jumped so indifferent to her!"*

It did not matter that the table was obviously the most attractive in the room, or that gossip made heads nod, and she was the cynosure of every eye. She merely knew she

walked alone through the gay, fashionable, rich crowd, and it was nearly five minutes before Gary threaded his way toward her, but without apparently seeing a single



up. "Why don't you rush off and tell Crystal your news? Maybe you won't be she screamed at him.

face. Loretta felt he started out of a dream as she greeted him.

"I am sorry to be late," he said.

"I almost decided not to come," Loretta lied quietly. His quick

glance of disappointment made her furious. "I suppose that would have pleased you?"

"A magnum of 61," Gary said to the wine steward, "and make your

special cocktail. No, not mine, your own," he said quietly, and then turned to Loretta, "Er—no, I am pleased you came," he found himself lying in the same white way so often necessary socially.

Loretta tapped her fingers on the table. Then she thrust her left hand forward.

"You see, it is quite bare," she said significantly.

Gary stared at it.

"Yes?" It was a question.

Loretta drew in her breath angrily.

"It is usual for a ring to be given. A betrothal ring," she said with mock calmness.

"Of course, will you choose one tomorrow? Cartier's are expecting you. Order what you like best."

Loretta dropped her hands into her lap and they lay there clenched.

"I think the sooner we get married the better, and then your extraordinary manner will be just right for us. Nobody will think anything of your obvious boredom."

Gary smiled. That was Loretta's idea of the average marriage. His eyes half closed with a stab almost physical, as he thought of Crystal's tender, shy, passionate excitement when they discussed their plans. Days and nights—they were all to be on top of the world. Love—real, enduring, passionate love, and, later, children who would be taught to work and think even though they would, as they believed then, inherit vast wealth.

The cocktails came mercifully into the tension. As Gary emptied his glass he forced himself to ask:

"When will you be prepared to be married?"

Loretta twiddled the glass around with her right hand, which had the huge square emerald ring she nearly always wore. She did not look at him.

"The day after to-morrow," she said slowly. "I can order and prepare everything in that time when money is no object."

"Very well." Gary felt stunned. The day after to-morrow! Crystal asked for it to be soon, but he had not thought so soon. The rest of the dinner went by in a dazed, stupefied way. Loretta laughed and talked for the benefit of the rest of the restaurant, and he tried, like a child running along beside a tall man, to keep up with it. But it was a ghastly failure. Out of the mist came Loretta's plans.

"We will be married at the Plaza. I want orchids lining the room. Then we will go to the White Mountains, and later Europe, but not Paris, as it is positively a desert at this time of the year. There will be nobody we know there."

Gary wanted to laugh out loud in bitter amusement.

Crystal had said: "Let's see all the beauty in Europe while the folks we know are busy running around to the fashionable places. And we shall be all alone."

At that moment the waiter appeared with a large important looking envelope addressed to Gary. He took it and at a glance knew who it was from. He apologized and asked Loretta's permission to open it.

The letter heading bore all the official splendor of the United States War department. A little while ago the contents would have put Gary on the heights of excited pride, now it came too late. It meant nothing, except the opportunity to work and work, until he dropped.

"What is it?" Loretta asked.

Gary folded the letter.

"I have got the most important engineering job in the country. I am chief technical adviser to the United States Air Force."



Delight spread over Loretta's face. She would be more than Mrs. Gary Lonsdale. She would be a "somebody" socially, officially. Her mind darted ahead to banquets, receptions, official greetings in Europe. Her eyes danced as she said eagerly:

"Gary, this is wonderful."

He shrugged his shoulders and signaled to the waiter for the bill.

"Yes, it's interesting," he said indifferently. And then Loretta, oblivious of everybody, banged the table with one clenched fist.

"I should rush off and tell Crystal if I were you," she burst out.

Gary reached the end of his patience.

"That's quite an idea," he retorted.

As Gary drove Loretta home after dinner he paid no attention to her chatter, for in his head was her taunting advice to "tell Crystal."

How glad and proud he would have been to take her the news. They would have celebrated, danced until they were weary, and then gone home to each others' arms to end a perfect day.

Loretta dragged her chiffon wrap around her with an impatient movement as he helped her out of the car.

"Will you come up for a drink? We have such a lot to arrange." Her voice was as sharp as her eyes.

"No, thanks, I must get back. Just do whatever you like and let me know your plans. Good night."

He bowed and waited for the door to shut her away, and then he climbed into his car and turned toward New York's less fashionable avenues. When he reached Crystal's house he parked the car, and sat there for a long time watching her window, smoking cigarette after cigarette, until he saw her come to

lean her elbows on the sill, her face merely a small, white patch from where he sat. Presently she drew inside and the light went out.

He returned to his apartment to find a pile of work waiting, but he sat in front of it unable to start and, then against his wisdom, he reached for the telephone and dialed Crystal's number.

"Have I dragged you out of bed?"

"No, my dear." It was a part of her fascination that he could rely on the truth, never just politeness.

"I called because I have some news for you," and he told her.

Crystal forgot everything in her proud delight and Gary's haggard expression lightened a little as he realized her joy. Then he said rapidly, ashamed, and humiliated.

"Loretta wants to be married the day after to-morrow, Crystal. Can't we go somewhere to-morrow night? It will be the last time."

He almost heard her start as she said in a new, shaky sort of voice:

"I'm glad. Yes, I'll be ready for you at nine. Good night."

The receiver clicked and Gary put his down. The work still waited, but it no longer held the importance, the urgency for doing anything. He began to draw meaningless lines and circles on the blotting pad. He would have been making enough money, more than enough for himself and Crystal. The irony of it was they could have had fame and happiness on a moderately good income. Not the fortune he enjoyed at present, but enough to be gay and travel and give the children they would want a good time.

And out on Long Island, there were four of his kin helpless, dragging him down so that they might live.



# In Time for the Wedding

By Doris Fletcher

**G**AIL PATTERSON'S stiff white forefinger pressed again on the doorbell, making it scream in urgent demand. **JEFF SEABURY, M. D.**, the neat sign on the old colonial door stated. Gail shut

her eyes against the dizzy, swimming print. She wished he would come soon.

She looked up then, to see a tall young man holding the door open and frowning down at her.

"Is there a doctor in the house?" Gail asked with an unsteady touch of bravado.

Just why she should take this moment to be flippant, she didn't know. But, when your car skids into a tree and you wake up still alive, it leaves you feeling funny and disconnected inside.

The young man, who was probably Doctor Jeff Seabury himself, didn't smile or say a word. He just stood there, looking at her queerly.

Perhaps it was because her white satin gown wasn't right for country wear, or maybe her veil and orange blossoms were askew. Maybe he had never seen a bride-to-be before, or rather a bride-that-was-to-have-been. Maybe he didn't like brides anyway.

It was getting dark and mixed up back in her head again. She couldn't think straight, and the floor was coming up to meet her.

No, it wasn't the floor! Somebody's arms! They caught her just as she started to fall. She felt herself lifted, a very small girl in a froth of white tulle veiling.

Those strong tweed arms were so comforting, so reassuring. Gail buried her gold head with its crown of flowers and lace in the hollow of the young man's shoulder.

"The bridegroom always carries the bride over the threshold," she thought in a daze.

The acrid smell of tobacco smoke on the lapel of his coat was the last thing Gail remembered. It penetrated to the last the cool, blissful darkness that settled over her.

Gail was trying to figure out where those roses had come from, only to realize that they belonged to the wall paper. Then everything got much clearer, and she saw where she was.

She was right in the middle of the biggest bed she had ever seen! And such big pillows! She felt lost and helpless, and she couldn't move.

That frightened her. It made her want to cry foolishly, like a child. Her gold lashes began to blink furiously over gentian-blue eyes, and her pert nose prickled with tears.

"There, there! Now, you're all right!"

A stout, motherly woman appeared out of nowhere and began to pat her hand, clucking softly at her as if she were a baby chick.

Gail smiled shakily. She thought, "Everything about this house is comforting—the bed, this motherly woman and—yes, that young man's arms."

Then a distressed pucker appeared in her forehead and ruffled the thin, gold line of her brows. Was this woman the doctor's wife? For some reason or other, she felt somewhat depressed at the thought.

But the woman put her right on that score immediately.

"I'm Mrs. Bowen, Doctor Jeff's housekeeper. He's gone to look at your car. But he'll be back. You were pretty well shaken up, weren't you? How you ever walked to the house in your state—" Mrs. Bowen shrugged eloquently. She picked up a couple of bottles and started for the door, talking continuously.

"You just lie quiet there. Doctor Jeff will be back any minute. And if you want me, just sing out. I can hear you easy downstairs."

Gail lay obediently quiet and stared at her hands. She realized then that she was wearing a man's oversized pajamas—Doctor Jeff's, no doubt. Queer, she had only seen him that brief moment at the door, and yet she could remember him so plainly.

She shut her eyes tight with a keen thrill of satisfaction. He had ruffled, thick, dark hair and deep-set scowling eyes. She didn't know what color they were because his lashes were so heavy. He had rather a grim, straight mouth and a deep line in his forehead. But he was very good-looking, which rather surprised Gail. She had thought all the handsome young men lived in the city. She didn't know there were any in the country, particularly such forsaken country as this.

"Hello!"

Gail's eyes flew open at the sound of the deep, crisp voice. It was Jeff Seabury in person.

He came up to the bed and felt her pulse, meanwhile surveying her with cool professional interest.

Gail watched curiously. Didn't he ever smile?—she wondered.

"How do you feel?" he asked abruptly.

Gail tipped her head back against the pillows and looked up at him perkily, if palely.

"I feel pretty well," she answered. "How do you feel?"

He gave her a swift, dark look, but otherwise ignored her question.

"I went and got your car. It's pretty well smashed but still able to run. I put it in the garage for you. You must have been going at a terrific speed to have missed that curve."

Gail lowered her eyes and pulled at a tuft in the quilt.

"I don't remember," she said in a low, strained voice.

She could feel his eyes scrutinizing her, searching out her secret.

"Too bad!" he commented. "Now you'll be late for your wedding."

His words found with brutal sureness the hurt in her heart—a hurt that her accident had momentarily dulled.

She glanced up at him to find his eyes looking across the room significantly. From the top of the closet door like a pale ghost, hung her cap and veil.

Gail looked away hastily, with distaste. Her soft pale-rose mouth tightened to stop its desperate quiver. She was remembering Larry.

"I won't be late for my wedding," she whispered, staring straight before her with misery-filled eyes, "because there isn't going to be any. I'm not going."

She could feel Jeff Seabury's hardness beside her. She could hear it in the dry irony of his voice.

"Not going? And what about the man? I suppose he was left to face the music alone? Was that it?"

"I can't help it!" Gail cried wretchedly. The blue of her eyes darkened. She was thinking of the people at the church. They must have gone home by now, tired of waiting—all the bridesmaids, the ushers, and Larry, too.

If her face with the warm tears on it showed her misery, Jeff Seabury did not care. There was no sympathy in his expression.

"That's just fine!" he drawled sarcastically. "All I can say is that I hope the man you left there at the church, forgets you sooner than I forgot the girl who did that to me."

Gail's eyes widened in astonishment. Her head jerked back to look at him. His face above her was hard and set. He had pulled his pipe out of his pocket and was packing it with vicious, angry fingers.

So that was why he looked so grim, so unhappy! He was nursing a broken heart. And now he was determined to hate her, too, because she represented the reason for all

that had spoiled his life. Only, he had her wrong!

"But you see——" She started to explain and was rudely interrupted.

"Never mind!" Then professionally, "You've talked enough. You need to rest."

He poured some water in a glass and dissolved a powder in it.

Gail couldn't protest. She lay weakly back among the high pillows, her curly gold hair like a ring around her white face, whiter for the contrast of the dark shadows under her eyes.

She didn't care. She didn't want to tell him, anyway. It would be far better just to sleep and forget everything.

She wanted to forget particularly about Larry Burt, whom she was to have married to-day. But you can't marry a man when you find out that he's only marrying you for your money and he's really in love with some one else—somebody named Marcia. Gail had walked into the room where the bridesmaids were dressing, to show them how she looked in her wedding gown. They had been talking about her somewhat pityingly, in low, absorbed voices. Some day she was bound to know about Larry's affair with Marcia. Marrying Gail wasn't likely to put a stop to that, especially now that Gail's money would finance it.

Gail had retreated in silent, stunned horror. Their words had left her sick and revolted. For a moment she was wild with shock

and mortification. All that was left for her to do was to run off, away from the echo of those voices, away from the unendurable bursting of her heart.

She had stolen out just as she was, forgetful of her bridal finery. She had taken the car out of the garage and driven it out to the country, not caring where or how she was going. But there was a mad desperation in her speed. Then a strange, lonely road and that curve and the tree!

"Here, drink it!"

Doctor Jeff was holding the glass to her lips. Gail gave one convulsive shudder at the memory of the hour before. Then she lifted her head and drank eagerly, like a child, her lashes sweeping

her cheeks and shadowing them.

At least, this medicine had the power to make her forget. It would bring peaceful darkness. There would be no Larry in that world of sleep, and no dark, angry young man, either, who blamed you for what you couldn't help.

"All right. Ante up!" Gail instructed.

She and Jeff were playing poker on her bed. She had insisted, after lying there for three days, that some one had to amuse her. Jeff had been forced to comply, more indifferently than graciously.

Now he put down a penny as his ante. Gail carefully matched it with a pajama button.

"Hey!" Jeff remonstrated. "That's



the third one of those. And don't forget those are my pajamas you're wearing."

"It was halfway off, anyway," Gail said, and shook a floppy sleeve at him. "You ought to get a wife to sew on your buttons."

She said that last with a sense of daring, for fear she might be on a forbidden subject. But he only frowned and took refuge behind a bitter cynicism.

"Where can you get a woman these days who knows how to sew on buttons? They're all like you—pretty little pieces of decoration to hang on your arm. And they're heartless, thoughtless and full of sensational whims, like changing their minds at the last minute."

He jerked his black eyebrows up meaningly. But Gail refused to be squelched.

"Oh, so I'm pretty, am I?" she asked saucily.

His eyes narrowed inscrutably as he started to deal the cards.

"Some people like blondes. But personally I find them flat and colorless." There was a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips.

Gail reached over and gave a lock of his thick hair a hard pull.

"That for you!"

He caught her wrist with his strong, long fingers and held it. For a second his eyes burned on her, and Gail, as she looked at them, felt a sudden shock of excitement. They were bluer even than her own, like hot, blue flames.

Then, as quickly as they had opened, his lashes lowered and his cool, masklike look came back. He dropped her wrist and pushed his hair back.

"One more move like that and I'll put you in a strait-jacket. And another thing," he threatened as he picked up his cards, "if I win those

pajama buttons, you're going to sew every one of them back on."

So they spent their days, fencing skillfully with each other—Gail, determined to scratch his dark, angry reserve, and Jeff, determined not to like her.

"And all because some woman threw him over as I am supposed to have done to Larry," Gail thought.

Thinking of that, her mouth sobered into a sad droop. Her old wound was still sore to touch. But it was healing with surprising rapidity. Somehow, Larry didn't matter so much as the days went on. He seemed so far away, unreal, as if he belonged to another part of her life.

It was this tall, dark-headed doctor with the veiled blue eyes that absorbed her. Every time he came into her room, Gail felt her heart leap up with expectancy.

Sometimes he would respond to her teasing in spite of himself. Sometimes a softer, more boyish look would come over his face. But most often he was unresponsive, wrapped in his own hardness.

"Why would any girl change her mind about marrying him?" Gail asked herself wonderingly. "And who was she? What was she like?"

There were a thousand questions Gail would have liked answered. She would study secretly his fine, lean face and think how much he must have loved this girl. Perhaps he still loved her.

It made her feel curiously depressed and unhappy. She began to watch him for signs and ask him leading questions.

"Well, if you don't like blondes, what kind of girls do you like—brunettes, redheads? Do you like brown eyes?"

He was noncommittal.

"How would you like to go down on the porch this afternoon?" he asked irrelevantly.

Gail's eyes brightened.

"Anything to get out of this bed. I'm so sick of it."

"You're getting well, I think. You'll be able to go home soon."

Gail realized suddenly that that was the last thing she wanted to do. She looked up at him reproachfully from under her lashes. She hated the thought of leaving here. It almost made her want to cry with childish petulance.

Besides, Jeff had called her father that first night, and her father had advised her to stay away until the storm blew over. The house was being besieged by reporters.

She brushed away the thought of going home as Mrs. Bowen came in and proceeded to wrap her in a blanket. Then Jeff lifted her in his arms to carry her downstairs.

Gail clung to that moment happily. It gave her an exquisite thrill to be so near him. Her golden head bobbed close to his dark one. She could have touched his cheek with her lips.

She would have liked to ride like this forever, but her brief pleasure came to an end on the couch on the porch.

Mrs. Bowen tucked her in while Jeff went to answer the phone. He came back with a stack of magazines and some old books from the library.

"You'll have to amuse yourself this afternoon," he announced. "I've got to help Mr. Stork."

Gail watched his worn old car rattle out of the driveway and down the road.

"If he brought me down, he'll have to carry me up. And then tomorrow will be twice again!" Gail's lips curved impishly.

She lay back and dreamed about it. She didn't feel like reading. She wanted to think about Jeff. But for the sake of appearance, she opened one of the books and put it on her lap.

It was then that she found the snapshot. It had been in the book, marking a place.

Gail picked it up slowly and studied it. It was one of the loveliest girls she had ever seen. She had beautiful dark hair, liquid dark eyes and a smile that was both provocative and knowing. She was the one Jeff loved! Gail was sure of it.

Something about the girl's face haunted Gail, as if she had seen it somewhere. She put the picture back, but she continued to see it in her mind all afternoon.

Jeff did not come home until late in the evening.

"Time you were in bed," he announced, looking down at her.

"Was it a boy or a girl?" Gail asked gayly.

"Both!"

For the first time he really smiled. It was like a flash of sun on his face. It took all the dark hate out, bringing a charm and boyishness to it that made Gail's heart ache. She hated more than ever the black-haired girl who had caused that smile to be displaced by bitterness.

But then he bent to pick her up, and Gail forgot about the girl. She could only think about the blissful delight of being close to Jeff again.

At the side of the bed, just as he was going to put her down, Gail had an impudent impulse to kiss him good night.

Gail had meant this kiss to be quick, fleeting and half-teasing. She had lifted her face smilingly up to his.

But she had not counted on the quickness of his lips to seize and



*Jeff lifted her in his arms to carry her downstairs. It gave Gail an exquisite thrill to be so near him. She could have touched his cheek with her lips.*

hold hers. Before she knew it, that kiss had turned from a casual gesture to something deeper, more lasting.

Gail had had kisses and kisses, but none had ever been like this. None had ever so completely possessed her. She had never known such tenderness, such hunger.

Then, abruptly, his head came up. His arms loosened around her, and he dropped her on the bed.

There was no time for explanations. Mrs. Bowen came bustling in almost immediately, but not before Jeff had had time to mutter. "I'm sorry!"

Gail did not miss the stern, hard set to his jaw as he stalked out. He was visibly angry, either with himself or her. Gail didn't know which.

Her own mouth still burned from the bruise of his lips, and she was trembling. She had to hold tight



onto her hands to keep them from betraying her to Mrs. Bowen, as she tucked her in for the night.

Once the lights were out and the cool darkness enveloped her, Gail thought dreamily of Jeff, the thrill of his kiss and his arms around her.

"I'm in love with him," she thought. "I'm more in love than I ever thought any one could be. It makes my love for Larry seem so light and trivial. But this I will never get over."

The next day she did not go downstairs. She had not slept well that night and she had shown a slight temperature.

She lay there quietly and waited for Jeff to come to her. She was half curious, half anxious about what he would say, how he would act. She kept wondering if that kiss had meant anything to him.

But Jeff did not come near her until afternoon, and then it was only to tell her that there was some one downstairs to see her.

"Who?" Gail wanted to know, surprised.

"The man you were going to marry," Jeff said evenly. "I told him to come up."

Gail pressed back against the pillows and shook her head. Larry? No, she couldn't see him. She didn't want to. Her love for him had died on her wedding day.

But there he was! Gail heard his running feet on the stairs and saw him enter her room.

He came over to the bed and, catching her hands, kissed them. He was as demonstrative as ever, and as handsome with his brown hair in its perfect waves. But yet, she wondered, how had she ever loved this man?

Out of the corner of her eye she could see Jeff watching them with

cool, unfathomable scrutiny. Obviously, he did not like Larry, or Larry, him. There was an undisguised antagonism between the two.

"I've come to take you home, dear!"

Gail pulled her hands away from Larry's. Her eyes filled with helpless tears.

"I'm sorry, but Miss Patterson cannot be moved for some days." It was Jeff's crisp voice.

Larry surveyed him with a superior air. But when he spoke, it was exclusively to Gail.

"We'll be careful, dear. But I think it will be better to get you home where you can have the proper medical attention. These country doctors, you know——"

Jeff snorted. "Miss Patterson is not going to be moved, so don't count on it. If she is, I'll not be responsible for what may happen. I think you'll find that any doctor will bear me out."

There was something authoritative in Jeff's tone that could not be argued with.

Larry laughed it off lightly.

"All right. But I'm going to stay here with you, Gail, so that you won't get lonesome. Besides, you owe me an explanation for what you did. Such a mad stunt—to go riding just before your wedding and get into an accident! Next time I'll put a guard around you."

"So that's how he looks at it," Gail thought. "He thinks I went for that drive for the fresh air, and not to get away from marrying him."

"I'll leave you two to talk," Jeff said courteously, and started to make his exit.

But something stopped him—something that stopped all of them and brought their heads up, alert and astonished, to listen.

It was a woman's voice, high and

insistent, arguing shrilly with Mrs. Bowen.

"But I'm going to see him," it was saying. "I guess I didn't follow him all the way down here for nothing!"

She burst into Gail's room then, wearing a smart blue taffeta suit and trailing strong, sophisticated perfume. She might have been beautiful, but her face was coarsened with anger. She looked hard and old.

"Larry, how dare you do that to me?" she blazed. "I won't be treated this way! She left you once, didn't she? Isn't that enough?"

Gail's face froze as she looked at the speaker, not because the girl had come after Larry, or that she was looking at Gail with venomous fury. Gail had seen her before. She was the girl in the snapshot—Jeff's girl.

Larry coughed with embarrassment.

"Gail, this is Marcia van Allen, an old friend of mine, and Doctor Seabury."

Gail's eyes turned to that tall figure which had not moved since Marcia had come in. Jeff's face was a cold white mask. It spoke more truly of his inner emotions than anything could.

Yes, Gail had guessed right. Marcia van Allen, Larry's sweetheart, was the one who had broken Jeff's heart!

For a moment there was a hideous silence in the room, and then Marcia gave a nervous ripple of laughter. She faced Jeff and spoke in a voice that was suddenly soft, warm, and pleading.

"Jeff! Do you hate me? Can you ever forgive me?"

Was it possible that a woman could change so completely in a moment? Why, she was an entirely

different person—sweet, tragic, appealing. Her voice held all the undertones of suffering. She went over to him and took his hands that hung stiffly at his sides.

"Jeff, you may never speak to me again, but I want to tell you that I made the biggest mistake in my life and I've suffered for it. Don't make it harder by not forgiving me."

Gail turned her head away, furious and disgusted. She'd bet anything that there were tears on Marcia's lashes. And she was lying! But why? Did Marcia really want Jeff?

Gail felt as if she could not bear it. She must do something.

"O-oh!" An agonized moan escaped her lips. But it was enough.

Jeff jumped into attention and shot her a concerned glance. One look at her white, tired face and his old brusque manner returned.

"Get out!" he said briefly to Larry and Marcia, "both of you." Firmly, he hustled them toward the door.

It brought peace of a certain kind. But that wasn't the end. As long as Marcia was in the house, Gail could not rest easily.

And Marcia stayed, as did Larry. It became a regular house party, except for Gail. She lay upstairs and heard them laughing downstairs.

She grew very pale and weak those days. She couldn't eat. She didn't sleep. All her old perkiness was gone. When Jeff came in and tried to cheer her up, she only smiled at him wearily, from dark-circled pathetic eyes.

Jeff had changed, too. It was he who laughed and teased her now, while she could not respond.

That was just it. He had forgiven Marcia and was happy. Gail would hear the two of them come up the stairs late at night, and she would



*Larry came over to the bed and, catching her hands, kissed them. As she looked at him, Gail wondered how she had ever loved this man.*

know that Jeff kissed Marcia before she went into her room.

Lying there helplessly, Gail's fists would clench, and the tears would slide silently down her cheeks in the darkness.

Sometimes, Marcia would come in to see her with Jeff. She was always leaning on his shoulder, always clinging to him.

**LS-8C**

Gail grew thinner than it was possible to believe she could. Jeff looked at her worriedly, with a strange gentleness about him.

But Gail didn't want his gentleness. She wanted the old stormy mastery that he had had before Marcia came. She wanted to tease, to love him into gayety and happiness by herself, without Marcia.

But she would never have the chance now. Marcia and Jeff were going to be married. Gail knew it even before she was told.

Then Jeff told her one day himself. Gail had been ready for it. She had steeled herself for that moment, a stiff little figure under the bedclothes.

"Many happy returns," she had said flippantly, her eyes shut.

The wedding was going to take place next week in the village church. Jeff had gone to live in the village so that Marcia could have the whole house for her preparations. Larry left, too, but was planning to come back for the wedding.

It was a mad, busy whirl that next week—more so because the plans had been so sudden.

Gail lay in bed and heard the people come and go, the dressmakers, the decorators, the caterers. Then the presents began to come, and the doorbell rang every five minutes.

"Aren't you going to get well for my wedding, Gail?" Jeff would ask. "I'm sure there's nothing the matter with you. Yet you won't eat, and you don't sleep. You don't seem to care about getting well."

He took her hands between his and held them. Some of his warm strength seemed to flow in her. But she dared not look at him because her eyes were filled with tears. The least movement, and they would spill out.

The day before the wedding, he stood by her bed and shook his head at her.

"Bad girl! I'm disappointed in you. It won't seem like a wedding at all without you there to throw a shoe at me."

Gail smiled shakily, but she couldn't answer. Her misery went too deep.

Jeff gave her a long, troubled look. As he left, he seemed almost as unhappy as she.

Gail woke at dawn to usher in Jeff's wedding day. It was a lovely, morning. Its beauty taunted cruelly her own unhappiness.

The house was in a bustle early that morning. And in the next room, Marcia's, there was continual excitement—Marcia getting dressed, Marcia getting telegrams and flowers.

Gail's bed was near the partition. She couldn't help but hear it all plainly. At times, she felt that she could not bear it any longer.

"This should be my wedding day," Gail whispered, agonized.

But the hours crept nearer on Marcia's. Gail lay in her bed and wondered what she would do with the rest of her life. All she could see were empty days, on and on. Larry thought she would marry him, but that could never be.

Somehow, Gail must have slept. She was sure of it, for the next thing she knew, it was almost time for the wedding.

It was the noise in the next room that had awakened her. Gail was sure she heard Larry's voice. But mostly, it was Marcia's. She was stamping on the floor in fury, and half crying.

"Well, I don't care," she shrilled. "I did it once, and I'll do it again. I'm not going to tie myself down to any one who hasn't any money. You can't even get alimony. Why didn't you find it out before?"

Larry's voice was lower. He was arguing with her.

"Forget it! It's not too late, and I didn't know any more than you did that he'd lost his money. The next best thing to do now is beat it."

Gail gasped. Did it mean that Marcia was going to walk out on Jeff again? Why, he must be at the church already! The people must be coming, the organ playing.

Some of Gail's strength came back. Some one must stop Marcia for Jeff's sake. He would never get over this. To have it happen to him twice! That was too much.

Gail's feet touched the floor. She felt weak and wobbly, but she couldn't think of that now. The voices in the next room were quiet. Frantically, Gail stumbled to her door and opened it.

Too late! She was only in time to see Marcia and Larry disappearing down the back stairway. A second later she heard a car start.

They were gone! Gail's hand went out as if to stop them, and then fell feebly to her side. There was nothing to be done.

Gail stood there for a minute helplessly. The house seemed so quiet. Everybody had started for the church.

The thought seemed to shake Gail into action. She must do something! She pictured Jeff waiting at the altar, waiting, and no bride coming. It would break his heart completely this time. And the humiliation of it would make him bitter forever.

Well, at least, she could save him the humiliation of it. Trembling with weakness, but with set lips, Gail pulled open her closet door. Her own bridal gown and veil hung there.

Nervously, with icy fingers, Gail put on the sheer stockings, the tiny slippers, the gown and the gorgeous veil.

Twice, she had to sit down to stop the dizzy whirling in her head, but the thought of Jeff spurred her on.

With her veil gathered in her

arms like a great white bouquet, Gail edged her way down the stairs. Outside, a chauffeur and a car waited.

"A little late, ain't you, miss?" he grinned as he opened the door for her.

He thought her the real bride. Gail smiled wistfully. It didn't matter. She sank back into the seat with relief. Of course, the people in the church wouldn't make the chauffeur's mistake. But, at least, they wouldn't know that Jeff had been let down so completely. They'd just be puzzled.

The chauffeur drove her to the little side door where the bride's waiting room was. Gail went in and looked around.

It was empty. From the church she could hear strains of music. She went to the door and listened. Was Jeff in there already? Was the organ about to play the "Wedding March"?

Yes, there it was. For a second, her heart stopped. For the first time, she thought of how Jeff might feel about this. When he looked up and saw her instead of Marcia, he might be furious.

But there wasn't any time to think of that. She spread her veil out behind her. On the chair by the door was a small white prayer book. That would do for flowers. She snatched it up.

The strains of music drifted to her sweetly, urgently. Carefully, Gail put one unsteady foot before the other.

It was a very pale, golden-haired bride that came slowly down the aisle. But there couldn't have been a lovelier or sweeter one.

Her head was bowed a little, her eyes lowered. Inside, she was saying every step of the way, "He's furious. His face went completely



white and I saw his jaw clamp down like iron. He'll hate me forever."

That aisle seemed miles long. At last she was there. She wanted to look at Jeff. She hadn't dared, since that first glance. But something now was compelling her to. Fearfully, Gail raised her eyes to his face.

A warm rush of courage and hope coursed through her.

He was smiling. His eyes were

*Jeff was holding her hand tightly, and he was whispering to her, "It's you I wanted all the time. I knew it the minute I saw you coming down the aisle. I knew it by the way my heart started beating."*

like blue flames with a deep light of love in them.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here——"

The words flowed over her like a benediction. Jeff was holding her hand tightly, and he was whispering to her.

"It's you I wanted all the time. I knew it the minute I saw you

coming down the aisle. I knew it by the way my heart started beating."

The ceremony was going on, but Jeff didn't seem to care. He went on, muttering out of the corner of his mouth, right through to the end of the prayer.

"I've been a fool. I've been loving you for a long time, but I didn't have sense enough to know it."

The only thing that really stopped him was the kiss at the end. And that told more eloquently than words how he felt.

It put a seal upon the wedding, a seal of happiness upon her heart. Jeff loved her. She was as happy as a bride. Why, she thought in stunned amazement, she *was* a bride! It was her wedding day after all.

She turned and put her arm through his, her eyes telling him the

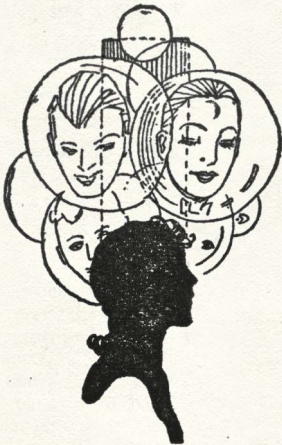
rapture she felt. Together, they walked out of the church into the waiting car.

There was no need for words now. Jeff merely took her into his arms, kissed her again and again and again.

"I'm grateful to Marcia," he told her after a while. "I'll be grateful to her for the rest of my life. If she hadn't jilted me——"

"I wouldn't have been well enough in time for the wedding," Gail finished softly.

"My dearest!" As though he had just comprehended the fact that she was his wife only by some miracle, he crushed her to him as though he'd never let her go. And Gail felt strength and vitality rushing back to her. The pallor of her face was transformed by a glow of radiance, and if her eyes burned feverishly, it was with the fever of love.

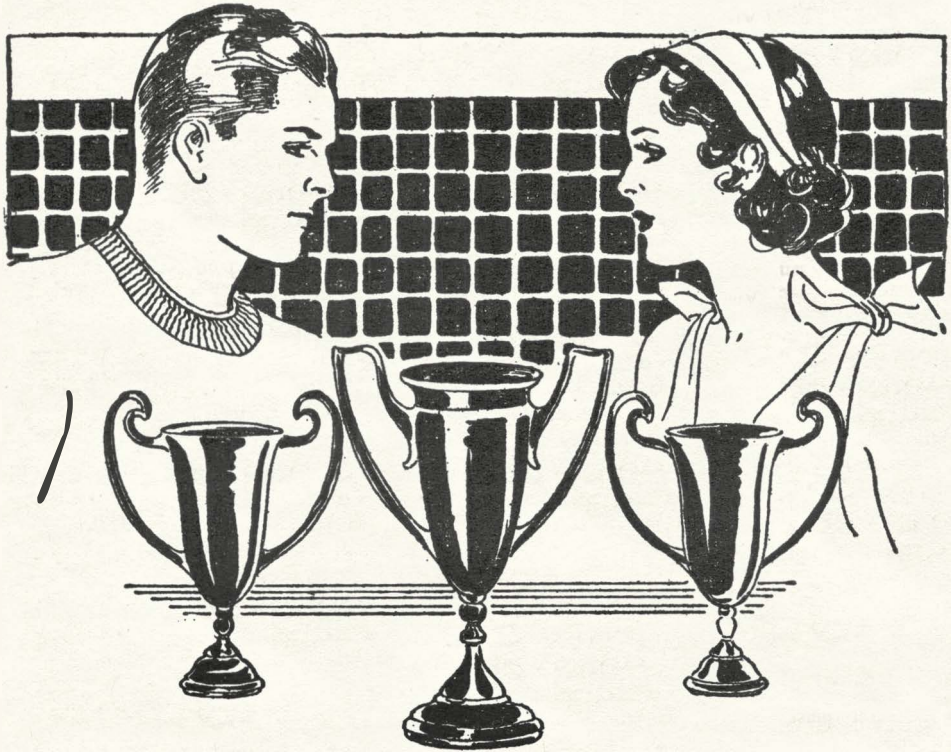


## THE WORLD OF DREAMS!

**E**VERY one has dreams! At some time or other in your life you have had a dream that has stayed in your mind for days, a dream that has bothered you because you did not know its meaning; a dream that was a warning of impending disaster, but ignorant of the interpretation of dreams, you ignored its message.

MARIE CALVANE, well-known authority on dreams and their meanings, has written especially for Love Story Magazine a series of articles explaining the meanings of different dreams and telling how to interpret the dreams you have.

Coming soon! Watch for it!



# A Man For Melissa

By H. Viggo Andersen

**A** KISS says I can beat you out to that float," challenged Bill Bradford, mischief in his dark eyes as they rested on the girl.

Melissa, testing the water's warmth, looked up at him. She had been resisting this determined young man's advances for three weeks, but it wasn't in her to refuse a dare.

"A kiss says you can't," she flung back at him defiantly.

It developed that he could. When she reached the raft he was already on it, crowing jubilantly.

"Who says you can swim?" he jeered, helping her up. "It's too crowded to collect here," he added in a low voice, "but I get that kiss later."

"I always pay my debts," she told him.

"You're a honey in a bathing suit," he said appreciatively.

Melissa thrilled to the compliment, but she felt uncomfortable under his frank scrutiny. It made her realize that her suit was a bit scanty.



Bill always made her feel, somehow, on the defensive. He was so confident of himself. She remembered the first time she met him.

She was behind the perfume counter then, at the Fidelity Department Store. Busy arranging a display of bottles, she became aware that some one was staring at her. She looked up to find herself being appraised by an incredibly tanned, handsome young man.

"So you're the girl who's hard to beat," he drawled. "At games, I mean," he added hastily. The look in Melissa's eyes had warned him that his approach was wrong.

"Something in perfumes for you?" asked Melissa coldly.

"Do I look the type?" he laughed. "Don't get me wrong, Miss Saunders. I'm a fellow slave, Bill Bradford. I've just been put in charge of the sporting goods department."

Melissa's attention was immediately captured.

"So you're Bill Bradford," she breathed.

"You've heard of me?"

"Who hasn't?" said Melissa. She knew that the Fidelity, after much angling, had recently acquired the services of Bill Bradford. All-American football star of two seasons back and a ranking tennis player, this famous athlete would draw customers in droves. What could he want with her?

He answered the question in her eyes.

"I've a business proposition to make to you," he told her. "I hear you're the store's champion girl athlete. In addition to that, I discover you're gorgeous. I need some one like you in my department. There's nothing like a pretty girl who knows her stuff to make these big, strong sportsmen extend themselves," he twinkled.

Melissa hesitated.

"I can guarantee you a five-dollar raise," he said.

"For a five-dollar raise I'd work in pots and pans." She smiled. But it wasn't only the prospect of a raise that made her accept his offer so readily. The thought of working with Bill Bradford thrilled her.

"O. K., then. I'll arrange the transfer." He extended a brown hand. "Let's shake on the deal." He held her hand longer than was necessary. "Incidentally," he informed her, "I'm going to take you on at a few games."

Melissa gazed after him, blood rushing hotly into her cheeks. For suddenly she knew what he had meant when he said, "So you're the girl who's hard to beat at games."

The girls' club of the Fidelity had recently held its annual field day. As usual, Melissa had won most of the prizes. Late in the afternoon a group of girls had gathered in the clubhouse, and the talk drifted casually to the subject of marriage.

"What sort of man do you want, Mel?" one of the girls had asked.

"The man I marry," said Melissa decisively, "must be able to beat me at every sport I know."

And she meant it! Since earliest childhood, Melissa had demonstrated a remarkable proficiency at any sport that interested her. She could swim like a fish, play an excellent game of tennis and golf, and on skates she was amazing.

Her prowess at sports had given Melissa a complex. She was tired of beating men at their own games. It robbed even the most attractive man of some of his glamour if you could beat him swimming, trounce him at tennis and skate rings around him.

Long ago, she had made up her mind that the only man for her was

one who was her physical superior. Was Bill Bradford the answer? It was obvious from his first words that some one had repeated her remark to him. And it was apparent that he was going to accept the challenge.

As soon as she had begun her new duties in his department, she knew that she was going to like it. Her work now brought her into contact with people who hitherto had been only names in the newspapers to her. Bill's association with the store had put new life into the department.

That Bill did not intend to keep their relationship on a strictly business basis was evident from the start.

"What about stepping out to-night?" he asked her a few minutes before closing time on the first day.

"Why not?" Melissa smiled.

"O. K. I'll pick you up at about nine."

They went dancing. He danced as well as he did everything else. When Bill's car drew up before the apartment house where Melissa lived with her widowed mother, he tried to kiss her.

"Not so fast," she gasped, holding him away. "I'm not sure I like you well enough for that."

He didn't insist. "But you do like me, don't you?"

"Yes," she admitted.

In the days that followed she liked him more and more. He was a gay companion, and at last Melissa had found her match in sports. Her defeat to-night in the race to the raft was just another proof of that.

When he took her in his arms in the car, she didn't resist him. He kissed her lingeringly, with a competence that was disturbing.

"That wasn't your first kiss," she observed dryly, her head on his shoulder.

"Not by a couple of thousand," he laughed. "Did you like it?"

"Um-m-m."

"How about another?"

"It wasn't in the contract," she whispered.

He correctly interpreted this to mean consent. He kissed her again. It was wonderful sitting there in the car, his strong arms about her, the moon smiling in through the windshield and the music of the sighing waves coming to them from the beach.

"Love me?" he asked presently.

"I'm not sure."

"Like me lots?"

"Yes," she answered that readily enough.

It wasn't until later, lying in bed, that she realized he hadn't said anything about loving her.

"Maybe he expects me to take that for granted," she comforted herself drowsily.

She was busy sorting golf sticks the next afternoon when a pleasant voice addressed her.

"How is the lovely goddess of the sporting goods department to-day?" it asked.

Melissa turned smilingly to greet her favorite customer. He was Tod Hunter, a tall, lean young man with quizzical gray eyes and an amused quirk about his lips.

"You know, if I were a writer, I should describe you something like this," he said. "'Clear, dark eyes and cheeks warm with natural color testified to hours in the open air. The erectness of her easy carriage, the grace of her swift sure movements told of abundant exercise. Add to these a breath-taking set of quiet, lovely features, a red, laughter-loving mouth and a wealth of blue-black hair and you have



*Melissa felt a twinge of jealousy as they moved away. Bill was being needlessly solicitous. He didn't usually find it necessary to hold a customer's arm.*

Melissa. Certainly a creature to set any man's pulses pounding."

"I think you should be a writer," she told him, flushing with pleasure. "You say things so nicely."

"With an inspiration like you I think I could be most anything," he returned. "Melissa"—abruptly—"how about having dinner with me to-night?"

She studied him for a moment before answering. Knowing very little about this man, she nevertheless liked him very much. He had become a daily customer since he first found her in the sporting-goods department. He made extravagant purchases solely, he whimsically explained, to enjoy her society. This was the first time he had asked her to go out with him.

"I'm afraid I can't," she said reluctantly.

"Not married, are you?"

"No."

"Engaged?"

She shook her head.

"In love?"

"I'm afraid so," she confessed. Her eyes strayed over to where Bill was standing, talking with a man.

"So it's Bradford?"

"Do you know him?"

"By reputation." He changed the subject. "Well, you can't shoot a man for trying. And as long as he hasn't got the ring on that pretty finger, I'm going to keep on trying."

He did. Every day he came to the store. Invariably, he asked her to dinner and as consistently she refused. But they became good friends.

"You've made quite a conquest," grinned Bill one day.

"Aren't you jealous?" she smiled.

"Nope," he returned complacently. "Nobody's going to take you away from me."

"Pretty sure of yourself, aren't you, young fellow?" she asked slowly.

"Why not?" he teased. "I can beat you at any sport you know. That's the chief requirement, isn't it? There's no getting away from it, Mel. I'm your man."

She wished she knew that were true. Bill met her stipulation as to sports. At swimming, golf, riding, roller-skating, he was more than her equal. He delighted in demonstrating his superiority and crowed about his triumphs.

She accepted her defeats good-naturedly, but Bill's attitude was beginning to worry her. He took her too much for granted. He took her kisses casually, as though they were his by right of conquest. But he said nothing of love. Melissa's appetite these days wasn't what it had been, and she didn't sleep well.

One afternoon, during a lull in the store's activities, she and Bill were chatting when, suddenly, his eyes widened.

"Good gosh," he exclaimed, "look at the vision your boy friend has in tow to-day."

And she was a vision, the radiant blonde who was clinging to Tod Hunter's arm, as he came strolling toward them.

"Know who that is?" whispered Bill excitedly. "That's Alison Phelps—lots of money, top social position. I met her a couple of times after football games."

"I say, Bradford," drawled Tod, as they drew near, "I wonder if you'd look after Miss Phelps? She wishes to make a few purchases."

"Gladly," Bill returned.

Melissa felt a twinge of jealousy as they moved away. Bill was being needlessly solicitous. He didn't

usually find it necessary to hold a customer's arm.

"I suppose," said Tod, "the answer to the time-worn dinner question is still in the negative?"

"Still in the negative," she affirmed solemnly.

"Well, to-day's penalty for popping an apparently useless question is a tennis racket," he sighed. "Broke my best one yesterday."

"Are you good at tennis?" she asked interestedly.

"Only moderately so."

A little later Bill drifted close to her elbow.

"Would it break your heart if I dated the Phelps person for to-night?" he whispered.

"But why?"

"Good for business," he said tersely. "Keep her coming in here. Think of the commissions!"

Melissa managed to look indifferent. "Go ahead," she shrugged. But as she watched him eagerly rejoin Alison, Melissa suddenly saw red. She'd give him a dose of his own medicine.

"Did you say something about dinner to-night?" she asked, turning to Tod.

He dropped two tennis rackets with a clatter.

"Did I!" he cried, his face lighting up. "I've been saying it so long, I feel like a victrola record with the needle stuck in one track."

He called for her in a roadster of imported make and took her to places she had always wanted to visit. He was a heavenly dancer, even better than Bill, she was forced to admit to herself.

Presently, she discovered that she was talking more than usual. When she was out with Bill he did most of the talking. It seemed good to do a little of her own. Tod seemed to have a gift for drawing people

out. She told him things she had never told any one before—about her past life, her dreams, her ambitions, even about Bill.

When she told him about saying that the man she married must be her superior in every way, he asked mildly, "Do you think that's necessary, Melissa? Consider the man's side of it. It would do him no end of good to have his wife get the upper hand every once in a while—prevent him from getting too cocky, and at the same time keep things on the fifty-fifty basis successful marriage should have."

Melissa told him he was wrong. The man must rule, she maintained.

Tod, unlike Bill, didn't try to kiss her when he brought her home.

"It's been wonderful, Melissa," he said simply. "Look here, to-morrow's Sunday. How about going out to my club with me for a spot of tennis and a swim?"

Melissa hesitated. She wanted to go, but Bill and she usually spent their Sundays together.

"I'm sorry," she told him with regret. "To-morrow's my day with Bill."

"That man has all the luck," grumbled Tod good-naturedly, and said good night.

Bill called her in the morning.

"Listen, Mel," he began uncomfortably, "I'm afraid our date for to-day is off. The Phelps person is going for the Bradford personality in a big way. She wants me to go out with her to-day. It's in the nature of a royal summons. Do you mind too badly?"

Melissa fought down the lump in her throat.

"Not at all," she lied coolly. "But I wish I'd known about it sooner. I had a chance to go out myself to-day."

"With whom?"

"Tod Hunter. I was out with him last night." She couldn't resist repaying him in his own coin.

It was Bill's turn to be cool. "You were? How come?"

"I thought it might help business," she said sweetly.

"You did, my eye!" snorted Bill angrily. "You did it to get even. I thought better of you, Melissa."

"At least I didn't break a date to go out with him," she retorted.

"Oh, let's not bicker over the phone," he snapped. "I'll see you at the store to-morrow."

If Melissa had been the crying type, she might have given away to tears then. But she hardly had time to indulge in any feelings whatever. The phone rang again almost immediately. It was probably Bill calling back to apologize for being rude.

"Yes?" she breathed hopefully.

"This man Bradford is beginning to get in my hair," drawled Tod's voice plaintively. "You turned me down for him last night and just now when I called Alison to ask her to come and romp with me, she tells me he's got her booked, too. Is the man twins?"

"No. I got left out in the cold," she said truthfully.

"Does that leave you free?" he asked, almost breathlessly.

"Free as the air."

"How about taking me on as second choice, then?"

"Don't waste any time getting here," she commanded.

"I won't," he caroled.

"I'll show Bill Bradford he can't stand me up and get away with it," gritted Melissa. That young man was going to get a lesson!

"I suppose you know you look particularly fetching in that get-up, my lass?" Tod greeted her when she went out to the car.

She loved his praise. She knew yellow was becoming to her, and her mirror had revealed that her smart sports dress brought out the lovely lines of her figure to their best advantage.

They had a gorgeous day. Tod's club was the sort of place one read about in fashionable sports magazines—a huge, sprawling clubhouse, encircled by a wide veranda, sloping lawns of cool green, beautifully kept tennis courts, and a magnificent golf course that stretched away over undulating hills.

Tod gave Melissa a stimulating set of tennis, but she finally beat him.

As they quitted the court, hot but happy, a man who had been watching them observed:

"Little off your game to-day, weren't you, Tod? The young lady gave you quite a walloping."

"The young lady plays a walloping good game of tennis," laughed Tod.

They had a refreshing plunge in the club pool and then a delightful luncheon in one corner of the cool porch. It was all very new and thrilling to Melissa.

"What do you want to do this afternoon?" asked Tod, lazily puffing at a cigarette.

"If I'd brought my clubs I'd love to go over that golf course," she said.

"Tireless, aren't you? I'll get you some clubs." He excused himself. When he returned, he was accompanied by two grinning caddies, each carrying a bag of clubs.

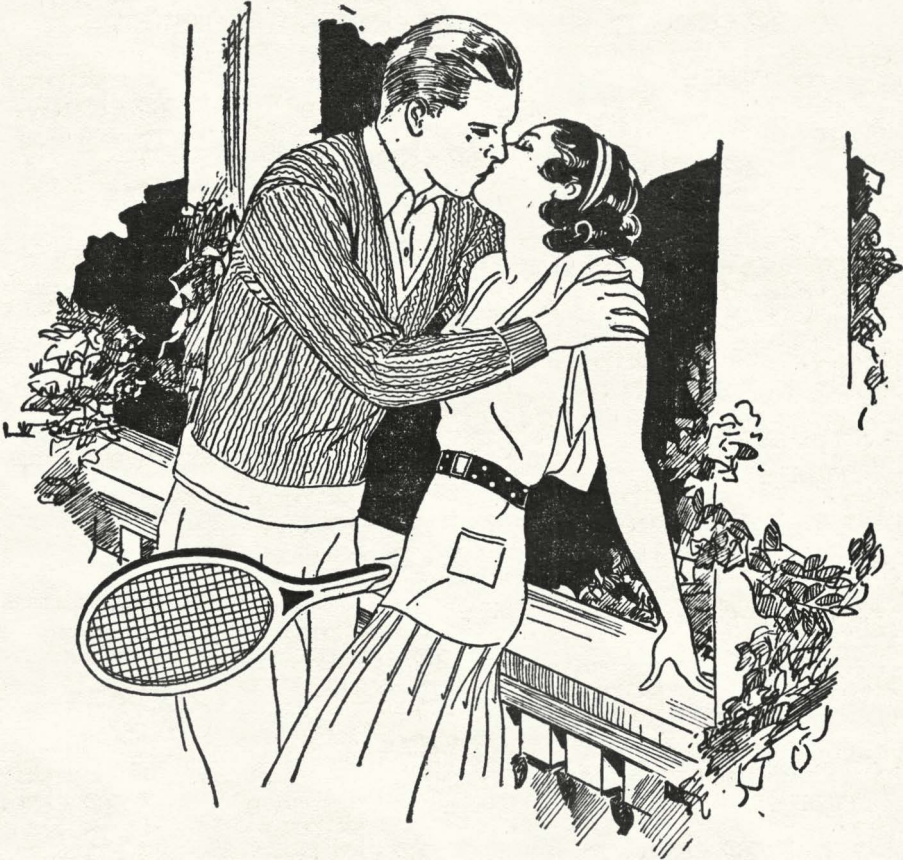
"We're off," said Tod. "Hope those clubs will be all right. They're the best I could round up."

They were the best Melissa had ever played with, and she turned in a beautiful score. Again she had beaten Tod.

"I just don't seem to possess the qualifications you demand in a man, do I?" he sighed.

"Never mind," she comforted. "You have your redeeming features."

He looked at her speculatively. "Don't let a lovers' tiff upset your judgment, Melissa," he advised quietly. "But there's one thing you might as well know. I'm in love with you, Melissa."



*They were alone on the veranda. Suddenly, Tod bent down and kissed her. It was the kiss she had been waiting for all her life. It told her everything her heart wanted to know.*

"Such as?"

"You're sweet," she told him sincerely. There was a quiet charm and unflinching courtesy about him that would win anybody, she thought.

"That's a great recommendation, coming from a girl who goes in exclusively for he-men," he grumbled.

"Not as exclusively as I used to."

"Are you, Tod?" she asked gently, and didn't know how to go on. For, suddenly, she knew a disturbing uncertainty. Up to this moment she had thought that no other man mattered but Bill. Now, as she looked into the steadfast eyes of the man before her, she wasn't so sure.

Why had his simple declaration of love set her heart dancing to a

rhythm it had never known before? Why was the blood pounding so strongly against her temples? And why was she suddenly wondering what Tod's kisses would be like?

"Yes, Melissa," Tod continued. "I've loved you from the first moment I saw you. But I don't want you on the rebound, if there's going to be one. I can't always be second choice."

"I understand, Tod," she replied in a low voice. "But you must give me time to think."

"All the time there is, Melissa." His heart was in his fine eyes. "I'd wait through eternity for you."

He was quiet on the drive home.

"I don't know when I'll be seeing you again," he said, before leaving her. "It's torture to be with you and worse torture to be without you, but I think it would be best for both of us if I stayed out of the picture for a while."

"Perhaps you're right," she whispered, hating to hurt him, but knowing that he was right.

Her dreams that night were all of Tod—a Tod who loved her desperately and wanted to crush her in his arms, but whose rigid code forbade him to trespass.

Bill sought her out the first thing in the morning.

"I'm sorry, Melissa," he said contritely. "I got out of line but I'm back in again. Let's skip the whole thing."

"What's the matter?" she asked biting. "Didn't you have a good time?"

"Rotten. That crowd's too swift for me."

"What about Alison?"

"Particularly Alison," he said grimly. "She took three hundred off me at poker last night."

"You shouldn't play for such high stakes." She looked at him curi-

ously. "You don't like to lose, do you, Bill?"

"Not at poker," he admitted, forcing a grin.

"I went out with Tod Hunter yesterday," she told him speculatively. "I had a wonderful time."

For a moment, something smoldered in his eyes.

"Oh, well, I guess we can skip that, too," he said, and pressed her hand.

But could they? In the week that followed, Melissa discovered that she couldn't. Bill was unusually attentive. He insisted on taking her out nearly every night and when he didn't, he made it a point to call several times. Melissa found herself answering those calls in the hope that one of them would bring over the wire the quiet voice of Tod Hunter. But that call never came.

"Listen, Mel," said Bill one afternoon, "we're missing a swell bet. You make some big sales, like that one you just made to Sam Ames. I work on a commission basis. You're on straight salary. Let me take credit for some of your sales and I'll split the commissions with you."

"That would hardly be honest, Bill."

"It's perfectly legitimate," he argued. "I've been playing for cups and tin medals long enough, sweetheart. I'm out for all I can get, while the getting is good. If you're smart, you'll cut in on it."

"I'll think it over," she said reluctantly. But she knew she'd never become a party to anything of that nature. "Incidentally," she added, "I don't like your friend, Sam Ames. He's always asking me to go out with him and I don't like the things he insinuates."

"Oh, Sam's all right," answered



Bill easily. "He's got rather a crush on you, that's all."

Later that afternoon, he came hurrying over to her.

"Sam Ames is throwing a big week-end party at his country place," he told her excitedly. "He wants us both to come. I've convinced the boss it would be good business to let us go. We shove off to-morrow morning. Isn't that great?"

Melissa didn't want to go to Ames's party, but she hated to disappoint Bill. She had heard tales of Ames's country estate. It would be worth seeing, even if she didn't like its owner. So she made no objection to Bill's program.

She felt a thrill of excitement the next morning, as they drove up the winding driveway that led to the big house on the hill overlooking the sound. Gayly colored umbrellas were sprinkled about the vast lawn, an orchestra was playing on a vine-covered porch, and handsomely groomed men and women were everywhere.

"By the way, Melissa," said Bill, a trifle uncomfortably, as the car drew up under a portico, "I forgot to tell you that Alison Phelps will be here. But don't let it bother you. She means nothing to me."

The hot retort that rose to Melissa's lips was stifled by the approach of Sam Ames.

"So you came!" he cried enthusiastically to Melissa. "I told Bradford he needn't bother showing up unless he brought you."

That statement explained a number of things to Melissa. She shot an angry look at Bill, but his eyes were deliberately elsewhere.

It was a thoroughly annoyed Melissa who presently came down from the pleasant room to which she had been shown. She wanted noth-

ing better than to find Bill Bradford and tell him a few things, then catch the first train back to the city. He had used her as a means to obtain an invitation to the Ames's party so that he could be with Alison!

"Looking for some one?" inquired a courteous voice. In her blind rage, Melissa had collided violently with a figure on the shaded porch. Strong arms were around her.

"I'm sorry," she managed. "Yes, I—— Tod!"

The arms about her tightened. "Yes, darling."

"What are you doing here?" Melissa was so happy, she was close to tears.

"I heard of a plot," he said. "It seems there were two men who were, for reasons best known to themselves, interested in two girls. So they played them against each other. If Mr. Ames could prevail upon Alison to join this party, then Mr. Bradford could bring you."

"Then you know that——"

"I know a great many things, my sweet," he returned grimly. "Prepare yourself for a couple of shocks. First, my name is really Tod Hunter Phelps. I'm Alison's brother. She's an irresponsible little thing but I happen to love her. And I love you. I'm not going to stand by and watch a fortune hunter like Bradford break your hearts."

"But how——"

"I haven't lived in this country for a number of years. I never did get about in public much, so I'm not widely known. I made Alison keep my identity a secret. I'm her guardian, so she does what I say. She is of two minds about this Bradford individual, and I've something to prove to her. You're going to help me."

"What do you mean?"



*When it was all over, Alison came running up to the net, laughing good-naturedly. "You play a wonderful game, Miss Saunders," she cried. But Bill snorted, and his eyes were venomous.*

"Place yourself entirely in my hands. Do as I say and don't question anything. Now dash upstairs

and get into something suitable for tennis. Step on it." Melissa did.

"You're marvelous," he applauded, when she rejoined him. They were alone on the veranda. Her face was turned up to his. Suddenly, he bent down and kissed her. It was the kiss she had been waiting for all her life. It told her everything her heart wanted to know.

"And now, precious child," he said after a heavenly interval, "let's get about the business of putting Mr. Bradford in his place."

Obedying him implicitly, Melissa asked no questions as they walked across the lawn toward the tennis courts. They arrived just in time to see Bill and Alison laughingly humble a pair of wearied opponents.

"Too bad there's not some real opposition around here, Alison," Bill was crowing.

"How about taking us on?" asked Tod mildly.

"More lambs for the slaughter," cried Bill, avoiding Melissa's eyes.

Melissa and Tod lost the first set speedily. It was obvious that they were no match for Bill and Alison. Bill was in top form and Alison played an excellent game. Melissa gave everything she had, but Tod didn't seem equal to the occasion.

"Want some more?" jeered Bill.

"Just getting warmed up," said Tod, as they changed courts. Under his breath he murmured to Melissa, "Now, let's go to town."

The next set was a complete reversal of the first. Suddenly, Melissa discovered what real tennis was like. So did Bill Bradford. Alison didn't seem so surprised. Tod's languor had completely disappeared. He became a veritable demon. He practically played the opposition single-handed. Bill was no match for his terrific volleying and bullet serves. The set ended 6—1, with a bewildered Melissa wondering what was happening.

LS—9C

"You had all the wind and plenty of luck that time," growled Bill, as they again changed courts. "It'll be different this time." He was smarting under the jeers of the onlookers.

The third set was different only in that it ended 6—0 in favor of Tod and Melissa. By this time Melissa had overcome her stage fright to give her partner some real help. Together, they blasted Bill and Alison off the court.

When it was all over and the watchers were applauding wildly, Alison came running up to the net, laughing good-naturedly.

"You play a wonderful game, Miss Saunders," she cried. "You'll have to give me a few lessons."

"You could do with a few," snorted Bill, his eyes venomous. "You were practically no help at all."

Alison looked at him from under lowering lashes. Then she turned to Tod and nodded.

"How about a swim?" she suggested. There was general assent.

It was a gay group that assembled at the beach a few minutes later, with one exception. Melissa, studying Bill, wondered how she could ever have thought that she loved him. His defeat at tennis had transformed him. His usual confident, bantering smile was missing. He glowered.

"I'll bet anybody in this crowd I can beat them out to that raft by ten lengths," he offered truculently.

"Just how much would you be willing to bet?" asked Tod pleasantly.

"I hope you're not planning to take me on!" sneered Bill.

"I might."

"It's only fair to tell you that I hold a few records," Bill remarked, offensively sure of himself.

"So I've heard." Tod and Bill

were standing a short distance from the rest of the group. They conversed in low tones.

"Do you really mean that?" demanded Bill presently.

Tod nodded.

They walked to the edge of the pier. "Remember, I warned you," said Bill.

"Quite," drawled Tod. "Melissa, would you mind giving the word to go?"

She did so with a sinking heart. She had seen both men swim, and knew that Tod had ventured too far. The contestants hit the water simultaneously.

"Bill hasn't got a chance," Alison's voice whispered in Melissa's ear.

"What?"

"Tod swims like a dolphin."

He did. He reached the raft several lengths ahead of Bill and, disdainingly to pause for rest, headed back for shore.

"Would you mind explaining Tod to me," demanded Melissa. "He has told me he is your brother, but I had no idea he——"

"Few people have," interrupted Alison. "Tod hates to show off. When he was a little boy he was sickly. Doctors said he couldn't live. But he did, and as he grew older he developed a passion to excel at sports. He went away to Europe to live and devoted all his time to that end. He's better at most sports than professionals."

Tod was nearing the pier, his eyes on Melissa.

"Tod's terribly in love with you," continued Alison. "When he found that you were in love with Bill Bradford, he was miserable. You see, Bill had also been making love to me—been trying to get me to elope with him. Tod has taken this way to show us both how wrong we were about Bill. You see, Tod and Sam

Ames are really good friends. Tod engineered this whole party. Poor old Sam has been playing the villain just to show how unscrupulous Bill is—that he would bring you up here to Sam for what he thought was going to be a wild party, so that he himself might make love to me."

"How awful," shuddered Melissa.

"Thanks to Tod, everything's turning out all right. Let's be nice to him."

"That won't be hard," murmured Melissa.

Nor was it. Late that night, she and Tod were again out on the pier.

"Melissa," he began, "you know I love you, but——"

"Say it again," she whispered.

"I adore you," he said huskily.

She raised her lips to his. After a long, long time she opened her eyes, and the stars were mirrored in them as she looked up at him.

"Why did you let me beat you at golf and tennis, darling?"

"I was playing a game of hearts," he told her. "That's the only game I cared about winning."

"But you knew——"

"I knew there were Bill Bradfords who could meet your demands about sports. I was playing for your heart in my own way."

"And you won it."

"Forever?"

"And ever." Presently she asked, "What was that bet you made with Bill?"

"It was rather sordid," he said uncomfortably. "I put him to the final test. I offered to bet him a considerable sum against a clear field with you."

"Let's forget about Bill," suggested Melissa.

It was surprisingly easy to do with Tod's arms around her, his lips against hers, and an understanding moon smiling down upon them.



# Under Blue Lights

By Katherine Greer

**J**ANE MERRILL and Alec Vaile had worked across the aisle from each other five days a week for nearly a year, and had not met once on either of the other two days. During that time they had probably talked about every subject under the sun, including love—yes, especially love. Yet, they had never so much as touched each other's hand.

Jane had given their relationship considerable thought, and had come

to the conclusion that it really was the nearest thing possible to the much maligned term, "platonic." They were just swell pals. They thought alike about many vital subjects and disagreed stimulatingly about a number of minor matters. They each asked and gave advice freely and frankly about the problems of the other.

Jane had a habit, annoying to the men who took her out as well as to

herself, of comparing every man's conversation with that of Alec and finding it either boring or silly.

Now, from a casual remark Alec had just made, she had a hunch that she was interfering in the same way with the girls he dated after working hours.

"I wasted a perfectly good evening," he complained, "when I should have been working on my patent. A dizzy blonde who is visiting my sister. I almost fell for her when I saw her. Gorgeous coloring and eyes! But when she opened her mouth——" He shrugged expressively. "I should have had better sense. All Sue's friends are like that."

Jane thought a bit cynically: "Why should a man expect everything in a girl when he certainly is far from perfection himself?" Aloud, she remarked: "You should have been content to feast your eyes upon her in silent communion."

"I would have, but she insisted on talking—giggling, too."

Jane's blue eyes twinkled understandingly behind her round, tinted spectacles. Her companion of the night before had been a Greek god who guffawed! As she bent her head to the exacting occupation of fastening colored threads into armatures which went into the motors of the Superior Suction Sweepers, she compared him again with Alec.

Alec, with his huge octagonal goggles in their heavy metal frames, with the monotonous sallowness of his face, certainly was no Greek god. Even though Jane knew that the sickly purple shade of his lips was caused by the peculiar blue lights which Superior efficiency experts had installed throughout the plant because they were easy on the eyes, she had no doubt about the unattractive leathery texture of them.

"My lips are purplish, too," she remembered, "but that doesn't change their texture. They're still Cupid's-bowish and soft. And kissable, so I've been told!"

She dismissed Alec finally, in favor of the more profitable business of turning out armatures at record speed.

Toward closing time he stopped his highly technical work of filing a pattern to the most minutely accurate measurements long enough to inquire: "I suppose you're going to take in the Superior employees annual dance and picnic to-morrow at Crystal Lake?"

"Yes, I'm going for the evening. I hate the picnic part." Was he going to ask her to go with him? He never had asked her to do anything with him before.

He said instead: "They can count me out on the whole affair. I'm going to make up for lost time by spending the whole day and evening in my workshop. A successful inventor—and I intend to be one before long—can't be bothered with potato races and the like. The dancing part wouldn't be so bad if——"

"Why put yourself out for it, though?" she cut in with a touch of acid. "With a thousand or so others in attendance, it could go on very well without you!" She felt strangely annoyed with him; she didn't know exactly why. She would have refused to go with him even if he had asked her, because she had promised to go with Mark Graham in the sales department.

The annual outing provided a much needed day of rest for Jane. Even after a year of it, she hadn't become accustomed to the high pressure of factory life. As she did the dozen and one tasks which were sup-



*Their steps fitted together as perfectly as though they had been dancing together all their lives. She closed her eyes and gave herself up to the delicious thrill of floating to music.*

As she stood in front of the long mirror for a final inspection before Mark Graham came for her, unaccountably, the image of Alec popped into her mind. He had never seen her like this—a lovely, pink-crinoline lady out of a picture book—and he probably never would. Would he like her or would he call her cynically,

posed to be aids to beauty and which she didn't have time for on ordinary days, she thought critically: "I'm no worse for it, though. There aren't even any lines around my eyes. I suppose wearing glasses for the close work, keeps them away. The girls who don't wear them all squint or have a tired look."

"just another dizzy blonde"?—she wondered.

Mark liked her. That was obvious from his first admiring look. He found plenty of superlatives with which to tell her about it, too. He made her turn around slowly, so that he could get the effect from all sides.

Then, when she faced him again smilingly, he caught her shoulders and kissed her on the lips.

She pulled away laughingly. "Please," she protested, "you'll muss me all up! Dresses like this were designed for the sedate young things of fifty years ago. They aren't built for modern methods!"

"Then they shouldn't make you so irresistible," he complained.

Jane thought wonderingly: "Perhaps I'm fifty years behind the times, too. I'm always glad of an excuse not to be kissed. If any one could stir me, Mark should. He seems to have about everything—looks, charm, brains and excellent prospects."

The huge open-air ballroom overlooking the lake was crowded when they arrived—too crowded for comfort, Jane decided. But when she had danced once around the floor to the magic strains of a famous radio orchestra, she was as reluctant as the others to leave it.

Mark's dancing was easy and rhythmic, if uninspired. Jane was glad to come back to him after a slow-motion dance with one of his friends and a breathless whirl with one of the elderly office managers.

She was even reluctant to leave him for an old-fashioned country dance. But he said: "My boss is calling the figures, so perhaps we'd better join in."

As the huge circle of girls was surrounded by an even larger circle of men, Jane thought: "If I'm near somebody impossible when the whistle blows, I'll drop out. No sense in being annoyed."

She didn't drop out because almost before the whistle had blown, she was in the arms of a tall young man with keen brown eyes, deep-set beneath straight dark brows. There

was something about the clear-cut line of his features which struck her—something not only attractive, but vaguely familiar. Yet, she couldn't quite place him.

After the first instant of surprise and questioning, she relaxed gratefully in his arms. Their steps fitted together as perfectly as though they had been dancing together all their lives. She barely came to his shoulder, but she fitted into the circle of his arm as though she had been modeled especially for that particular niche. She closed her eyes and gave herself up to the delicious thrill of floating to music.

She was glad that he didn't feel it necessary to make conversation. Words—especially stereotyped phrases to a stranger with whom she probably had nothing in common—would have broken the spell at once.

For there was a spell, of course. He seemed to be under it as much as she. It was as though an electric spark had been set off by the first contact—a spark which might easily turn into a leaping flame.

Perhaps because her ear was pressed against the dark lapel of his coat, she barely heard the whistle when it blew.

If he heard it, it was the signal for him to swing her out swiftly into the cool dimness of the garden, beyond the dancing pavilion. He lifted her easily down the step or two to the ground. Then, when he should have released her, he only drew her closer. His left hand slipped from hers to tilt her head so that her lips met his.

In that instant, she forgot that a few hours earlier she had thought herself a prim lady in crinoline who didn't like to be kissed. Instead, she wished brazenly that she could



go on being kissed forever—kissed burningly, yet tenderly, as this handsome breath-taking stranger who was so unaccountably dear and familiar, was kissing her.

While her lips yielded willingly to the firm, demanding lips pressed hard against them, her mind cried out bitterly against her weakness.

"This is utter madness!" a small voice of reason within her cried desperately for attention. "This is something so crazy, so recklessly insane, that you'll be ashamed of it to-morrow! This is something certainly that you won't dare discuss with Alec!"

Alec! But why on earth, she wondered, had she thought of Alec Vaile in that moment of ecstasy? Alec was miles away in a room over a garage, working on his invention. He had said he wouldn't come to-night. Suddenly, amazingly, Jane realized that she needed him. There was something about his quiet voice, his matter-of-fact manner, which had a way of steadying her. If she ever needed a steadying influence, it was now.

"I—I must go in!" Her voice sounded unnaturally high with a decided tremor in it. The ground seemed to quake beneath her as she pulled herself free of his enveloping arms.

He made no effort to hold her. He merely stood, very tall and straight, staring down at her.

"Say that again," he muttered, very low. "Say that, or anything!" he cried.

"Please take me back to the ball-room," she obeyed, her voice more nearly normal.

"Jane—Jane Merrill! Or is it your sister?"

"I haven't any sister. I am Jane Merrill, of course. But how did you

know——" She broke off sharply. Her head was whirling. What was the matter with her that she was seeing one man, thrilling to his kisses, and hearing the voice of another?

Had Alec Vaile stepped up behind her in answer to her thought of him? Or was his voice only an hallucination?

"Why, you're the loveliest thing I've ever seen!" Firm hands were gripping her shoulders again. It was Alec's voice, incredulous and exuberant. "You have the most beautiful eyes, the most gorgeous hair! Your skin is gardenia and your lips are rose petals! I can't believe it!"

"Alec! You can't be Alec!" But even as she denied it, she knew that it was true. "I—I never dreamed your eyes were so bright and brown, like this! And where are your goggles?"

"I wear them only when I work. I wouldn't even need them then," he told her, "except to keep the flying particles of metal out of my eyes. But you—you wear thick spectacles."

"Only when I work. They keep me from squinting and getting wrinkles."

"What a sap I've been!" he groaned then. "One would think I'd been wearing blinders instead of goggles! Of course, I knew your lips weren't really that thick, horrible purple—that it was the blue light in the room which made them look that way. But, somehow, much as I liked and admired you, I couldn't get past that. I couldn't bear the thought of kissing them!"

"Oh, I forgot that my lips, too, were purple at the factory!" She suddenly understood. "I suppose my skin had that bilious hue, even



*"Why, you're the loveliest thing I've ever seen!" His voice was incredulous and exuberant. "You have the most beautiful eyes, the most gorgeous hair. Your lips are rose petals. I can't believe it!"*

a sort of leathery texture, like yours."

"Positively livid!" He was chuckling now. "And your hair was the same shade, with a more greenish cast."

"Your hands were horrible, too." She was not to be outdone. "Much

as I liked you and admired your mind, I hoped you'd never want to touch me!"

"You didn't seem to cringe from me a moment ago," he remarked pointedly. "If I was so utterly repulsive to you——" His ardent eyes, boring into hers, finished the question for him.

"You should know the answer to that one," she murmured faintly.

"I think I do," he said, his voice deeper, more vibrant than she had ever heard it. "It's this."

His arms swept her to him again, crushing her close. He kissed her hair, her eyes, the soft curve of her cheek, then her lips again. They clung

together for an eternity of rapturous bliss.

His first kisses had stirred her, but these stirred her infinitely more. She seemed to be set apart by them in a heaven of happiness.

With his lips still close to hers, Alec murmured huskily: "We fit,

darling. We belong together. If it hadn't happened to-night, it would have happened some time. We were both very dull, I admit, but we were bound to come to our senses eventually. But, thank Heaven, it happened to-night. I don't believe I could have stood it much longer. You were so much a part of me, so mixed up with all my thinking, that you spoiled every other girl for me. Marry me soon, darling. I love you so!"

"I'll give you your answer tomorrow, at the factory." Jane drew away from him and remained at a safe distance. An idea had come to her which she thought might be worth testing. "If you can bear to kiss my purple lips and if I can endure the caress of your olive-drab hands, then we'll be sure we have something that may be worth patenting."

In spite of the fact that it was the morning after the big Superior outing, at least two of the employees

were at their jobs ahead of the regular time.

Jane Merrill and Alec Vaile were there to do a bit of experimenting of their own, before they began the business of making Superior Suction Sweepers.

Though they didn't find it necessary to record their findings in writing, they both agreed that Jane's test was eminently satisfactory. The main thing they discovered, was that the sense of touch was more important than that of sight. In fact, in the case of the touch of a kiss, all other senses became dull in comparison—so dull, that they did not hear from a nearby table:

"Wonder what she sees in him!" This was the frank comment of an eyewitness.

"What he sees in her, you mean!" —this from another.

But there, under the blue lights, Jane and Alec went on kissing, oblivious to everything but each other's lips.

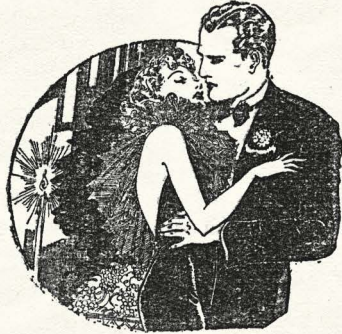


#### FIRST MEETING

OUR very first meeting  
 Brought me bliss,  
 Though our lips had not met  
 In a thrilling kiss;  
 Our hands had not touched  
 And yet I knew  
 That the world would be empty  
 Dear one, without you!

HELEN K. ROBERTS

DON'T MISS  
The Love Story Girl  
ON THE AIR  
tune in the following stations



LIST OF STATIONS

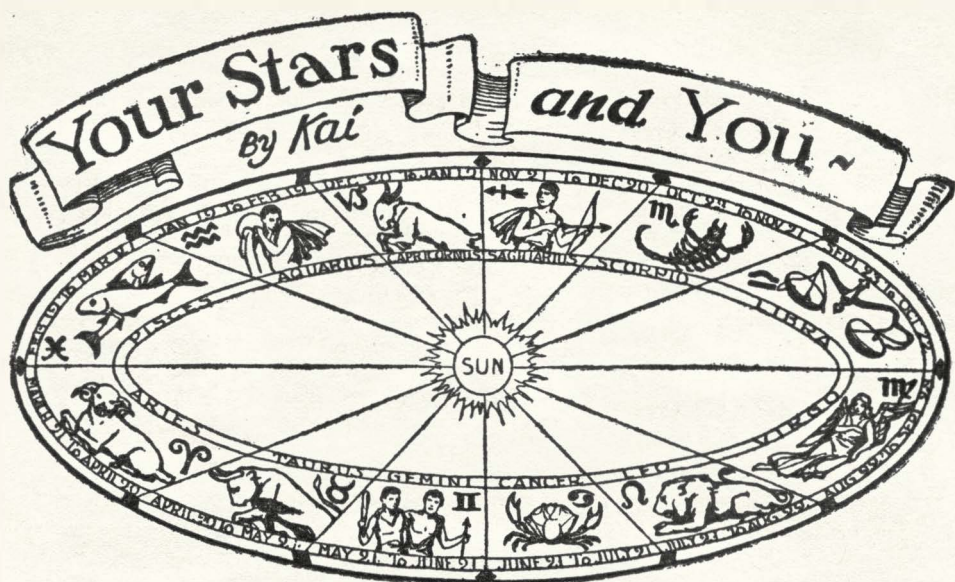
City	State	Station	City	State	Station	City	State	Station
Birmingham	Ala.	WBRC	New Orleans	La.	WDSU	Shawnee	Okla.	KGFF
Decatur	Ala.	WMFO	Augusta	Maine	WRDO	Eugene	Ora.	KORE
Mobile	Ala.	WALA	Presque Isle	Maine	WAGH	Marshfield	Ore.	KOOS
Selma	Ala.	WFSB	Baltimore	Md.	WCAO	Medford	Ore.	KMED
Sheffield	Ala.	WMSD	Cumberland	Md.	WTBO	Salem	Ore.	KSLM
Anchorage	Alaska	KFQD	Hagerstown	Md.	WJEJ	Allentown	Pa.	WCBA
Jerome	Ariz.	KCRJ	Boston	Mass.	WORL	Altoona	Pa.	WFBG
Lowell	Ariz.	KSUN	Fall River	Mass.	WSAR	Eric	Pa.	WLEU
Phoenix	Ariz.	KVAR	New Bedford	Mass.	WNEH	Harrisburg	Pa.	WHP
Tucson	Ariz.	KVOA	Springfield	Mass.	WSPR	Reading	Pa.	WEEU
Yuma	Ariz.	KUMA	Bay City	Mich.	WBCM	Sunbury	Pa.	WKOK
Jonesboro	Ark.	KBTM	Ironwood	Mich.	WJMS	Wilkes-Barre	Pa.	WGX
Little Rock	Ark.	KLRA	Marquette	Mich.	WBEO	Anderson	S. C.	WJHI
Pine Bluff	Ark.	KOTN	Ferdus Falls	Minn.	KGDE	Spartanburg	S. C.	WSPA
Bakersfield	Cal.	W6XAI	Minneapolis	Minn.	WTCN	Aberdeen	S. D.	KABR
Berkeley	Cal.	KRE	Guilford	Miss.	WGCM	Sieax Falls	S. D.	KSOD
El Centro	Cal.	KXO	Hattiesburg	Miss.	WPFB	Watertown	S. D.	KWTN
Long Beach	Cal.	KFOX	Jackson	Miss.	WJDX	Briarcliff	Tenn.	WOPJ
Oakland	Cal.	KLS	Laurel	Miss.	WAML	Jackson	Tenn.	WHP
San Bernardino	Cal.	KFXM	Meridian	Miss.	WOCB	Knoxville	Tenn.	WROL
San Francisco	Cal.	KSFO	Columbia	Mo.	KFRU	Memphis	Tenn.	WMC
Stockton	Cal.	KWG	Joplin	Mo.	WMSH	Dallas	Texas	WFAA
Alamogosa	Cal.	KGIW	Kansas City	Mo.	WHB	El Paso	Texas	KTSM
Colorado Springs	Colo.	KVOR	St. Joseph	Mo.	KFEQ	Fort Worth	Texas	WFB
Denver	Colo.	KFEL	St. Louis	Mo.	WIL	Houston	Texas	KFRC
Donver	Colo.	KVOD	Springfield	Mo.	KGBX	Ogden	Utah	KLO
Grealey	Colo.	KFKA	Butte	Mont.	KUIR	Salt Lake City	Utah	KDYL
Pueblo	Colo.	KGHF	Missoula	Mont.	KGVO	Springfield	Vt.	WNBX
Sterling	Conn.	KGEK	Wolf Point	Mont.	KGCK	St. Albans	Vt.	WDM
Hartford	Conn.	WDRG	Clay Center	Neb.	KMMJ	Waterbury	Vt.	WDEV
New Britain	Conn.	WNBC	Kearney	Neb.	KGFW	Charlottesville	Va.	WCHV
New Haven	Conn.	WELI	North Platte	Neb.	KGNF	Danville	Va.	WBTM
Gainesville	Fla.	WRUF	Scottsbluff	Neb.	KGKY	Lynchburg	Va.	WLVA
Jacksonville	Fla.	WJBR	Reno	N. C.	WDNC	Petersburg	Va.	WPHR
Miami	Fla.	WIOD	Durham	N. C.	WEED	Aberdeen	Wash.	KXRO
Orlando	Fla.	WDBO	Rocky Mount	N. C.	WEED	Olympia	Wash.	KGY
St. Petersburg	Fla.	WSUN	Wilmington	N. C.	WMFO	Spokane	Wash.	KFPX
Tampa	Fla.	WDAE	Grand Forks	N. D.	KFJM	Tacoma	Wash.	KMO
Athens	Ga.	WTFI	Mandan	N. D.	KGOV	Walla Walla	Wash.	KUJ
Atlanta	Ga.	WTJL	Minot	N. D.	KLPM	Yakima	Wash.	KIT
Griffin	Ga.	WKEU	Lacena	N. H.	WLNH	Bluefield	W. Va.	WHIS
Macon	Ga.	WMAZ	Manchester	N. H.	WFEA	Huntington	W. Va.	WSAZ
Thomasville	Ga.	WPAX	Portsmouth	N. H.	WHEB	Parkersburg	W. Va.	WPAR
Boise	Idaho	KIDO	Asbury Park	N. J.	WCAP	Janesville	Wis.	WCLD
Lewiston	Idaho	KRLC	Camden	N. J.	WCAM	LaCrosse	Wis.	WKBH
Nampa	Idaho	KFXD	Jersey City	N. J.	WAAT	Mantowee	Wis.	WOMT
Pocatello	Idaho	KSEI	Red Bank	N. J.	WRRB	Poynette	Wis.	WIBU
Twin Falls	Idaho	KTFI	Frenton	N. J.	WTNJ	Racine	Wis.	WRJN
Carthage	Ill.	WCAZ	Clovis	N. M.	KICU	Superior	Wis.	WEBC
Chicago	Ill.	WAAF	Sante Fe	N. M.	KIUJ	Sheridan	Wyo.	KWYO
East St. Louis	Ill.	WTMV	Albany	N. Y.	WOKO			
Harrisburg	Ill.	WEBQ	Binghamton	N. Y.	WNBF			
Joliet	Ill.	WCLS	Chester	N. Y.	WGNV			
Springfield	Ill.	WCBS	New York	N. Y.	WINS			
Tuscola	Ill.	WDZ	Olean	N. Y.	WHDL			
Waukegan	Ill.	WCBD	Plattsburgh	N. Y.	WFFF			
Fort Wayne	Ind.	WOWO	Troy	N. Y.	WHAZ			
Indianapolis	Ind.	WFBI	White Plains	N. Y.	WFAS			
Muncie	Ind.	WLBC	Ohio	Ohio	WHOC			
Richmond	Ind.	WKBY	Columbus	Ohio	WCOL			
South Bend	Ind.	WFAM	Dayton	Ohio	WHIO			
South Bend	Ind.	WSBT	Portsmouth	Ohio	WPAY			
Davenport	Iowa	WOC	Toledo	Ohio	WSPD			
Marshalltown	Iowa	KFJB	Zanesville	Ohio	WALL			
Shenandoah	Iowa	KMA	Ada	Okla.	KADA			
Garden City	Kans.	KIUL	Elk City	Okla.	KASA			
Hutchinson	Kans.	KWBG	Enid	Okla.	KCRC			
Lexington	Ky.	WLAP	Oklahoma City	Okla.	KFXR			
Paducah	Ky.	WPAD	Ponca City	Okla.	WBBZ			

ALASKAN STATION		
Anchorage	Alaska	KFQD

CANADIAN STATIONS		
Calgary	Alb.	CJCF
Edmonton	Alb.	CJRN
Kelowna	B. C.	CKOV
Trail	B. C.	CJAT
Fredericton	N. B.	CFNB
Moncton	N. B.	CKCW
Kirkland Lake	Ont.	CKLJ
St. Catharines	Ont.	CKTB
Timmins	Ont.	CKGB
Waterloo	Ont.	CKCR
Hull	Quebec	CKCH
Regina	Saskatch.	CHWC
Saskatoon	Saskatch.	CFQC

If your local station does not broadcast these LOVE STORY dramas, write to your station manager, asking about it. Check the time from your daily newspaper.



### YOUR WEEK

Employment and environment will come into conflict this week and may create a problem for your solving. It will be better to mark time, if possible, and let the conflict subside of its own accord, as environmental changes made at this time may not be for the better. In matters of employment, you may become involved in mass discontent. In so far as possible, refrain from participation in any mass movement as the consequences may be far reaching and are apt to prove detrimental. Violence and unreasoning emotionalism are approaching a bad combination that may affect some lines of employment in a disturbing way. However, the trying period may be for only a week or so. If you are caught in it, hold your temper and guard your speech and actions, and some minor benefit may be received. Love and marriage matters may be slightly benefited as a result of employment conditions; in some manner connected with your home life, your love interests may be considerably advanced. However, home affairs and possible uncertainty with respect thereto, may temporarily delay marriage in many instances, and in case of those already married, some annoyance may become apparent but is apt to be more apparent than real. Unexpected happenings in a financial way may modify your marriage plans, perhaps to your detriment. However, the happenings, should they come, will direct your mind into other channels that will prove remunerative. A journey may be

planned, but is not apt to be taken at this time. It is a good time to think seriously concerning business matters, with the idea of advancing your marriage interests, whether you are single or married; avoid too heavy financial expenditures or investments at this time as you may overlook some safeguards for your money. Avoid litigation at this time involving marriage relations as you may win to your after regret.

### DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time. If not using that time, make correction to the time you are using.

Saturday,  
October  
17th

h

The early-morning hours may bring employment and marriage benefits and also environmental conditions may be somewhat more pleasant. The marriage partner's finances may be benefited as a result of some delayed business transaction which may be completed at this time. Between 9:30 a. m. and 11:00 a. m., employment matters will be under favorable influences and the marriage partner's finances may be benefited as a result thereof. Between 3:30 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., business transactions connected with other people's

money may prove mutually profitable. From 4:30 p. m. until 6:00 p. m., watch your speech carefully in marriage matters and avoid making marriage plans that will require the outlay of much money as your judgment will be poor in matrimonial affairs, especially in the expenditure of mutual finances. From 9:30 p. m. until midnight, love, marriage and financial affairs will be favorably affected. This is an excellent day with the exception of the period when your judgment is apt to prove faulty.

Sunday,  
October  
18th



This day will be somewhat quiet, but will be a very good day for most people. More harmony will prevail in home affairs, and home benefits are likely to be received, both from a financial standpoint and also in matters pertaining to personal property. Business transactions will bring benefits; your social popularity will increase. New friends will be made, and the old ones will seem closer to you. It is a good time to travel, both for pleasure and for profit. Benefits may come to you from lawyers, or as a result of legal procedure. You may also profit as a result of transactions connected with water or water products or in connection with liquids of some kind. The usual tension connected with everyday life will be noticeably lacking and you will feel more at peace and happier than usual. It is a good time to come to a better understanding with loved ones and mutual plans looking to your future welfare can be made to advantage at this time. Finances generally will show improvement. Some special benefit may be received between 8:30 p. m. and 10:00 p. m., which will also be a good time to have a friendly, heart-to-heart business chat with your fiancé or marriage

Monday,  
October  
19th



partner in matters of mutual concern. Make the most of this day.

The early-morning hours may bring developments in money matters, of an unexpected nature, that may perturb you mentally, particularly as they may require some change in your marriage plans. However, you will adjust yourself quickly and will probably benefit by the change. Mark time in marriage matters and business transactions between 8:00 a. m. and 10:00 a. m. The later morning hours will be somewhat uneventful. Between 2:30 p. m. and 4:30 p. m., mark time in environmental and employment matters and also avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to consult lawyers nor to become involved in litigation. Avoid unnecessary traveling at this time. Keep your temper under control in employment matters and watch your actions carefully. Employment changes at this time are apt to prove detrimental. Avoid becoming embroiled in labor disputes. Between 7:15 p. m. and 8:30 p. m., make no unnecessary environmental changes and avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to deal in real estate. Between 10:00 p. m. and midnight, be careful in business transactions and employment matters and do not become involved in difficulties precipitated by some one else. Avoid becoming romantic as there is danger of deception and disillusionment. Keep your brain clear.

Tuesday,  
October  
20th



The early-morning hours will be good for planning in connection with marriage matters and business transactions. A profitable and pleasurable journey may be taken at this time. However, be sure that you have sufficient money along if you do take a trip,

as unexpected expense may develop. Some unlooked-for development may react unfavorably in a business way between 8:00 a. m. and 9:30 a. m. Between 10:15 a. m. and noon, employment matters will be under favorable influences; you may receive financial benefits. Opportunity to advance your love interests may come to you at this time, but keep your head cool. The early-afternoon hours will be somewhat quiet. Between 4:30 p. m. and 6:00 p. m., you will have an excellent opportunity to advance love and marriage interests; you may receive business benefits. A pleasant journey may be taken at this time. To many of you it will be a honeymoon trip. During the entire day, mark time in home affairs.

Wednesday,  
October  
21st

♁

The early-morning hours will bring you opportunity to advance love, marriage and business interests. You may benefit in a financial way. A profitable journey may be taken. Occupational matters may also be benefited. The later morning hours will be somewhat uneventful. From 1:30 p. m. until 3:00 p. m., beneficial developments in occupational matters may come to you in an unlooked-for manner; unexpected financial benefits may be received by you. The rest of the afternoon and the early-evening hours will be somewhat uneventful. Between 9:00 p. m. and 11:00 p. m., your judgment in marriage matters will be poor, so postpone matrimonial decisions to a later date, if that can be done. You should also mark time in occupational matters. Avoid unnecessary signing of papers in connection with real estate. Watch your speech carefully. It is not a good time to write love letters or to write or sign papers involving your marriage interests.

Thursday,  
October  
22nd

♃

The influences during the early-morning hours will be somewhat mixed in love matters; you will be benefited in some respects, but in others, things may not go to suit you. Employment benefits will be received by you. A change in environmental conditions or a removal may occur at this time, to your benefit. Profit may come to you as a result of transacting in real estate or in some manner connected with real estate. Financial benefits may be received in some way connected with water products or things transported by water. Between 9:00 a. m. and 10:00 a. m., employment benefits may come to you, possibly in a rather unusual manner. You may become romantic at this time and daydream, with possible future benefit to yourself, for some of your dreams, if followed through, may later come true. From 10:00 a. m. until 4:00 p. m., will be somewhat quiet and uneventful. Between 4:00 p. m. and 5:15 p. m., minor occupational and business benefits may come to you, and a journey may be taken. You may also profit in a financial way, possibly in connection with real estate, or through dealings with lawyers or as a result of legal procedure. From 9:30 p. m. until midnight, mark time in employment and environmental matters. Do not lose your temper. Avoid motor-boating at this time.

Friday,  
October  
23rd

♀

The early-morning hours will be good for love and romance; but mark time in marriage matters. Employment and financial benefits may be received. Between 8:15 a. m. and 9:30 a. m., you will have opportunity to advance your love interests. Friends will do you favors. Financial benefits may come to you. Between 10:00 a. m. and noon, mark time in matters of environment and also in employment. Changes in either are apt to

prove detrimental if made at this time. Between 1:00 p. m. and 2:30 p. m., be alert in employment matters and keep your mind on your work. Avoid daydreaming. It is not a good time for romance. The rest of the afternoon hours will be somewhat uneventful. Between 8:00 p. m. and 9:30 p. m., avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to deal with lawyers. Curtail your social activities or you may lose some of your popularity. Be careful not to have misunderstandings with friends. Between 9:30 p. m. and midnight, you may be put to unexpected financial expense, some of which may be occasioned by coming to the assistance of friends. Mark time in home affairs during the entire day.

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 28th will receive business benefits this week and may profit as a result of legal procedure. A profitable and pleasant journey may be taken. In marriage matters your judgment will be poor, so mark time. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between March 29th and April 5th, minor unexpected financial benefits may come to you. Mark time in employment matters. Your judgment will be poor in marriage matters. Guard your speech carefully. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between April 6th and 12th, mark time in employment matters and keep out of other people's labor troubles. It is not a good time to become romantic. You may profit as a result of business transactions and may be benefited through some legal procedure. Environmental conditions will be somewhat less restrictive than usual. Best days for you this week are Monday and Tuesday.

Mark time on Thursday. If born between April 13th and 20th, mark time in love and marriage matters; also in home affairs. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday.

#### April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taurus born between April 20th and 28th will be benefited to a minor degree in love and marriage matters. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between April 29th and May 6th, the unexpected will happen in money matters, probably with mixed results. Employment matters will be benefited. Love and marriage matters will benefit to a limited degree. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. If born between May 7th and 13th, employment benefits will be received. You may profit as a result of business transactions. If environmental conditions have been distasteful, it will be a good time to make satisfactory adjustments. A change of environment may occur at this time. Best day for you this week is Thursday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between May 14th and 21st, you will be benefited in home affairs. Minor marriage benefits may come to you; but mark time in courtship. Be considerate of your marriage partner's finances at this time. Best days for you this week are Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Sunday.

#### May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and 29th will be mentally alert in marriage matters this week. Mark time in love and courtship. Best day for you this week is Friday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between May 30th and June 6th, minor financial benefits may be received from unlooked-for sources. You will be mentally alert in marriage matters and can plan to advantage. Mark time in employment matters. Mark time on Monday. If born between June 7th and 13th, avoid becoming embroiled in labor disputes. It is not a good time for business transactions nor for dealing with lawyers. Avoid unnecessary social activity. Environmental conditions may be somewhat more restrictive than usual. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between June 14th and 21st, home benefits may be received. You can advance your love and marriage interests to a considerable extent if alert to do so. Mark time on Tuesday.



## June 21st and July 23rd

(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 29th will have poor judgment in marriage matters this week. Minor love benefits may come to you. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between June 30th and July 7th, unexpected financial benefits will be received by you. You will also be benefited in employment matters. Your judgment will be poor in marriage matters, so mark time. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between July 8th and 15th, you will receive employment benefits. You may be somewhat benefited as a result of business transactions. It is an excellent time to make satisfactory adjustments or a change in matters of environment, if not satisfactory. Best day for you this week is Saturday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between July 16th and 23rd, mark time in love and marriage matters. Your husband or fiancé may be benefited in a financial way. Best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday.

## July 23rd and August 23rd

(Leo ♌)

—Leo natives born between July 23rd and 31st will be mentally alert in marriage matters this week. You can advance your love and marriage interests to a considerable degree by careful planning. Best day for you this week is Sunday. Mark time on Friday. If born between August 1st and 8th, you may be put to unexpected financial expense. Minor employment benefits may be received by you. You will be alert in marriage matters and can plan to advantage. Best day for you this week is Monday. If born between August 9th and 15th, minor employment benefits may be received by you. You will profit as a result of business transactions. A profitable journey may be taken. Benefits as a result of legal procedure may come to you. Mark time in matters of environment. Best days for you this week are Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between August 16th and 23rd, home affairs will be benefited. You can advance your marriage interests; but mark time in courtship. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday.

## August 23rd and September 23rd

(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo natives born between August 23rd and 31st will be mentally alert in marriage

matters; but mark time in courtship. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between September 1st and 8th, unexpected financial benefits will be received. Mark time in employment matters. You will be mentally alert in marriage matters and can plan to advantage. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between September 9th and 15th, mark time in employment matters and do not become embroiled in other people's labor troubles. Avoid unnecessary business transactions. It is not a good time to deal with lawyers. Avoid unnecessary traveling. Mark time in environmental matters. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between September 16th and 23rd, home benefits will be received. You can advance your love and marriage interests. Best days for you this week are Sunday, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday.

## September 23rd and October 23rd

(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and 30th will have opportunity to advance love and marriage interests this week by careful thought and planning. It is a good week for traveling, especially for honeymooning. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between October 1st and 8th, the unexpected will happen in money matters, probably with mixed results. Minor employment benefits may be received. You will be mentally alert in marriage matters and can plan to advantage. Best day for you this week is Monday. Mark time on Wednesday. If born between October 9th and 16th, minor employment benefits may come to you. You will profit as a result of business transactions. Benefits may come to you through lawyers. A beneficial journey may be taken. Mark time in matters of environment. Best days for you this week are Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday. If born between October 17th and 23rd, mark time in home affairs. You will have an excellent opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Thursday and Friday.

## October 23rd and November 22nd

(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 23rd and 31st will be mentally alert in mar-

riage matters and can advance love and marriage interests. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Friday. If born between November 1st and 7th, you will be put to unexpected expense. Employment benefits may be received by you. You can advance your marriage interests by thoughtful planning. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. If born between November 8th and 15th, you will receive employment benefits. Business transactions may profit you. It will be an excellent opportunity to improve your environmental condition if it has been unsatisfactory. Best day for you this week is Thursday. If born between November 16th and 22nd, more harmony will prevail in your home affairs and you will receive benefits. Opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests will come to you. Best days for you this week are Sunday, Thursday and Friday.

**November 22nd and December 22nd**  
(Sagittarius ♏)

—Sagittarians born between November 22nd and 29th will be mentally alert this week in marriage matters. You can advance your love and marriage interests by careful planning. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. If born between November 30th and December 7th, the unexpected will happen in money matters. Mark time in employment matters. You can advance your marriage interests by careful planning. If born between December 8th and 14th, mark time in employment matters and avoid becoming embroiled in labor disputes. Keep your temper. You may profit as a result of business transactions. Mark time in matters of environment. If born between December 15th and 22nd, your love and marriage interests will be benefited. Best day for you this week is Tuesday.

**December 22nd and January 20th**  
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricornians born between December 22nd and 29th will have poor judgment in marriage matters this week. However, opportunity to advance your love interests may come to you. If born between December 30th and January 6th, you will receive unexpected financial benefits, probably of a substantial nature. You will be benefited in employment matters. Your judgment in marriage matters will be poor. Best day for you this week is Wednesday, except in marriage matters, with respect to

which mark time and watch your speech and actions carefully. If born between January 7th and 13th, you will receive employment benefits. Business dealings may bring you profit. Environmental conditions will improve. A change of environment may occur at this time. Best days for you this week are Saturday and Thursday. If born between January 14th and 20th, mark time in home affairs and marriage matters. You may advance your love interests. Best days for you this week are Sunday, Thursday and Friday.

**January 20th and February 19th**  
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 20th and 28th will find this an excellent opportunity to advance love and marriage interests by clear-thinking and proper planning. Best days for you this week are Sunday and Friday. If born between January 29th and February 5th, you will be put to unexpected expense. Mark time in employment matters. You can advance your marriage interests by proper planning. Best day for you this week is Monday. If born between February 6th and 12th, mark time in employment matters. Business transactions may bring you profit. A beneficial journey may be taken by you or by some one to your advantage. It is a good time to deal with lawyers. Environmental conditions will be somewhat less restrictive. Best days for you this week are Monday and Tuesday. Mark time on Saturday. If born between February 13th and 19th, opportunity to advance your marriage interests will come to you; be careful in courtship. Best day for you this week is Tuesday. Mark time on Sunday.

**February 19th and March 21st**  
(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 27th should mark time in love matters. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Sunday. If born between February 28th and March 6th, you will receive unexpected financial benefits. Mark time in employment matters. Best day for you this week is Wednesday. Mark time on Monday. If born between March 7th and 13th, mark time in employment matters and avoid becoming embroiled in other people's labor disputes. It is not a good time for business transactions nor for dealing with lawyers. Do not unnecessarily travel. Mark time in matters of environment. Best days for you this week are

Saturday and Thursday. Mark time on Monday and Tuesday. If born between March 14th and 21st, you will receive home benefits, possibly of a very substantial nature. You can advance your love and marriage interests. Best days for you this week are Sunday, Thursday and Friday. Mark time on Tuesday.

Note for "Born Between—" readers: The week referred to begins with Saturday, October 17th, and ends with Friday, October 23rd. Compare with information given in "Your Week" and "Day by Day" to see what the general influences are.



### MORE ABOUT LIBRA PEOPLE

While it cannot be foretold in detail the events that are likely to happen to a person without casting that person's horoscope, what may happen generally to groups of people can in a measure be forecast from the positions of certain planets and the native belonging to a particular group will respond more or less to the group influence. The manner in which a person will respond to the group influence will be modified by that person's horoscope and the characteristics inherited from his ancestors. You should bear the foregoing in mind in considering the following forecasts.

The particular group to which you Libra natives belong will be affected, beneficially or otherwise, during the twelve months ensuing from September 23, 1936, by the positions of certain planets, in the following manner:

If you were born between September 23rd and 28th: Occupational and marriage matters will be adversely affected during the month of December, 1936, and it will not be a good time for business transactions. From April, 1937, to September, 1937, marriage matters and partnership transactions will be adversely affected. Be careful of your speech and watch your actions carefully. Avoid recklessness as it may result in falls and possibly broken bones. Matters will be about normal for you during the twelve months' period in other respects.

If you were born between September 29th and October 3rd: From October, 1936, to May, 1937, the unexpected will happen from time to time in money matters and matrimonial affairs, possibly with mixed results. During December, 1936, and January, 1937, mark time in occupational

and marriage matters and avoid unnecessary business dealings. During July, 1937, be careful of your speech and actions, especially in marriage matters. Avoid recklessness that might result in injury. Avoid transactions involving real estate. Keep your fire insurance in force. Matters will be about normal for you during the twelve months' period in other respects.

If you were born between October 4th and 8th: Mark time in occupational and marriage matters during January and February, 1937, and avoid transacting unnecessary business. From May, 1937, to September, 1937, the unexpected will happen in money matters and matrimonial affairs, from time to time. Whether the happenings will be good or bad will largely depend upon your viewpoint and your previous actions. In other respects, matters will be about normal for you during the twelve months' period.

If you were born between October 9th and 13th: From October, 1936, to January, 1937, environment may somewhat restrict you and your matrimonial affairs may be adversely affected thereby. Be careful around dangerous bodies of water. From October, 1936, to September, 1937, minor employment benefits may come to you at various times, bringing opportunity to advance your love and marriage interests. During October, 1936, love, courtship and marriage will be benefited as a result of business transactions. You may profit through legal procedure or from lawyers. You may travel to your profit or benefit from the journey of some one else. During February, March, August and September, 1937, avoid unnecessary business dealings and mark time in occupational and marriage matters. Matters will be about normal for you in other respects during the twelve months' period.

If you were born between October 14th and 18th: Business benefits will be received by you during October and November, 1936, and love and marriage matters will be favorably influenced. You may benefit as a result of legal procedure or from dealing with lawyers. You may travel for pleasure and profit, or such may come to you as a result of the journey of some one else. During January, February and March, 1937, environment may restrict you and adversely affect your matrimonial affairs. Be careful when near dangerous bodies of water. Avoid doing things that may result in injury to your feet. During March, April, June, July and August, 1937, mark time in occupational and marriage

matters. Do not transact unnecessary business. Avoid dealing in real estate. Matters will be about normal for you in other respects during the twelve months' period.

If you were born between October 19th and 23rd: During November, 1936, love, marriage and business benefits will come to you. A pleasant journey—for some a honeymoon trip—will be taken by many of you. Legal procedure may bring benefits to you. During March and April, 1937, mark time in environmental matters. Environment may adversely affect your love and marriage interests during this period. Avoid doing things that may result in a bruised or fractured foot. During April, May and June, 1937, avoid unnecessary business dealings and mark time in occupational matters and your matrimonial affairs. During the entire twelve months' period, avoid being upset by trifles in home affairs. The twelve months' period will be about normal for you in matters other than above noted.



### COMMENTS BY KAI

A few things for readers of this department to note:

(1) In answering letters, I indicate the birth place as the State only, unless otherwise requested. For instance, "New York" means that the birth occurred somewhere within the State of New York. It may have been in New York City or it may have been at some other place within the State. However, in writing to me, do not fail to send the place of your birth as well as the State where born.

(2) If the birth occurred in a foreign country, usually the name of the country only is mentioned in the answer, though in the case of large countries, the province may be added.

(3) Initials only are used in identifying you, unless otherwise requested. If you do not wish your initials used, you may request that your answer be published under a "pen" name; but avoid using nicknames that are frequently used, and do not use combinations of letters that are familiar to many people, such as "X. Y. Z.," for example.

(4) Every effort is made to keep your communications strictly confidential.

(5) Before writing, be sure to read the editor's note at the end of each article.

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*Kai does not send answers by mail*

**ELOISE:** Your friend, Mrs. S. Fry, wishes you to write or phone her. If you don't know her address, send your letter in care of me.

**MARGARET,** born September 4, 1917, about 4:00 a. m., Wisconsin: Opportunity to marry will come to you during 1937, but consider it carefully as it may not be satisfactory to you. During 1938, by being mentally alert you can probably contract a happy marriage. You may have to make a decision quickly when the opportunity comes, so have your course of action thought out in advance, so far as possible. Should an engagement result, do not permit marriage to be delayed too long, as obstacles may develop. It is possible that you may become engaged in 1938 and married in 1939. For you, a successful and happy marriage will be largely a matter of your own planning, the desire to be permanently married, and the mental ability to adjust yourself to married life. For your best interests, you should avoid becoming jealous in love and home life; do not brood. In the matter of children, make special effort to protect them from falls, cuts and burns until they get old enough to sense the danger of it for themselves.

**MISS R. H.,** born April 11, 1900, 5:00 a. m., Pennsylvania: Opportunity to marry may come during 1937, but may prove unsatisfactory; 1938 will bring a more satisfactory opportunity, which you can probably turn into marriage if alert to do so.

**FEMALE,** name omitted by request, born March 17, 1912, 8:00 a. m.: You did not state where you were born. The next eighteen months may bring to you a secret marriage; but I doubt the advisability of it, especially if it is to get away from too much parental supervision. In any event, there is apt to be a disturbance in your home routine that will cause you worry and be hard on your nerves. A better opportunity will come during 1938; but it may bring some obstacles to surmount and may necessitate the sacrifice of some present material interests. Be sure you are in love

when you marry. Do not marry because of rebellion over present environmental restrictions. At your age your judgment ought to be fairly developed, and it is but natural that you should want to live your own life. If that can't be done under present environmental conditions, you can change the conditions without resorting to marriage to do it; or maybe the restrictions would be lightened if you determined to throw them off otherwise. If you are dependent upon others and for that reason have to submit to their dictation, the first step in gaining independence is to make yourself self-sustaining. The motives of your self-appointed supervisors are no doubt of the best; but I am inclined to think that you are more apt to get into a matrimonial mess as a result of their too rigid supervision than if you are given more liberty of action in your social affairs, with consequent more opportunity to find the right man. Probably the girls and boys that you know shy off from you because you are so thoroughly supervised. If there is anything the matter with you, then most people have something the matter with them. I believe I have answered all of your questions. Good luck to you.

MISS A. B. C., born March 16, 1915, 5:00 a. m., Old Mexico: Thanks for your nice letter. You certainly know your own mind in love matters. Do not marry any one you do not love, even to please some one else. You will have opportunity to marry during the next eighteen months, but the marriage, if contracted, is apt to prove very unsatisfactory; 1938 and 1939 will bring you excellent opportunities for marriage, to some one you can really love. You will probably marry during 1939.

MRS. F. B. E., born August 2, 1885, about 5:00 a. m., Pennsylvania: I have examined your horoscope and that of the man you expect to marry. The harmonies between your horoscopes are so many, and the discords so few, that I do not hesitate to advise you to marry him. Taboo the few subjects on which you will not agree. You can't help but be happy if both of you use even a minimum of common sense in your marriage relations. You are to be congratulated. Your horoscopes are unusually harmonious with each other.

MISS V. J. C., born October 30, 1912, about 4:00 a. m., Texas: I am glad you have found this department interesting and helpful. You will make a good business woman in some branch of business con-

nected with transportation, whether that be airlines, bus, water travel, or merchandise delivery. A department you might find remunerative would be connected with the finances of some company engaged in this business, possibly as cashier. Quick delivery service to residences for merchants who have no regular delivery service, might prove a pleasant and profitable occupation for you. It would require little financial outlay on your part except a car. Interviewing merchants and strict attendance to business would probably build and keep for you a good clientele. With respect to marriage—there is danger of your contracting an unsatisfactory marriage during the next twelve months; and if you get by that period without marrying, you may turn romantic and suddenly marry during the following few months. During the latter part of 1938 or sometime in 1939, if not by then married, you will have another marriage opportunity. I haven't compared your boy friend's horoscope with yours, as you did not request it. I hope the foregoing will assist you to "find yourself," as you put it in your letter. Best wishes for your success.

MISS D. F., born October 2, 1920, about 5:00 p. m., Kansas: There are a number of marriage possibilities for you. The type of man, however, who is apt to most strongly attract you, will be a dreamer, an artist, possibly a musician; but one of exceptional talents in his field; emotional, loving, different from the average run of men, and if married to him, you can either assist him to become an outstanding figure in public life, or you will break his spirit if you do not understand him. It is possible that he may be interested in the manufacture or sale of subtle perfumes, quite expensive and not commonly used.

E. L. W., female, born August 24, 1919, 10:00 a. m., Kentucky: Your question is one that properly pertains to the medical field and should be answered by your physician. I'm sorry.

MRS. E. J. C., born March 8, 1908, about 2:00 a. m., West Virginia: Both you and your husband are coming under better marriage influences, and 1937 should bring a better understanding between you and more peace of mind for both of you. If you do not separate during the next few months, you may bury the past and again face the future together. Sometimes the lingering hurt that follows separation from a loved one, is greater and more lasting than the

hurt of betrayal. Remember this, in making your decision, and if you remain together, do not brood on the past, but turn your mind resolutely to the future. You are a lover of children, and will find great happiness in them.

L. R. S., born April 3, 1919, about 1:00 a. m., Montana, female: What field isn't overcrowded at the present time? Do the thing you like to do best, if you can make a living at it, after qualifying yourself to do so. I doubt your commercial success as either an architect or a singer. You would make a good landscape gardener. Why not take up where the architect leaves off and beautify his buildings and their grounds? Watch the building permits and go after the jobs along this line. You might add interior decorating to your accomplishments. There is nearly always room for those who stand out above their fellows in any field, so close your eyes to possible competition. You are apt to meet plenty of it no matter what you do.

Miss C. C., born December 23, 1911, New York: You will have opportunity to marry during each of the next four years. Be careful that too many chances do not result in your missing them all.

Miss G. R. F., born March 3, 1918, 1:05 a. m., Maine: Yes, you can be happily married; but there may be a period following marriage that will require adjustment to your new environment and mode of living. Next year, 1937, will bring you an opportunity, with possibly some problems; 1938 will bring another opportunity, but adjustment to the new life may be harder to make. Another opportunity will come to you in 1940; or if married in 1937, 1940 will bring a closer understanding and sympathy between you and your husband. In attaining married happiness, much will depend upon your wise selection from the opportunities that will come your way. When you have opportunity to marry some one you love, beware of a too long engagement or you may drift apart. When your mind is made up, don't give the man opportunity or excuse to change his.

Miss V. Mc., born January 17, 1918, about 1:00 a. m.: I admire your deter-

mination, but I am afraid you are directing it toward the wrong end. I do not believe you will become a great actress, if by that you measure greatness in commercial success and popularity. You may become an accomplished performer, but I am doubtful that you will make a commercial success of acting. It would seem to me that you would be more successful qualifying yourself to be a teacher of dancing and dramatics than to attempt to be an entertainer.

W. M. G., female, born January 24, 1920, about 2:00 a. m., Colorado: Opportunity to marry will come to you during the next fifteen months.

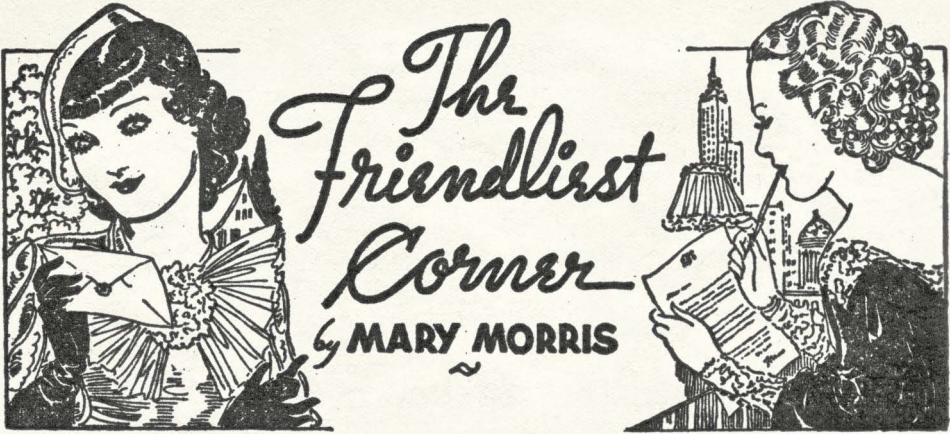
P. C. R., born November 7, 1908, 1:00 p. m., New York; female: It is problematical whether or not you will have an opportunity to marry during 1937, and I am inclined to doubt it, unless you make the opportunity. An opportunity to marry during 1938 will come to you, but obstacles may have to be overcome, most likely those pertaining to business and employment; 1939 will probably bring marriage to you, if you are not married at that time.

Miss E. C. F., born September 6, 1917, 10:00 p. m., Alabama: The year 1938 may bring to you a romantic and impetuous courtship with opportunity to marry; but obstacles may prevent it. If not married in 1938, you will probably marry during 1939.

C. M. S., female, born February 2, 1917, 8:20 p. m., Michigan: The next fifteen months will bring to you an excellent opportunity to gain in social popularity, if you make a studied effort to mix with the right kind of people. It may bring opportunity for marriage, as well. Why sit at home waiting for some one to call on you? Meet people in legitimate ways and boys that you don't even know now will be calling on you before long. Make the most of your opportunities during 1937.

Miss I. K., born July 2, 1914, 6:30 p. m., Mississippi: Opportunities for marriage will come to you during 1938, 1939 and 1940, but you will have to be alert to take advantage of them.

**Editor's Note:** Questions for this department are answered only through *Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine*. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded. We are not responsible for money (coins) sent through the mail.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

*Do not mail letters to these Pen Pals after October 23rd.*

**T**HIS brother and sister are eager to hear from Pals everywhere, and promise prompt, friendly replies to all letters received. Who'll give them a chance? Bert is an X-ray technician, has traveled in the Orient and South Seas, and has many interesting things to tell you. Alice, on the other hand, has stayed at home, but finds life crammed with thrilling and exciting events. So get busy, Pen Pals, and give these two a chance to be *your* friends!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May we join your pleasant Corner? We are a brother and sister anxious to find Pen Pals. I am a nurse, age twenty-six, have never traveled, but life for me is never dull. I have had many interesting experiences, and feel sure that I can make my letters worth while. My brother is twenty-nine, an X-ray technician, has traveled in the Orient, visited the South Seas, and enjoyed the wonders

of the West. He has had an adventure-some life, and I'm sure lots of Pals would like his letters. We have plenty of time to answer all letters, and promise prompt replies.  
ALICE AND BERT.

Girls, pile up your letters at her door!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'd like very much to correspond with girls of any age. I'm a brown-eyed girl from California, interested in reading, art work, writing letters, and enjoy all the worth-while things of life. I collect stamps, and would love to hear from a few Pals who also enjoy this hobby. How about it, girls? I promise faithfully to answer every letter I receive. If there's anything you'd like to know about California, ask me!  
ELVA W.

This girl will answer every letter she gets.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another lonesome girl who would love to correspond with Pen Pals everywhere. I am

sixteen, fond of swimming, dancing, hiking, baseball, and other outdoor sports. I will answer every letter I get, regardless from where it comes. Pals, won't you give me a chance?  
CALIFORNIA BLUE EYES.

### Three Pals at a throw.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are three sisters, sixteen, fourteen, and eleven years of age, live in Missouri, and are fond of the following sports: Swimming, dancing, horseback riding, driving a car, skating, and farm interests. We'll exchange snapshots and answer all letters promptly. Winnie, who is sixteen, has won two beauty contests. Please, girls, give us a break!

DEL, DO, AND WINNIE.

Reg is particularly interested in opera and the stage.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-four years of age, live in Maine, fond of all outdoor sports, and would very much like to correspond with young men of my age or older, especially those who are interested in light or grand opera and the stage. I promise to answer letters promptly and will try to make my replies interesting. I'll gladly tell you all about Maine, Pals.

REG.

Girls, here's a lonesome girl who needs your letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a very lonesome girl, have gray eyes, black hair, love to make friends and write long letters. I am also fond of the movies, dancing, reading, and several outdoor sports. Won't some of you girls please write to me? I live in an interesting city, and there are oodles of things I can write about. Please, Pals, give me a break.

MISSOURI BETH.

Music and traveling appeal to Ed Mac.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty years of age, interested in music, traveling, and as I haven't much time to go out and meet people, I would like to exchange letters with Pals everywhere and of any age. Come on, fellows and let's exchange letters and snapshots. You'll find me a real friend.

ED MAC.

Here's a Pal who finds joy in everything.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you a tiny bit of space in your Corner for my letter?

I'm a girl of twenty-one, easy to get along with, and find joy in almost every dark cloud. My pet hobby is reading, but I am interested in everything and every one. I live in Alabama, and can tell you much about the South. I'll answer all letters.

NOLIA.

Her ambition is to sing Western songs.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Are there any fourteen-year-old girls who want a peppy Pen Pal from Illinois? I'm a brown-eyed girl, very much interested in the West, and my ambition is to sing Western songs when I am a little older. I would also love to visit Texas, but since I can't do that now, I hope to hear from some Texas Pals. I'll exchange snapshots and answer every letter that comes my way.

ALISON.

You can count on her for a happy outlook.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I have often dreamed of having some Pen Pals, and hope that my dreams will come true. I'm a girl eighteen years of age, a tall brunette, considered good-looking, enjoy hiking, swimming, and other sports. I'll gladly exchange snapshots with Pals everywhere, and will try to cheer up those who are blue. How about it, girls?

PERSONALITY GIRL.

Hopeful Kathy is the peppy kind that you'll like.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm another sixteen-year-old girl anxious to find a few Pen Pals. I really love to make friends, and can't think of anything nicer than writing to girls from far and near. I live in Minnesota, am fond of dancing, hiking, reading, and enjoy anything girls of my age like. Won't you write and tell me all about yourselves, Pals?

HOPEFUL KATHY.

Let this happy married Pal transmit some of her happiness to you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-one, have a darling baby five months old, and I'm as happy as any one can be. I would love to correspond with single and married Pals near my age, will exchange snapshots, souvenirs, picture post cards, and promise to answer all letters. I like outdoor sports, movies, drawing, sewing and reading.

MRS. JERRY.



A snapshot and a letter await you in Montana.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's my call for Pen Pals. I'm a teen-age girl who has never had a Pen Pal, and I hope to hear from girls everywhere. Surely, girls, you're not going to disappoint me? I enjoy swimming, horseback riding, roller skating, fishing, and making friends. A snapshot and a letter await every one who answers this plea.  
KAY OF MONTANA.

She finds life in a big city lonely.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am hoping that some one will answer my plea. I'm a friendly young girl, live in a large city, but find it very lonely. I want to hear from Pals everywhere. Every one between fifteen and eighteen is welcome, and I'll try to make my replies as peppy and interesting as I can. I'll also exchange snapshots. Who'll try me? All letters will be answered promptly.  
MINNIE RAE.

Let Bren tell you about the Ohio exposition.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a young fellow of twenty-eight who would like to hear from Pals everywhere. I live in Ohio, and can tell you all about the exposition we are having here this year. I'm rather serious, enjoy music, shows, have my own car, and like to write letters. How about it, fellows?  
BREN.

Delphine and Ruth are waiting for your letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two Maine girls, eighteen and thirteen years of age, enjoy all sports, dancing, horseback riding, canoeing, fishing, and want to correspond with girls from all over the world. We have lots of interesting things to write about, and promise to answer all letters. Come, on, girls, drop us a few lines.  
DELPHINE AND RUTH.

Help to make her evenings less lonely.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would like to hear from many Pen Pals. I'm a girl seventeen years of age, live in Niagara Falls, Canada, and have lots to write about. I work during the day, and my evenings are often long and lonely. I'll answer all letters, and will be a true-blue friend. Pals, don't disappoint me!  
MARION F.

This warm-hearted girl pledges prompt replies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Wanted, Pen Pals everywhere! Who wants to write to a friendly fifteen-year-old Chicago girl? I like swimming, dancing, reading, and other sports. I'll exchange snapshots with any one, and promise prompt replies to all letters received. I'm friendly and good-natured, so won't all you girls please write?  
GENTLE JUDY.

A call for Long Island Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm very much interested in your Friendliest Corner and hope that you can find me some Pen Pals. I would especially like to hear from some one in Richmond Hill, Long Island, but every one is welcome. I'm a young married woman from the Brass City in Connecticut, interested in everything, and love to make friends.

LONESOME MARY V.

She's ready for anything that spells "fun."

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is a plea from a girl of nineteen. I'd love to hear from Pals all over the United States, and promise to answer every letter received. I enjoy dancing, traveling, reading, outdoor sports, and anything that spells "fun." Girls, won't you put my name on your list of Pen Pals? I'm sure you'll find me a steady correspondent.  
OUTDOOR VI.

Get your letters from Popular Marge.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another girl who would like to join your Friendliest Corner. I'm a Pennsylvania school girl, like fishing, horseback riding, baseball games, and riding a bicycle. I also enjoy the movies, and as I am popular with boys and girls I'm not lonesome, but would love to have a few sincere Pen Pals.  
POPULAR MARGE.

How about it, girls? These two sisters want Pen Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two sisters, sixteen and fourteen years of age, live in Oregon, and want a few real Pen Pals. Won't some of your girls please write us? Don't let age or nationality worry you. Every one is welcome, and we promise to answer all letters received. We'll tell you loads of interesting things about the West.  
GOLDIE AND DOT.

Kankakee offers you true friendship.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I would more than appreciate having a few Pen Pals to correspond with. I'm a young married woman twenty-one years of age, with blue eyes, brown hair, a cheerful disposition, and interested in every one. I enjoy dancing, hiking, writing long letters, and will answer all letters as soon as I receive them. Try me, girls.

KANKAKEE.

Exchange cards and souvenirs with her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm eager to hear from Pals of my age. I'm a girl of seventeen, like to swim, play ball, and enjoy most outdoor sports, as well as movies and listening to the radio. I'll gladly exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and souvenirs with Pals all over, and to the first two Pals who write to me I will send gifts. Drop me a line, won't you?

BLUE ISLAND NITA.

Stamp collectors, she's anxious to hear from you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wonder if you have room in your Corner for my plea? I'm a young married woman twenty-one years of age, collect stamps, and would love to hear from other stamp collectors, regardless of where they live. I promise prompt replies to all letters. I've plenty of time to write.

LILAC.

She's interested in every one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Are there any Pen Pals who would care to correspond with a Pennsylvania girl of eighteen? I enjoy all sports, am interested in every one and everything, and promise to be a steady correspondent. I'll exchange snapshots, and tell you more about myself in my first letter. How about it, girls? I'll be waiting!

LONELY VEE.

Exchange news with Aileen A.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea for Pen Pals. I'm a very lonely girl of almost fifteen, have fair hair, blue eyes, enjoy all sports, write long letters, and my ambition is to be a nurse. I would love to exchange news and views with girls everywhere and of any age. I'll also exchange snapshots. Come on, girls, let's get acquainted.

AILEEN A.

Berthene will tell you about her travels.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll write to a lonely girl of seventeen? I live in Montana, have traveled in thirty-eight States in the Union, also in Canada and Mexico. I'd like to hear from girls of any age, will exchange snapshots, souvenirs, and promise some interesting replies. Please, girls, write to me.

BERTHENE.

Who'll take her for a Pen Pal?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a married woman thirty years of age, and although I have a darling baby, I get very lonesome as my husband works nights. I like movies, collecting stamps, knitting, sewing, and I also draw a little. I'll try hard to make my letters interesting, and promise prompt replies.

HAWTHORNE MRS.

This Canadian girl loves to write letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's an S O S from a Canadian girl. I'm fairly popular with boys and girls, and not really lonesome, but I love to write letters and hope Pals everywhere will drop me a line. I like skating, hiking, swimming, and other sports. I'll gladly tell you anything you would like to know about Canada. Try me, girls.

CANADIAN JEANNETTE.

Two sisters from the "wild" West.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two sisters from South Dakota, twenty-one and sixteen years of age. Both of us have blond hair, love to dance, ride horseback, and enjoy all outdoor sports. We are very lonely, and would be very happy if girls everywhere would answer our plea. We'll gladly tell you all about the West too, if you're interested.

MYRTLE AND ELSIE.

Sweet sixteen and talented! Make her your Pen Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please find room for my plea? I'm a slim young girl with brown hair, blue eyes, and just sweet sixteen. My hobby is drawing, and I will gladly send a sample of my talent to any one who is interested. I'll also exchange snapshots. I really enjoy reading and writing letters, so please, girls, give me a chance to be your Pen Pal.

BEBE.

X-Marine has lots to write about.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I've read your Friendliest Corner for some time, and hope you can help me find some Pen Pals. I'm a broad-minded young man, and feel sure that I can make my letters interesting. I would especially like to hear from Pals who live in Cincinnati or Columbus, Ohio, and promise to answer all letters received. I'll exchange photographs.

X-MARINE.

Talk things over with Miss Charleston.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is South Carolina calling! I'm a friendly girl twenty-one years of age, enjoy sports, dancing, horseback riding, will exchange snapshots, picture post cards, and be a true friend to any one who cares to get in touch with me. I'll answer all letters as soon as I receive them. If you don't believe it, just write to me and see.

MISS CHARLESTON.

Full of pep and ready for Pals!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hi, Pals. Who'll be the first to write to me? I'm a peppy high-school girl fifteen years of age, love to write long, chummy letters, will exchange snapshots with all Pals who answer my plea, and promise to be a true-blue friend. My favorite hobby is dancing. Come on, all you Pals everywhere, let's get started!

JACQUELYN.

Tennis enthusiasts, write to her.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl of eighteen and would love to correspond with Pen Pals who are keen about tennis, but promise to answer all letters. I have brown hair and eyes, a friendly disposition, enjoy swimming, skiing, dancing, and my favorite sport is tennis. I have loads of interesting things to talk about, so please, girls, answer my plea.

MIN-MIN.

Nurse Rosa wants to hear from every one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I have found your Friendliest Corner very interesting, and hope that some of the Pals will write to me. I'm a graduate nurse in a State hospital. I'm in my early thirties, but want to hear from girls of any age. I enjoy reading, making friends, and feel sure that I could write interesting letters. Won't some one please answer my plea?

NURSE ROSA.

Boys, give Friendly Phil a hand.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young fellow nineteen years of age, an orphan, and at present working in a reforestation camp. I collect autographs, like to take and collect photographs, and hope that boys all over the country will write to me. I'll exchange photos and promise to answer all letters received.

FRIENDLY PHIL.

This city girl would like some ranch Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope to make a lot of friends through your Corner. I'm a Texas girl, live in the city, and would love to hear from girls who live on ranches. I'll exchange snapshots, and promise faithfully to answer every letter received. Won't all you girls everywhere please try me?

MITTIE.

Girls, compare notes with Hawthorne Pal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's a plea from a dark-haired, hazel-eyed girl of sixteen. I would love to have some Pen Pals from all over the world. I am interested in everything girls of my age enjoy, and would like to hear about the activities of other Pen Pals. I've a friendly disposition, and get along well with any one. Pals, won't you please take a chance on me? I'll be a real friend.

HAWTHORNE PAL.

Sally S. hails from New York.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am an American girl of Polish descent, nineteen years of age, live in Brooklyn, New York, and would like to correspond with Pals everywhere. I enjoy fishing, dancing, sewing, making friends, and really love to write long, newsy letters. I also collect stamps. Please, girls, write to me. I'll exchange snapshots with any one.

SALLY S.

A Pal from the smallest State in the Union.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm sending out an S O S for Pals everywhere. I'm a young man twenty-five years of age, live in Rhode Island, promise prompt and cheerful replies to all letters received, and would especially like to hear from young men interested in medicine, the navy, and college studies. Who'll be the first to write?

PASCOAG.



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# THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

*Well-known Authority on Love and Marriage*

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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**S**OME men seem only too ready to take advantage of any assistance a woman offers, because they know that most women are ruled by their hearts and easily fall for a hard-luck story. But a woman never fails to cheer, comfort, and sympathize with the man she loves, even to the extent of offering material help.

I often receive letters from girls who have loaned money to men friends, only to find that romance and finance do not mix. Love cannot last long when a man lacks character, and if he does not hesitate to accept money from a girl under ordinary circumstances, before long his feeling for her changes to resentment and sometimes contempt. In most cases a girl is parted not only from her money, but from the man as well.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am an unhappy and puzzled girl of twenty. There is no one else I can talk to about my problem, so won't you try to help me?

Shortly after I found my first job a year and a half ago, I met a young man six years my senior. I know it was love with me almost at first sight, and I had no reason to believe that he was not as sincere

as he appeared to be. He was working only two or three days a week, and we could not afford to go anywhere except to a movie about once a week, and the rest of the time we either stayed home or went for a walk. But I didn't mind that; I was happy just to be with him.

About four months after we met he lost his part-time job and did not find anything until seven weeks ago. During the time that he was not working things were hard for him. He rooms with his married sister, but her husband has never liked Tom, and although he knew that Tom didn't have any money, he wouldn't even give Tom enough for cigarettes.

Naturally, I felt terribly sorry for him. Whenever we went out I paid for both of us. I did not miss the small loans I gave Tom because I was working and making a fair salary, and I also had a little money saved up.

One day Tom and I were talking and he said that if he had a hundred dollars he could buy a partnership in a printing shop. Tom didn't know any one he could borrow from, so I offered to lend him the money. He seemed awfully happy about it, and felt sure that he could start paying me back in small amounts almost at once.

In the meantime, we knew we couldn't get married until Tom made enough to provide a home for us, and somehow our emotions forced us into foolish ways. If I had only been wiser, I wouldn't have so much to regret. But I loved him so much that nothing seemed wrong, and we were so happy together.

Tom and his friend did not make out as well as they expected with the printing shop, and he sometimes said that he was disappointed because he couldn't start paying me back. I didn't dream that I was going to be disappointed altogether. But that's what happened. Tom had a quarrel with this man, and was told to get out if he didn't want to stay. At least that's what Tom told me. Anyway, he left, but promised to pay me back just as soon as he found work.

A month ago he found a very nice job, but began acting queer. On the nights I expected him to come to see me he was either late, or sent his little nephew to tell me he couldn't see me. When I did see him, he made no mention of paying back the money he had borrowed, though he did say that he had to get himself some new clothes because he had to look nice, and that later he'd be able to take care of his debt.

Last week I received a letter from him with the information that the plant closed down, and since he had no prospects of getting other work it would be better if we didn't see each other for a while. He said he was sorry that things turned out this way, and that when he can he'll pay me back.

I've sent him three letters, and even telephoned him, but couldn't get in touch with him, nor did he answer my letters. I don't dare tell my folks about the money. My sister is the only one who knows, and she says I've been all kinds of a fool, and that I might as well make up my mind and forget Tom. She thinks he never really loved me, but went with me only because I was easy, and that he has no intentions of ever paying back any of the money he owes me.

I'm so blue and worried I can't sleep or eat properly because all this is always on my mind. Of course, I am terribly disappointed in Tom, but I still care for him and want him back. Do you think that when he finds work he will come back to me? I'll be anxiously waiting for your advice.

FLORENCE.

It seems that when a girl begins lending money to a man friend, nine times out of ten the experience brings only unhappiness to her. And although in some cases it may not be a mistake to help a man, providing he shows in every way that he is making all possible effort to get

back on his feet and repay the loan, he begins to feel inferior and resentful instead of being grateful to the girl for lending a helping hand.

I am truly sorry I cannot tell you if Tom will ever come back to you. However, try not to let this unhappy experience break your heart, my dear. It may be that he loves you, but is weak and too easily influenced by conditions. Perhaps, too, he is ashamed of his weakness and embarrassed because he has not as yet paid back the money he borrowed from you.

But if you consider the fact that he has taken all your love, as well as your money, accepted your sacrifices, and now turns away from you without any apparent consideration for your feelings, it might be better if you made up your mind to forget a man who has taken everything and given nothing. Busy yourself with other interests, and it will not be so hard to forget.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a boy of nineteen. For several years I have been in love with a girl two years my junior. We used to see each other often and got along fine, but about six months ago she met a girl who moved into our neighborhood, and since then my friend seems to have changed.

This girl asks my girl friend to go on blind dates, and they go out with any fellow who has the money to take them places. Before that my girl friend—I'll call her Edith—never went out unless it was with some one she knew. But since she met this new girl they have been going to dances four and five times a week, and she has become a different girl.

We hadn't been going steady; I encouraged her to date other boys, and she did. I didn't mind, as long as she had a good time and I knew the boys were all right. The last time we had a date I tried to talk to her, and she told me that she didn't care to go out with me any more. She said she wanted to be entirely free to go with any one she wished, and that maybe in a year or two when we were older we'd get together again.

I've asked her to stop going with this

girl; I've heard different boys say she has a poor reputation, but Edith thinks she is all right. Her parents like me; they don't know that Edith and I are not as good friends as we once were, and I don't know whether or not I should tell them. I don't want to make any trouble for Edith.

I've cared for Edith ever since we first met; I guess I always will. She tells me to go ahead and date other girls, and I could have other friends, but somehow I don't care to date any one else. Should I stop coaxing her to go out with me? I'd hate to break with her. On the other hand, if I wait until she wants to go out with me, we may never get together again.

JOE.

For the time being, my boy, it may be best to let the matter rest. Meanwhile, since Edith has suggested the idea herself, why not be friendly with other girls? Perhaps if she becomes convinced that you are no longer waiting around for her, and are interested in some one else, she will be eager to go with you again.

However, you must not forget that you are both very young and really have plenty of time for romance and serious thoughts of love. Although you have been good friends with Edith for several years, it is quite possible that you are fond of her without being actually in love.

Give yourself a chance to cultivate other friendships; go out with boys and girls in a group, find a hobby, take a lively interest in outdoor sports, and in time your problem will take care of itself. Continue being friendly with Edith, but avoid rushing matters.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm in desperate need of advice, and because my parents often open my mail, I am going to ask you to please answer through your department.

I am a girl of eighteen; I know that I'm in the wrong, but I can't seem to break away from this terrible force that is tearing at my very soul. I have been going out with different boys for four years and have never before experienced anything like

this, so I believe that I have found real love. I know no one approves of a girl falling for a man who happens to be married, but that's my trouble. Please try to help me. I can't talk to my parents about this man; they don't even know I go with him.

I met him six months ago; he talked of getting a divorce before I even thought of falling in love with him. He still speaks of getting his freedom, but seems to think that the final break should be made by his wife. I have tried to convince him that he should stay with her, and that it would be better if we didn't see each other any more, but both of us feel that it is impossible to give each other up.

Although I believe that he is sincerely in love with me, I've tried more than once to forget him; but we are both miserable, so what can be done? We know that if we break up we would go back together again.

I hate myself for feeling this way about him; what can I do? I often go out with young people of my own age, but I never have a good time. He knows I have other dates; I've never lied to him. He takes me out whenever it's convenient, and although he never asks questions I always tell him where I've been and with whom.

We have never done anything wrong, except to fall in love with each other, but there are times when I'm afraid that something might happen which we will regret. Is there any solution to a problem like mine? If it would help matters, I'd go away—leave home and try to find work in another city. But he says that if I leave he will come after me.

Twice I have told him not to come to see me any more, and I really meant it. But I couldn't forget him. I know it is all wrong for me to spend any time thinking about him, but I can't help myself. I always meet him at different places, and hate sneaking around like this, but we can't meet openly. Only my closest girl friend knows about him.

Recently an old friend of my dad's moved into our neighborhood. This man has a son of twenty-two, and lately the boy seems to find me interesting. I've been out with him a few times, and my folks are delighted. They seem to think that we would make a nice couple, and mother has hinted more than once how nice it would be if some day I married Al. But although he's a very nice boy, I feel I can never care for any one as long as this other man is on my mind.

As I said before, I know I am not doing the right thing, but how can I straighten

things out? I feel as if I can never forget this man.

AVA.

No doubt many another girl finds herself in the same predicament. But if she is a girl of character, she will determine to clear up a precarious situation of this kind without further delay, and make up her mind definitely to give a more deserving young man a chance. Forgetting a married man is not as difficult as it may seem, if you can put your own emotions into the background for a moment, and see the whole matter from a rational point of view.

First of all, my dear, even if you do not feel entirely convinced, make believe there is no such word as "can't"; break with this man and do not permit yourself to see him again. Any man who claims to be sincere, and yet continues living with his wife, is *not* sincere, no matter what you would like to believe.

If you keep your mind occupied with thoughts other than of your own feelings, and deliberately set out to make new friends and go out with them, you may not at first have as good a time as you would like, but little by little, you will begin to enjoy the company of other men. In the end you will surely find that other people do interest you, and that giving your affection to a man who can offer you a wedding ring is the best course any girl can follow.

Life is filled with all sorts of anxieties, but you must be honest with yourself, and face things as they really are. So clear up this situation without further delay. You will not regret it.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I've just finished reading your department, and could not resist the temptation to add my comments. I hope you can find room for my letter.

The letter I have in mind is from a

young man who complained that girls he met never gave him a chance because he happens to be plain-looking, and that most girls prefer a man who has a good-looking face. This young man said he had good manners, dressed neatly, and felt very hurt because of the way girls have treated him.

I'd like to say a few words to the girls, if I may. In the first place, girls, why don't you make a resolution to be more kind and considerate to the plain men—tall, short, thin or fat? After all, doesn't it add to a girl's popularity if different boys can say that she is thoughtful and considerate, as well as friendly, and that she gives a fellow a chance to enjoy a girl's companionship?

What I mean is, you girls won't die on the spot if you give a plain-looking fellow one date a week. I'm speaking mostly to the average girls. Those who are very pretty and have loads of boys trailing after them all the time won't put themselves out for any one. It seems that beauty and selfishness go together—or am I wrong?

I'm sure, my dears, that the plain-looking boys will appreciate having a chance to date you. And, after all, you don't have to marry a boy simply because you are friends with him. He'll appreciate your thoughtfulness, and you'll feel better by having an additional admirer.

I would certainly like to see a few letters in this department as to how the girls who took my advice made out. And if you girls do not want to take my advice, won't you write and tell me why?

A FRIENDLY SOUL.

Don't you agree with me, family, that there is a carload of sensible advice in the above letter? Many a plain-looking boy could show a girl a very nice time if she rated high in friendliness. What's your answer to A Friendly Soul?

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I suppose a girl of nearly twenty should know her own mind but I'm so undecided, and thought you could help me out.

Two years ago I started going with a boy whom I met through a relative. I went with Bud for about a year, and then we quarreled. I felt sure at that time that I loved him, and cried myself sick. He had often said he hoped that some day we would be married, but after we quarreled Bud went away and I didn't see him for months.

After he left town I thought I'd better

stop thinking so much about him and started dating other boys. I met two different boys who thought a lot of me, but I didn't want any one to get serious because I couldn't seem to forget Bud.

Then Bud came home again and we started going together once more. But somehow we couldn't get along as before, because he insisted that I drop all my other friends, and I didn't want to. I thought if I dated other boys now and then he would not be so sure of me. But we broke up again, and now he is going with a girl who I am sure will ruin his life.

This girl is six years his senior, and has had oodles of boy friends. It seems that she makes a practice of letting them get serious about her and then leaves them flat. In the meantime, she is always out for any presents the boys can afford to give her.

I suppose if I did give up the other boys Bud would drop this girl and we would be friends again. But on the other hand, Bud's friends seem to think that this girl is serious about him. But she is looking for a husband and they hate to see him marry her.

Should I do anything to break them up, if only for Bud's sake? If I were sure that Bud cared for me I'd know what to do, but I have never been able to feel certain that he loves me. Please try to suggest something that will help me straighten this out in my mind.

MYRTLE.

Well, my dear, since Bud seems to prefer this other girl why do anything about it? Besides, if his boy friends are so anxious to help him, they should try to convince him that he would not be happy with this girl.

Although Bud's pride might have been piqued when you refused to drop your other friends, if he had really cared for you, Myrtle, you can be sure that he would not have given up your friendship altogether. No doubt it is the average young man's natural reaction that if one girl refuses to be ordered around by him, he at once begins to show off that other girls are eager to date him. But where real love exists, it is likely to make the man more anxious for the girl's favor.

And so, my dear, if you still have hopes of winning Bud some day, it will hardly do you any good to break in on his friendship with this girl. Give the whole thing more time, and meanwhile continue going with other boys.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm a girl in my teens, and several months ago I was fortunate enough to find my first job. I get only a small salary, but give it all at home, and in return mother gives me car fare and lunch money.

The trouble is that when I come home at six o'clock—I live an hour's ride from the place where I work—I am tired, and would love to rest a little and sometimes go out with my girl friends, but my mother expects me to do the housework, wash the supper and sometimes lunch dishes. I don't mind taking care of my clothes; I think every girl should do that herself. But don't you think my mother is unfair in asking me to do what I consider should be her work?

It isn't as if we were all alone. I have two brothers, and both are working. So you see there are quite a few dishes to wash, and the house could be straightened up two and three times a day after them as they are a little careless.

I have tried to tell my mother that I want to pay her six dollars a week board. I make only ten dollars and fifty cents a week, and sometimes I stay overtime so that gives me a little extra money, but she won't listen to me. She believes that as long as a girl lives home, no matter what her age, she should give all her money at home and help take care of the house.

Mother is never sick; I really don't know why she should complain that she is always too busy to do everything. If I have to do all my work at the office, she ought to be able to do her share at home. She doesn't have to go out to work because my brothers give her a fair allowance every week on which to run the house. I didn't really have to get a job, but after I finished high school I wanted to feel a little independent and be self-supporting like other girls.

I never have time to go out with my friends, and often when I can go to a show or a dance with a boy, I have to refuse because mother wants me to do something else. And by the time I get through straightening up the house and doing the dishes at night I'm too tired to do any-



thing but go to bed. I will greatly appreciate your opinion of my problem.

UNHAPPY GIRL.

It is hardly fair on the part of any mother who is well and strong enough to attend to the household herself, to expect a working daughter to do housework and dishes after working hours. I have no desire to encourage a strained relationship between mother and daughter, but if you work hard all day, and your hours are long, you need rest and recreation, the natural enjoyments that should be a part of every one's youth.

It is commendable, and to your credit, that you preferred to find a job rather than fall back upon your brothers to support you. And if you are earning slightly over ten dollars a week, you are entitled to a little more than lunch and carfare money. In fact, offering to pay six dollars a week for your board is quite an ample sum and should satisfy your mother.

Talk things over with your mother and try to work out a schedule whereby you will give her some help at home when she needs it, but not to the point where it seriously interferes with your friendships. Explain your side of the story, and leave it to her good judgment and sense of fairness to do the right thing.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I'm an engaged girl of eighteen and don't know whether to go on making plans for my marriage in the near future, or call everything off. My fiancé is very sensitive, and I always have to stop and think before I can tell him anything.

Here is the whole problem: Just because we *are* engaged he thinks he can come to see me any time, and that I must always be ready for him. I can never do things as I would like to do them. I mean, he comes over every evening, and although he says he wants me to continue seeing my old friends, I never have any time for them

because he is always around and he can't seem to understand that.

Another thing is that I'm awfully fond of dancing, tennis, and swimming. He doesn't care for any sports, or going to a show, and says dancing is a good way of getting all tired out. Much as I believe I care for him, I have begun to wonder whether we can make a go of it if we marry.

Very often when we spend the evening together at my home we quarrel about some little thing, and then he is peeved for hours and often days later he continues talking about it.

He makes a good salary, and his mother has said she will give us their small house when we marry; she intends to live in a two-room apartment near her married daughter. So I know that Dick can provide for me well enough.

Considering all I have told you, do you think we could be happy together? My folks think everything will straighten itself out after I'm married to Dick, but I'm beginning to doubt that. Please tell me what you think.

L. J.

Opposites often attract, and when in love we are tempted to make concessions, but people who live in two entirely different worlds where likes and dislikes are concerned, rarely get along as well as they had hoped to.

Friendship can exist between two people who do not like the same things, but marriage is a different story. Two of the important props in marriage are the ability to see things from the same point of view, and a genuine enjoyment of the same things. And although I do not want to discourage you, my dear, it seems to me that if you do not believe you and your fiancé are suited to one another, marriage will only make things harder for both of you.

I would suggest that you give yourself plenty of time to consider this matter from other than the material angle. Forget, for the moment, the fact that this young man can provide well for you, and make a further comparison of the differences in your general make-up.

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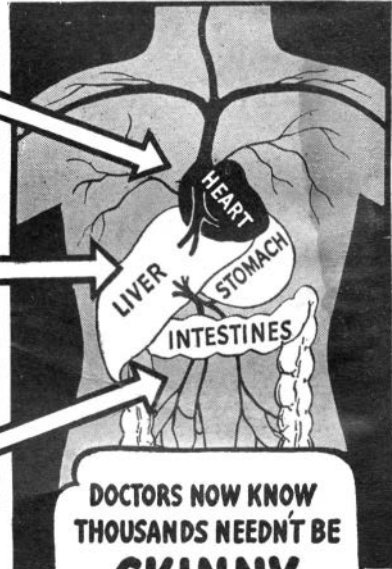
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